LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE ONE

THE BACKGROUND AND SUBJECT OF THE BOOK

Scripture Reading: Gal. 1:1-7; 3:1, 3; 4:17, 21; 5:2, 4; 6:12, 15

The books of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians form a cluster of Epistles which make up the heart of the divine revelation in the New Testament. Therefore, these books are very important. Ephesians covers the church as the Body of Christ, whereas Colossians deals with Christ as the Head of the Body. Galatians is concerned with Christ, and Philippians, with the experience of Christ. In Colossians and Ephesians we receive a clear view of the Head and the Body. In Galatians and Philippians we see Christ and the experience of Christ.

Just as there are four seasons in the year, so there are seasons in our Christian experience. This means that in our experience with the Lord we pass through winter as well as summer. The winter experiences are helpful, for they prepare us for a new beginning, which comes in the spring. During the winter season the various kinds of life are reduced. Through the reduction that takes place in winter, life is prepared to grow again. Because in our spiritual experience there is the need for us to be reduced, we must be ready for winter at the appointed time. We may say that Galatians is a winter book, a book that reduces us and eliminates everything that should not be permanent. However, this reduction serves a very positive purpose: it prepares us for further growth in life.

We all need to be reduced. We need to be reduced not only in things that are natural or worldly, but even in the various aspects of our spiritual experience. For the sake of

further growth in the Lord, we need to be reduced. Certain things in our Christian life may be very good, scriptural, and spiritual. But as long as these things are not Christ Himself directly, they should not be given a place with us very long. Only Christ Himself should have a permanent place in our Christian life. All other things, even the most spiritual experiences, must be reduced. In order for this reduction to take place, God ordains winter. We should never expect to have an endless summer in the Christian life. On the contrary, we should expect the recurring cycle of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Whenever we come to a winter in our experience with the Lord, we should be encouraged that spring and summer will follow in due time. Therefore, we should be encouraged to be reduced in order to have another new beginning. It is my hope that these messages on Galatians will serve this purpose.

I. THE BACKGROUND

In order to study the book of Galatians properly, it is important to know the background and the subject of this book. All the books in the New Testament have a particular background. We thank the Lord for these backgrounds, even though, for the most part, they were not very positive. The Lord uses the negative background as a basis for the release of the divine revelation. The more negative a certain background is, the greater is the opportunity for the Lord to release His revelation. The worse the background, the greater is the need for God's revelation. If we see this, we shall thank the Lord for all the negative backgrounds that made it necessary for the books in the New Testament to be written.

The Gospel of John is a good example of a New Testament book written against a negative background. This Gospel was written during the last decade of the first century. At that time there was a tendency, even among Christians, to deny the deity of Christ. Some were doubting Christ's deity, and others were even denying this

truth. With such a trend as the background, this Gospel was written by the Apostle John. Without this Gospel, we could not have an adequate understanding of Christ's deity and His eternal existence. Neither could we realize how Christ could become our life. But through the Gospel of John we clearly see that Christ's deity is eternal and absolute. In this Gospel we also have the clear view of eternal life and of how Christ can be life to us. If there had not been such a dark background at the end of the first century, this wonderful Gospel probably would not have been written.

The Epistles of Paul were also written according to certain backgrounds. First Corinthians, for example, was written because of the confusion and divisiveness in the church at Corinth. If we did not have the book of 1 Corinthians, we would not know how Christ could be our enjoyment in all kinds of situations. This book describes the enjoyment of Christ in a way not found elsewhere in the New Testament. We should thank the Lord for the confusion in Corinth that gave rise to this Epistle.

The book of Colossians was also written according to a particular background, the background of the culture that had invaded the church at Colosse. With this cultural invasion as the background, the marvelous book of Colossians was written. Without that background, we would not have this book today.

In the same principle, the recovery of justification by faith at the time of the Reformation came forth out of a negative situation and a dark background. Apart from such a situation and background, the truth of justification by faith would not be as clear as it is today. This truth can no longer be blurred because the dark background causes it to stand out so definitely.

Now we come to the background of the book of Galatians. Written before A.D. 60, Galatians is earlier than either Ephesians or Colossians. Galatians was written in the earlier part of Paul's ministry, before he was imprisoned.

In order to have the proper experience of the church as

the Body of Christ, we need the book of Galatians. We need both an adequate experience and understanding of all that is conveyed to us in this Epistle. If we intend to practice the church life today, we need to know the Christ revealed in Galatians.

Galatians reveals that Christ is versus religion with its law. The law given by God through Moses was the foundation of the Jewish religion. Judaism was built on the law. The book of Galatians reveals that the very Christ whom we need for the church life is versus law and religion.

A. The Churches in Galatia Bewitched by the Judaizers

In verse 2 Paul speaks of "the churches of Galatia," a province of the ancient Roman Empire. Through Paul's preaching ministry, churches were established in a number of cities in that province. Hence, "churches," not "church," is used when the apostle refers to them.

The churches in Galatia had been bewitched by the Judaizers (3:1). They had been distracted from Christ to Judaism. A good number of the New Testament believers in the churches of Galatia had turned back to the old Jewish religion and were endeavoring to keep the law with the ordinance of circumcision. This was the background that gave Paul the opportunity to write this wonderful book.

In writing to the Galatians, Paul was very frank and straightforward; he was not in the least political. For example, he called those Judaizers who were troubling the Galatians "false brothers" (2:4). The Galatian believers had been bewitched by these false brothers.

B. The Churches in Galatia Distracted from Christ to Law

In 1:6 and 7 Paul says, "I marvel that you are so quickly removing from Him Who has called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not another; only there are some who trouble you and desire to pervert

the gospel of Christ." Here Paul comes to his subject. Because the churches in Galatia were deserting the grace of Christ and backsliding to the observance of the law, Paul was burdened to write this Epistle. The "different gospel" mentioned in verse 6 denotes the Judaistic observance of the law. The grace of Christ is versus the law of Moses (John 1:17). The Judaizers troubled the churches by perverting the gospel of Christ, or distorting it, thus misleading the believers, taking them back to the law of Moses. However, the observance of the law could never be a gospel that sets free the sinners under its bondage and brings them into the enjoyment of God. It could only keep them as slaves under its bondage.

1. Brought to Nought from Christ

Because they were distracted from Christ to law, the Galatians were being brought to nought from Christ (5:4). To be brought to nought is to be brought to nothing. In His salvation God has brought us into Christ and has made Christ to be profitable to us in every way. In His redemption God has placed us into His Son who is now everything to us. But the Judaizers had caused the Galatian believers to be distracted from Christ to the law. By turning from Christ to the law, the Galatians were being brought to nothing from Christ. According to the King James Version, Paul said to the Galatians, "Christ is become of no effect unto you." The Galatians were in a situation where the profitable Christ was of no effect to them. They were being deprived of all the profit that is in Christ and were separated from Him as a result. As the American Standard Version says, they were "severed from Christ."

2. Fallen from Grace

In 5:4 Paul also told the Galatians that they had "fallen from grace." To be brought to nought from Christ is to fall from grace. This implies that Christ Himself is the very grace, and that we, the believers, are in Him as grace. The

profitable Christ is grace to us. To be severed from Him is to be fallen from grace.

3. To Be Justified by Law

In 5:4 Paul also points out that the Galatians were seeking to be justified by law. Although they had been justified in Christ, they had gone back to keeping the law and were trying to be justified by the works of the law. What a devilish subtlety! Fallen man cannot be justified before God by keeping the law. The only way to be justified is by faith in Christ, by believing in the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, the Galatian believers had been bewitched and therefore were trying to keep the law. They were endeavoring to be justified and to please God by their own works.

4. To Practice Circumcision

The Judaizers were also constraining the Galatians to practice circumcision (6:12, 15). In Genesis 17 God commanded Abraham and his male descendants to be circumcised. Any male who refused to be circumcised was to be cut off from God's people. Circumcision, however, was simply a type of the crucifixion of Christ. The true circumcision that cuts off the flesh is not the circumcision practiced in the Old Testament; it is the crucifixion of Christ. Our flesh can be dealt with only by the cross of Christ. Christ's crucifixion was the fulfillment of the type of circumcision. Since we have the reality of circumcision, there is no longer the need for the shadow. Nevertheless, the Judaizers turned the Galatian believers from the reality back to the shadow. How foolish!

5. To Be Perfected by the Flesh

Furthermore, the Galatians were trying to be perfected by the flesh (3:3). This means that the Galatians were trying to perfect themselves through their own effort, through the works of the flesh, in which there is nothing good. How foolish the Galatians were!

II. THE SUBJECT

A. To Rescue the Distracted Believers out of the Evil Religious Age

The subject of the book of Galatians is related to its background. The subject is the rescue of the distracted believers out of the evil religious age. In 1:4 Paul says that Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might rescue us out of the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." An age is a part of the world as the satanic system. An age refers to a section, an aspect, the present or modern appearance, of the system of Satan, which is used by him to usurp and occupy people and keep them away from God and His purpose. We may regard each decade as a distinct age or section of Satan's world system.

The various ages of the satanic system are expressed in the fashions of clothing that prevail during a certain period of time. For example, in the 1950s men's neckties were narrow, but in the late 1960s and throughout most of the 1970s, they were broad. Now, according to the latest change of style, they have become somewhat narrow again.

When I was young, I worked in a factory where hair nets were manufactured for export to the West. At first, the hair nets were large, designed to fit over hair styled in the shape of a tower. Then, to my surprise, we began to receive orders for small hair nets. The reason for the change was that women in the West were now wearing their hair very short, in a bobbed style, and therefore wanted small hair nets. By these illustrations of neckties and hair nets we can see that the world system of Satan has different ages, different sections.

The present evil age in 1:4, according to the context of this book, refers to the religious world, the religious course of the world, the Jewish religion. This is confirmed by 6:14-15, where circumcision is considered a part of the world--the religious world which to the Apostle Paul is crucified. Here the apostle emphasizes that the purpose of Christ's giving Himself for our sins was to rescue us, to pluck us out, from the Jewish religion, the present evil age. This is to release God's chosen people from the

custody of the law (3:23), to bring them out of the sheepfold (John 10:1, 3), according to the will of God. Thus, in his opening word, Paul indicates what he is about to deal with. He desires to rescue the churches which were distracted by Judaism with its law and to bring them back to the grace of the gospel.

For years I was fond of 1:4 and used this verse in messages. However, I did not realize that the present evil age in this verse refers to the Jewish religion. At the time of Paul, Judaism was very prevailing. His intention in writing to the Galatians was to rescue the distracted believers from the tyranny of the present evil religious age.

In 1:4 Paul points out that in order to rescue us from the present evil religious age Christ gave Himself for our sins. This indicates that Christ died in order to rescue us from Judaism. In John 10 we see that Christ as the good Shepherd entered into the fold in order to bring His sheep out of the fold and into the pasture. The fold in John 10 signifies the law or Judaism as the religion of the law, in which God's chosen people were kept and guarded in custody or ward until Christ came. Before the coming of Christ, God used Judaism as a fold to keep His sheep. But Christ has come as the Shepherd to bring the sheep out of that fold to the pasture where they may feed on His riches. Although Christ came to release the sheep from the fold, the Judaizers crucified this good Shepherd. He died on the cross not only for the sins of the sheep, but also to bring them out of the fold.

According to the New Testament, the death of Christ on the cross accomplished many things. In Ephesians 2 we see that He gave Himself in order to abolish the ordinances for the creation of the one new man. In Galatians 1 we see that Christ gave Himself for our sins for the purpose of rescuing us out of religion, out of the present evil age.

We should apply 1:4 not only to the Galatian believers, but also to today's believers in Christ. Most Christians are held in some kind of religious fold. Although in the New Testament the term fold is not positive (according to the

Greek, the second occurrence of "fold" in KJV of John 10:16 should be "flock"), certain Christian hymns speak of being brought back to the fold in some kind of positive sense. We have pointed out that in John 10 the fold denotes Judaism. In principle, Catholicism and all the denominations are folds. Only the church is God's flock. Christ has brought us back to the flock, not to the fold. Many of us can testify that we have been rescued out of the fold and brought back to God's flock.

At the time of John 10, God's people, His sheep, were in the fold of Judaism. But as this chapter makes clear, Christ came to bring His sheep out of the fold and to form them with the Gentile believers into one flock, the church (10:16). Hence, the fold is religion, whereas the flock is the church. Today Catholicism and the denominations are folds that keep Christ's sheep. But Christ is seeking to rescue His sheep out of the various religious folds and to bring them together as the one flock.

Christ's death on the cross to deliver us from the present evil age was according to the will of God, the Father. To rescue the sheep from the fold is thus according to the will of God. Because Catholicism and the denominations damage the flock of God, they are opposed to the will of God. By building up their folds, they spoil the church life.

Today the Lord is still endeavoring to bring His sheep out of the fold. For this reason, a warfare is raging between religion and the Lord's recovery. The Lord Jesus came not to steal the sheep, but to lead the sheep out of the fold. The Judaizers, however, regarded Him as a sheep-stealer. In like manner, we in the Lord's recovery are accused of proselytizing, of stealing sheep. Although we do not proselytize, we do desire that the Lord's sheep may be led out of the fold and into the flock.

The Lord Jesus came into the fold, opened the door, and led the sheep out of the fold. The Judaizers crucified

Him. But through His death on the cross, the Lord gave Himself for our sins in order to rescue us from the religious fold. The principle is the same both with the believers in Paul's time and with us today.

B. Paul Becoming an Apostle

In 1:1 Paul speaks of his apostleship: "Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, Who raised Him from among the dead." Paul's apostleship had much to do with the gospel he preached. The purpose of the book of Galatians is to let those who receive it know that the gospel preached by the Apostle Paul was not from man's teaching (1:11), but from God's revelation. Hence, at the very opening of this book, Paul emphasized the fact that he became an apostle not from men nor through man, but through Christ and God.

In verse 1, as in the entire book, Paul is careful in his use of words. Firstly he says that he did not become an apostle "from men"; he goes on to say that his apostleship was not "through man." He was made an apostle directly through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Christ from among the dead. The law dealt with man as the old creation, whereas the gospel makes man the new creation in resurrection. God made Paul an apostle not according to his natural man in the old creation by the law, but according to his regenerated man in the new creation through the resurrection of Christ. Hence, Paul does not say here, "God the Father who gave the law through Moses"; he says, "God the Father who raised Christ from among the dead." God's New Testament economy is not with man in the old creation, but with man in the new creation through the resurrection of Christ. Paul's apostleship belonged altogether to the new creation, which transpires in our spirit through regeneration by the Spirit of God.

In verse 2 Paul goes on to speak of all the brothers who are with him. This indicates that he takes the brothers

with him as co-writers to be a testimony and a confirmation of what he writes in this Epistle.

C. Grace and Peace to the Churches from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

In verse 3 Paul says, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ." Grace is God as our enjoyment (John 1:17; 1 Cor. 15:10), and peace is the condition, the issue, which results from grace. Peace is the result of the enjoyment of God our Father. How good it is that grace and peace come to the churches from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ!

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWO

THE APOSTLE'S GOSPEL

Scripture Reading: Gal. 1:6-12

In this message we come to 1:6-12. The main item revealed in these verses is the gospel preached by the Apostle Paul.

Many Christians think that the gospel has only one aspect. According to this concept, the message of the gospel is that we were sinners and that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was incarnated and died on the cross for our sins so that we might be forgiven and saved. Although this is not wrong, it by no means includes all the aspects of the gospel found in the New Testament. In Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we have different aspects of the gospel. In the Acts we do not see one particular aspect. Instead, there are verses that refer to the aspects of the gospel presented in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. However, in all the Epistles written by Paul, Romans through Hebrews, we see a particular aspect of the gospel. We may call these Epistles the gospel according to Paul, or the fifth gospel.

Let us now consider the various aspects of the five gospels in the New Testament. Matthew reveals that Christ, the Son of David, came as the King to establish the kingdom of the heavens on earth. Hence, in Matthew the term, "the gospel of the kingdom," is used. Therefore, the aspect of the gospel emphasized in Matthew is that of the kingdom. The goal of this aspect of the gospel is to bring people into the kingdom.

The Gospel of John emphasizes eternal life. In this Gospel we see that from eternity Christ is the very Word of God, even God Himself. One day, the Word was incarnated (1:14). Furthermore, He died on the cross not only to

redeem us from sin, but also to release the divine life so that He may impart Himself into us as eternal life. In this Gospel John brings us to a full realization of the divine life. For this reason, the Gospel of John may be called the gospel of life.

The aspect of the gospel emphasized in Luke is that of the forgiveness of sins. Here we find a record of how Christ came as a man to be our Savior, how He died on the cross to accomplish redemption and to solve the problem of sin so that we may be forgiven. According to Luke 24:47, repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in the name of Christ among all nations.

We have pointed out that Matthew is the gospel of the kingdom, that John is the gospel of life, and that Luke is the gospel of forgiveness. But what aspect of the gospel is emphasized in Mark? Mark is the gospel of service. According to this Gospel, Christ came as a slave to serve God by caring for God's people. Christ came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, to serve (10:45). He came not only as the King to establish the kingdom, as the eternal One to impart life, and as the Savior to forgive the sins of those who believe in Him; He also came as a slave to serve God by ministering to His redeemed people. Thus, Mark emphasizes service.

Paul's gospel includes all the aspects of the first four Gospels. In his writings Paul speaks of the kingdom, life, forgiveness, and service. However, in his Epistles he covers much more. In Colossians 1:25 Paul says that he became a minister according to the stewardship of God to complete the word of God. Hence, Paul's gospel is the gospel of completion. Without Paul's gospel, the revelation of the gospel in the New Testament would not be complete.

Many important aspects of the gospel are found only in the writings of Paul. For example, in Colossians 1:27 Paul says that Christ in us is the hope of glory. Such a word cannot be found in the four Gospels, nor in the Epistles written by Peter or John. Mark may be regarded as

Peter's spiritual son (1 Pet. 5:13), and he drew upon Peter as the source for much of the material in his Gospel. However, Mark says nothing about the indwelling Christ as our hope of glory. From Paul's gospel we learn that the Spirit of Christ is a seal and a pledge (Eph. 1:13-14). Although John speaks of the Spirit, he does not use the same terms Paul does. In Galatians 1:15 and 16 Paul tells us that it pleased God to reveal His Son in him. Such a word is not to be found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Paul also speaks of Christ living in us (2:20), of Christ being formed in us (4:19), and of Christ making His home in us (Eph. 3:17). Statements like these are not found in the four Gospels. Furthermore, in Ephesians 3:19 Paul speaks of being filled unto all the fullness of God. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have nothing to say about this.

In his Epistles Paul also tells us that we are members of the Body of Christ. He speaks of Christ as the Head and of the church as the Body. Such terms cannot be found in the writings of Peter or John. If we could tell Peter that the church is the Body of Christ, he might reply, "Where did you hear this? I was close to the Lord Jesus for three and a half years, but I never heard such a word. I heard about the cross and about feeding the Lord's lambs. In my first Epistle I even charged the elders to shepherd the flock of God. But I have never heard about the Body of Christ." We must admit that concerning the matter of the Head and the Body, Paul's vision was higher than Peter's. Although John tells us that Christ is the vine and that we are the branches, he does not say that Christ is the Head and that we are the Body. This is a further indication that without Paul's gospel the revelation in the New Testament would not be complete.

When Christianity went to China hundreds of years ago, all that was made available to the Chinese was a rather poor translation of the four Gospels. The unfortunate Chinese could hear only those aspects of the gospel found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Although they may have gained some understanding of the

forgiveness of sins, I doubt that they had a proper understanding of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew or of eternal life in John. Certainly they had no opportunity to hear the gospel which declares that the believers have Christ in them as their hope of glory and that they are members of the Body of Christ. They could not know that Christ is the Head of the Body of which we are members. What a loss it would be not to have the gospel of Paul!

It is crucial for us to see that Paul's ministry was a completing ministry, a ministry of completing the divine revelation. Paul's gospel is the gospel of completion. Therefore, if we did not have Paul's writings, we would lack a vital part of God's revelation. Paul's Epistles not only complete the divine revelation; they form the very heart of God's revelation in the New Testament. Thus, Paul's gospel is not only the gospel of completion; it is also the center of the New Testament revelation. For this reason, Paul's gospel is the basic gospel.

We in the Lord's recovery need to have a clear view of the gospel according to Paul. The focal point of Paul's gospel is that the Son of God, God's anointed One, has entered into our being to be our life today and our glory in the future so that we may be the members of His Body. This Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all, is the new man, the household of God, the household of faith, and the true Israel of God. In Paul's gospel there are many mysterious matters that are not covered by Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. In the four Gospels we are not told that Christ is the mystery of God (Col. 2:2) or that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily (Col. 2:9). In fact, the four Gospels do not even give us a clear word concerning justification by faith. It is in Romans and Galatians that justification by faith is covered in a clear way.

There is no doubt that Matthew speaks clearly and emphatically about the kingdom, which is a matter of administration. However, according to the revelation given to Paul, the gospel is not centered on God's administration. It is focused on the Triune God being our

life in order to be one with us and to make us one with Him, that we may be the Body of Christ to express God in a corporate way. The focal point of the gospel is not God's administration; it is God Himself in His Trinity becoming the processed all-inclusive Spirit to be life and everything to us for our enjoyment, so that He and we may be one to express Him for eternity. Such a profound thought cannot be found in the four Gospels. I doubt that Mark was clear about such a revelation of God's economy when he was writing his Gospel.

Many Christians today are not clear about this matter either. They may be familiar with the councils, the creeds, and the teachings of the historic church, but they do not know Paul's revelation of the Triune God processed to become the all-inclusive Spirit. This indicates that few Christians adequately know the gospel according to Paul.

Important aspects of Paul's gospel are found in Galatians. We have seen that in 1:15 and 16 Paul says that it pleased God to reveal His Son in him. What a wonderful word! However, millions of Christians have no realization that Christ is in them. In 2:20 Paul goes on to speak of Christ living in us, and in 4:19, of Christ being formed in us. In chapter six he covers fourteen important items: the human spirit (vv. 1, 18), the law of Christ (the law of life, v. 2), the Spirit (v. 8), eternal life (v. 8), the household (v. 10), the faith (v. 10), the cross of Christ (v. 14), the religious world, which has been crucified to Paul and to which Paul has been crucified (v. 14), the new creation (v. 15), peace (v. 16), mercy (v. 16), the Israel of God (v. 16), the brands of Jesus (v. 17), and the grace of Christ (v. 18). A number of these items can be found only in the writings of Paul, not in any of the four Gospels.

However, we by no means depreciate the four Gospels. We have devoted much time to the study of Matthew and John in particular. My purpose here is to emphasize our need to know the fifth gospel, the gospel of Paul. Some Christians boast that they accept all ministries, but actually they do not wholly accept the ministry of Paul.

This indicates that they receive the four Gospels, but do not fully receive the fifth.

The traditional understanding of the gospel in Christianity is very narrow. It does not include the whole gospel revealed in the New Testament. When I was young, my view of the gospel was limited. I only saw that Jesus loved us and died for us so that our sins could be forgiven. I knew nothing of the marvelous aspects of the gospel unfolded in the Epistles of Paul. Even some of today's pastors do not adequately know Paul's gospel revealed in the one hundred chapters of his Epistles.

I. THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

Paul's gospel is the gospel of grace (1:6). Grace is the Triune God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, processed to become our enjoyment. According to 1:6, we have been called in the grace of Christ. Through Christ we enjoy the processed all-inclusive Triune God. The gospel of grace is versus the law of Moses. John 1:17 says, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ." In John 1:16 we are told that "of His fullness we all received, and grace upon grace." To receive grace upon grace is to continually receive of the processed Triune God for our enjoyment.

II. THE UNIQUE GOSPEL

The gospel preached by the Apostle Paul was the unique gospel. It was the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:7). Those who preach a so-called gospel that is different from the unique gospel pervert and distort the gospel of Christ and should be accursed (1:7-9).

III. NOT ACCORDING TO MAN

In 1:11 Paul says, "For I make known to you, brothers, concerning the gospel preached by me, that it is not according to man." Paul received a marvelous revelation of the gospel directly from the Lord Himself. Therefore, the gospel he preached was not according to man.

IV. NOT RECEIVED FROM MAN

In verse 12 Paul goes on to say, "For neither did I receive it from man." Concerning the gospel, Paul did not receive anything from Peter, John, or James.

V. NOT TAUGHT BY MAN

In verse 12 Paul also says that he was not taught the gospel by man. Again and again he emphasizes the fact that man was not the source of his gospel. He did not receive the gospel from man's teaching.

VI. RECEIVED THROUGH THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Paul concludes verse 12 with the words, "I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ." This refers to the revelation given to the Apostle Paul by the Lord Jesus Christ concerning the gospel. We do not know in what way the gospel was revealed to Paul. Perhaps Paul received this revelation during his stay in Arabia.

Paul's writings testify to the fact that he had received revelation directly from Christ. In his Epistles there are many marvelous expressions which no man could utter apart from divine revelation. Certain ancient philosophers, such as Confucius, have composed some writings that are regarded as important. But there is no comparison between the best of these writings and those of the Apostle Paul. As one who is familiar with the works of Confucius, I can testify that comparing his writings to the Epistles of Paul is like comparing clay to gold. If Paul had not received revelation from Christ, how could he have written the things he did? It would have been impossible. His writings prove that his gospel was not according to man, that it was not received from man, and that it was not taught by man, but that it was received through a revelation of Jesus Christ. The expressions Paul uses are too wonderful to have come from any source other than a revelation directly from the Lord Jesus Christ.

VII. PREACHING THIS GOSPEL AS A SLAVE OF CHRIST

In verse 10 Paul says, "For am I now persuading men or God? Or do I seek to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I would not be a slave of Christ." Paul was not seeking for men's approval; neither was he seeking to appease men or to satisfy them. As a slave of Christ, he preached the gospel according to the revelation he received, not to please men, but to please God.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THREE

GOD'S SON VERSUS MAN'S RELIGION

Scripture Reading: Gal. 1:13-16

In 1:13-16 we see the matter of God's Son versus man's religion. Verses 13 and 14 present a vivid picture of man's religion. In verse 13 Paul says, "For you have heard of my manner of life formerly in Judaism, that I persecuted the church of God excessively and ravaged it." Here we see a contrast between the Jewish religion and the church of God. When Paul was in Judaism, he persecuted the church because the church was different from his religion. Paul hated the church because it detracted from his religion. In his religious zeal, he persecuted the church of God excessively and ravaged it.

In verse 14 Paul goes on to say, "And I advanced in Judaism beyond many contemporaries in my race, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." The traditions here were those in the sect of the Pharisees, to which Paul belonged. He called himself "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee" (Acts 23:6). The Jewish religion was composed not only of the God-given law and its rituals, but also of man-made traditions. Because Paul was so zealous for the traditions of his fathers, he became a leading religionist and advanced beyond many of his contemporaries.

GOD'S PLEASURE TO REVEAL HIS SON IN US

Then in verses 15 and 16 Paul declares, "But when it pleased God...to reveal His Son in me...." At the time

appointed by God, when Saul, zealous in his religion, was persecuting the church, the Son of God was revealed to him. God could bear with Saul's zeal for the traditions of his fathers, for this produced a dark background against which to reveal Christ. At a time which was pleasing to Him, God revealed His Son in Saul of Tarsus. God was pleased to reveal to him the living Person of the Son of God. To reveal His Son in us is also a pleasure to God. It is Christ, the Son of God, not the law, in whom God the Father is always pleased (Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5).

The Son of God as the embodiment and expression of God the Father (John 1:18; 14:9-11; Heb. 1:3) is life to us (John 10:10; 1 John 5:12; Col. 3:4). The desire of God's heart is to reveal His Son in us that we may know Him, receive Him as our life (John 17:3; 3:16), and become the sons of God (John 1:12; Gal. 4:5-6). As the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16), Christ is far superior to Judaism and its traditions (Gal. 1:13-14). The Judaizers bewitched the Galatians so that they considered the ordinances of the law above the Son of the living God. Hence, the apostle in the opening of this Epistle testified that he had been deeply involved in that realm and far advanced in it. God, however, had rescued him out of that course of the world, which was evil in God's eyes, by revealing His Son in him. In his experience, Paul realized that there is no comparison between the Son of the living God and Judaism with its dead traditions from his fathers.

In 1:16 Paul emphasizes the fact that the Son of God was revealed in him. This indicates that God's revealing of His Son to us is in us, not outwardly but inwardly; not by an outward vision but by an inward seeing. This is not an objective revelation; it is a subjective one.

God made the Apostle Paul a minister of Christ by setting him apart, calling him, and revealing His Son in him. Therefore, what Paul preached was not the law, but Christ the Son of God. Furthermore, he did not merely preach the doctrine concerning Christ; he preached Christ as a living Person.

THE LIVING PERSON OF THE SON OF GOD

The crucial point in this message is that this living Person, God's Son, is versus man's religion. This was true at the time of Saul of Tarsus, it has been true throughout the centuries, and it is true today. Instead of focusing his attention on this living Person, man has a natural tendency to direct his attention to religion with its tradition. But from Genesis 1 through Revelation 22 the Bible reveals a living Person. God cares only for this living Person, not for anything else.

The record of the experience of the disciples with the Lord Jesus on the mount of transfiguration illustrates this (Matt. 17:1-8). After bringing Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain apart, the Lord Jesus "was transfigured before them, and His face shone as the sun, and His garments became white as the light" (Matt. 17:2). Along with the other two disciples, Peter saw the Lord's glory. He also saw Moses and Elijah speaking with Him. Although it is doubtful that Moses and Elijah were in glory, they nonetheless were speaking with the glorified Jesus. According to Matthew 17:4, Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You are willing, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." In making this suggestion, Peter was elevating Moses and Elijah to the same level as that of the Lord Jesus. He was heir of the centuries-old tradition concerning Moses, who represented the law, and Elijah, who represented the prophets. To the Jews, Moses and Elijah were the representatives of the entire Old Testament. Hence, even on the mount of transfiguration, Peter was zealous for the traditions regarding Moses and Elijah. But while Peter was still speaking, "behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I delight; hear Him!" (Matt. 17:5). Moses and Elijah then disappeared from the scene. When the disciples lifted up their eyes, "they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone." This indicates that in the eyes of God there is no place for religion or tradition--only the living Person of His Son has a place.

TREASURING TRADITIONS IN PLACE OF CHRIST

Man has a natural tendency to appreciate traditional things. How people treasure their traditions! For example, the Seventh-Day Adventists treasure the Sabbath day. They fondly cling to the tradition of the seventh-day Sabbath. But according to Colossians 2:16, the Sabbath is a shadow of which the reality, the body, is Christ. Now that Christ has come, we should turn from the shadow to the reality. Nevertheless, like the Jews of old, today's Seventh-Day Adventists treasure the shadow and neglect Christ. Christ is our day. He is not only our real Sabbath, but the reality of every day. How foolish to treasure the seventh-day Sabbath when we can enjoy Christ as our real Sabbath and as the reality of every day!

Some Christians treasure certain things that are far more ridiculous than this. Have you heard that some preachers are occupied with the lengthening of legs? Where is Christ in such a practice? Those who specialize in the lengthening of legs should call themselves "leg-lengtheners," not ministers of Christ. To associate the lengthening of legs with the name of Christ is to use His name in vain.

Today millions of Christians are occupied with miracles, healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues, the so-called manifestation of gifts, and head covering, but few are occupied with Christ. What a pitiful situation!

For seven and a half years, I was with a very strict Brethren assembly. During my time with them, I heard a good number of messages on the books of Daniel and Revelation. In these messages a great deal was said about beasts, horns, toes, and certain periods of days. As a young man zealous for knowledge, I was somewhat satisfied by that kind of teaching. But although I heard many messages about different aspects of prophecy, I did

not hear very much concerning Christ. Actually the book of Revelation is not focused on beasts, toes, and horns; it is focused on Christ. This book is a revelation of the Person of Christ. Even the book of Daniel reveals Christ. Nevertheless, the messages given in that Brethren assembly were by no means centered on Christ.

If you attend the so-called Sunday morning services in today's Christianity or go to Bible studies held by Christian teachers, you will hear about many things. But rarely will you hear a message in which Christ is unveiled and ministered to the Lord's people. This indicates that today, as it has been for centuries, religious people are zealous for religious things and for traditions, but not for Christ. A great many Christians care for religion and traditions, but they do not care for the living Person of Christ.

THE SON, THE FATHER, AND THE SPIRIT

The focal point of the Bible is not practices, doctrines, or ordinances--it is the living Person of the Son of God. In 1:15 and 16 Paul said that it pleased God to reveal His Son in him. Concerning the Son of God, many are still under the influence of the traditional teachings in Christianity with respect to the Trinity. The New Testament reveals that God the Father loved the world and gave His Son for us (John 3:16). But the problem we face is how to understand this. In what way did the Father send His Son? One day, Philip said to the Lord Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and it suffices us" (John 14:8). Surprised at such a request, the Lord said, "Am I so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How is it that you say, Show us the Father?" (v. 9). Then the Lord went on to say, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?" (v. 10). However, later on in this chapter, in verse 16, the Lord Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever." If I had been Philip, I would immediately have said, "Lord, since to see You is to see

the Father, why do You now say that You will pray to the Father? Your word seems contradictory." Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus said that He would ask the Father and that the Father would give the disciples another Comforter to be with them forever, even the Spirit of reality (v. 17), who had been abiding with the disciples and who would be in them. But then in verse 18 He says, "I will not leave you orphans; I am coming to you." This indicates that the very He who is the Spirit of reality in verse 17 becomes the I who is the Lord Himself in verse 18. This shows that after His resurrection the Lord would become the Spirit of reality.

My purpose in speaking of these matters from John 14 is to point out that if we are adequately enlightened through the record of the New Testament, we shall see that whenever the Son of God is mentioned, the Father is involved also. We cannot separate the Son from the Father or from the Spirit. Many Christians mistakenly separate the Son from the Father and the Spirit from the Son, claiming that They are three separate and distinct Persons. But such a separation is not according to God's revelation in the New Testament. The Bible reveals that where the Son is, there the Father is, and there the Spirit is also. The Father is embodied in the Son, and the Son is realized as the Spirit. This means that the Spirit is the realization of the Son, who is the embodiment of the Father. For this reason, in 2 Corinthians 13:14 Paul says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (Gk.). We cannot have the grace of Christ the Son without the love of God the Father or the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Son, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Spirit cannot be separated. Actually, these three things are one. In the same principle, we cannot separate the Spirit from the Son nor the Son from the Father. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit all are one. Otherwise, God would not be triune. The word triune is composed of *tri-*, meaning three, and *-une*, meaning one. As the Triune God, God is both three in one and one in three.

THE EMBODIMENT OF THE TRIUNE GOD REALIZED AS THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT

It is significant that in Galatians 1:15 and 16 Paul does not say that God revealed Christ in him, but that He revealed His Son in him. Speaking of Christ does not lead to the same kind of involvement as does speaking of the Son. The reason for this difference is that whenever we speak of the Son of God, we are immediately involved with the Father and the Spirit. According to the writings of Paul, to have the Son is to have both the Father and the Spirit. As we have pointed out repeatedly, the Son is the embodiment of the Triune God realized as the Spirit for our enjoyment. Hence, when Paul says that it pleased God to reveal His Son in him, this means that the One revealed in him was the embodiment of the Triune God realized as the processed all-inclusive Spirit. The burden I have received from the Lord is to minister this matter to God's chosen people. Although I have been ministering on this for many years, I can testify that this burden is heavier today than ever before.

In Paul's Epistles we see that the Son is the mystery of God, the embodiment of God, and the One in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (Col. 2:2, 9). One day, through incarnation, the Son of God became a man called the last Adam, who, through death and resurrection, has become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). In 2 Corinthians 3:17 Paul says, "Now the Lord is the Spirit." Putting all these verses together, we see that the Son of God, the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead, became a man and that in resurrection this One is now the life-giving Spirit.

Concerning Christ as the Son of God, there are two "becames." According to John 1:14, the Word, the Son of God, became flesh; that is, He became a man. Furthermore, according to 1 Corinthians 15:45, this One, called the last Adam, has become the life-giving Spirit. This is the reason that Paul can say explicitly that now

the Lord is the Spirit. The Son of God is thus the embodiment of the Triune God realized as the all-inclusive Spirit. This wonderful Person is versus man's religion.

GOD'S UNIQUE INTENTION

The heart of God is fully occupied with the living Person of His Son. Because His attention is focused on this living Person, God has no interest in giving us things such as immersion, tongues-speaking, healing, circumcision, the Sabbath, head covering, or doctrines about prophecy. God's unique intention is to give us His Son as a living Person.

However, because of the fall, we are easily distracted to care for other things in place of Christ. It is quite possible that even among us in the Lord's recovery we may care for any number of things instead of Christ. For instance, we may care more about the church service than we care for Christ. It is crucial for us to have a vision of this all-inclusive living Person. This Person includes the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; He includes divinity and humanity. Although this living Person is so all-inclusive, He is very practical to us, for, as the life-giving Spirit, He is in our regenerated spirit. On the one hand, He is in the heavens as the Lord, the Christ, the King, the Head, the High Priest, and the heavenly Minister; on the other hand, He is in our spirit to be everything to us. He is God, the Father, the Redeemer, the Savior, man, life, light, and the reality of every positive thing. This is the living Person of the Son of God.

THE LIVING PERSON REVEALED

We have pointed out that Paul's Epistles were written according to God's revelation. But we also need to see that a very high degree of intelligence was required to interpret this revelation and to express it in words. Others may receive such a revelation, but, unlike Paul, they may not have the ability to understand it and to convey it in language. We have seen that Paul, a highly educated person, was a leading religionist. According to his

darkened mentality, nothing could compare to Judaism with its law, Scriptures, priestly service, and traditions. As one who always pursued what he thought was best, he was wholly given to these things. He despised the followers of Jesus; he considered that they were merely following an insignificant Nazarene, whereas he was zealous for the traditions of his fathers. But one day, when it pleased God the Father, the living Person of the Son of God was revealed in him. When this Person appeared to him, he fell to the ground and spontaneously called, "Who art thou, Lord?" (Acts 9:5). Immediately the Lord replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." According to the darkened understanding of Saul of Tarsus, Jesus had been buried in a tomb, and His disciples had stolen His body and hidden it somewhere. But now Saul was shocked to realize that Jesus was living, was speaking from the heavens, and was being revealed to him. From the time this living Person was revealed in Saul, the veil was taken away and Saul's keen mind was enlightened with respect to the Son of God. Henceforth, he cared for this Person and no longer cared for religion or tradition.

Pray that you may see such a vision of the living Person of the Son of God. Also pray that others will see this vision. Pray that they will see this living Person and care for Him instead of things such as the Sabbath, head covering, healing, and spiritual gifts. We need to pray that we shall care for this living Person more than anything, even more than for the church life. Without this living Person as the reality and content of the church life, even the church life will become a tradition. Oh, it is vital that we see this living Person!

THE LIVING PERSON VERSUS ALL THINGS

Though we have a good deal of knowledge of Bible doctrine, our burden is not to minister doctrine; it is to minister the living Son of God as the embodiment of the processed Triune God realized as the life-giving Spirit. We

should not treasure anything, including our Bible knowledge or spiritual experience and attainments, in place of this living Person. Daily and hourly, we need to experience this living Person. The church is the Body of this Person, His practical and living expression.

Because this living Person is everything to us, there is no need for us to seek mere holiness, spirituality, victory, love, or submission. As the embodiment of the Triune God realized as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, He is within us to be whatever we need. In a forthcoming message we shall see that this One is now living in us. What we lack is not holiness or victory--it is this living Person. He is versus everything. Without Him, everything is a tradition made either by others or by ourselves. May we all see that today this living Person is versus all things.

Apart from Christ, the living Person of the Son of God, whatever we have is religion. For example, a brother may love his wife. But if he loves her apart from Christ, even this is religious. The same is true of sisters who submit to their husbands apart from Christ. This kind of submission is religious and traditional. I have known some Chinese wives who were submissive simply because they were submissive by nature. Before they were saved, they were submissive. After they became Christians, they became good, submissive, Christian wives. But this kind of submission has nothing to do with Christ. It is the expression of Chinese tradition, not of the living Person of the Son of God.

I am concerned that many of us are trying to practice the church life apart from Christ. If this is the case, our church life will be nothing more than a religion with its own kind of tradition. How desperately we need a vision of this living Person! It is crucial that He be revealed in us.

Before I received a vision of the living Person, I was one who kept many traditions. But one day it pleased God to reveal His Son in me. Now I know that this living Person is the embodiment of the processed, all-inclusive Triune God realized in my spirit as the life-giving Spirit.

In my spirit I enjoy Him, experience Him, partake of His riches, and live Him. To be a Christian is to be one who is occupied with the living Person, not with religion. Judaism is a religion formed by man in dead letters with vain traditions. But the Son of God is life, the uncreated, eternal life of God. For our experience and enjoyment, this One is the all-inclusive Spirit with the divine reality (John 1:14; 14:6). I do not want anything to do with religion--I want this living Person. Which do you choose--man's religion or the living Person of God's Son?

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE FOUR

THE REVELATION OF GOD'S SON IN US

Scripture Reading: Gal. 1:15a, 16a; 2 Cor. 3:14-17; 4:3-6

As a living Person, Christ is spiritual and mysterious. Apart from God's revelation of His Son in us, no human being would be able to see this living Person. Due to the shortage of revelation, millions of people have not realized anything of this Person, even though He is living, real, active, and aggressive. Hence, the problem today is the lack of revelation.

Christians may read the Bible and study it carefully, but see very little of Christ. This also may be our situation even in the Lord's recovery. From the beginning of the Bible to the end, especially in the New Testament, Christ occupies the central place. God's revelation throughout the Scriptures is altogether focused on Christ. Nevertheless, as we review our past experience, we shall have to admit that in our reading of the Bible we did not see much of Christ.

For seven and a half years, I sat under some teachers among the Brethren. Although I heard many messages and took note of the important points, I saw virtually nothing as far as Christ is concerned. I saw a vivid picture of the great image in Daniel 2, a picture I can easily recall today. However, during my years with the Brethren, I did not see Christ.

VEILS KEEPING US FROM KNOWING CHRIST

Concerning the revelation of God's Son in us, Paul covers two cases in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4, the case of the Jews in particular and the case of the unbelievers in general. When the Jews read the Old Testament, they

read it with their understanding veiled. In 2 Corinthians 3:15 Paul says, "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart." Do you know what this veil is? It is the religion of Judaism. If you contact orthodox Jews today and speak to them about Christ, you will realize that they are covered with a thick, strong veil. The same is true of Moslems and even of many Christians. For example, many of those in the Catholic Church who truly believe in Christ are covered with a veil of many layers, perhaps dozens of layers. One of these veils concerns the superstition that Mary is the mother of God. These believers persist in saying that they must continue to pray to Mary, the so-called mother of God, because they think their experience proves that prayers to the so-called holy mother are heard and answered. What a veil this is!

Seventh-Day Adventists are veiled by their observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. As you speak to them concerning Christ, you will find what a thick veil this ordinance is to them.

As you contact Christians today, you will find that virtually all Christians are veiled in some way. These veils keep them from seeing Christ.

Although Christ is spiritual and mysterious, God has created within us an organ by which we can know Christ. This organ is the human spirit. In his subtlety, Satan has blinded people to the fact that they have a spirit, or has otherwise kept them from using their spirit. Instead, he entices them to use their fallen mentality, which is blinded, darkened, and hardened. In 2 Corinthians 3:14 Paul says that the Jewish religionists are hardened in their thoughts (Gk.). To be hardened in this way is also to be blind and in darkness. Many Christians also are blinded, hardened, and darkened because they are covered with so many veils. These veils not only frustrate them from knowing Christ, but often keep them from recognizing the church people as genuine Christians. Some persist in considering us as a cult.

Furthermore, the veils that cover today's Christians

make them very touchy. If they are touched even slightly, they are offended. The reason for this touchiness is that Satan, the subtle one, the touchy one, is crouching in their minds. Satan is lurking in the mentality of today's veiled Christians. What a pitiful situation that so many genuine believers in Christ are still veiled!

We need to apply this word about veils to ourselves. It is crucial that we be on the alert, for it is possible for anything that is not Christ Himself to be used as a veil by the subtle one. Satan may use even the Scriptures or the law given by God as veils. In Romans 7 Paul says that the law is good, holy, and spiritual. But even such a good, holy, and spiritual thing in the hands of Satan can become a veil. This indicates that Satan can use even the highest spiritual gift to veil our understanding. Thus, it is possible for anything that is not Christ Himself to be a veil.

UNBELIEVERS BLINDED BY THE GOD OF THIS AGE

In 2 Corinthians 4, Paul gives us the general case. In verse 4 he says that the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of those who do not believe (Gk.). The god of this age is Satan. Those who are blinded or veiled think that they do not worship anything. Actually, their god is Satan. Atheists worship Satan without knowing what they are doing. All people today, whether primitive or highly cultured, have been blinded by the god of this age. Consider all those you see on the street or in the supermarkets. How few of them know God! This is true even among a vast number of those who go to today's chapels, cathedrals, and denominational buildings. There is little revelation of the Son of God, and there is veil upon veil to keep people from knowing Christ. In their blindness, many condemn those who have seen the vision of the living Person of the Son of God.

THE NEED TO DROP OUR CONCEPTS

If we would receive the revelation of the Son of God, we

need to drop out concepts. Every concept, whether spiritual or carnal, is a veil. I have spent many years groping in my search to learn how to have revelation. Eventually I discovered that to have revelation we need to drop our concepts.

God today is shining everywhere. This age of grace is an age of light. God is shining, and the Bible is shining also. The Bible is full of light, and it has been printed in hundreds of languages. Moreover, the all-inclusive Spirit moving on earth is full of grace. But although the Bible is shining and the Spirit is moving, many still do not receive revelation. The reason is that they hold to certain concepts and are veiled by these concepts. As you contact people from various nationalities, you will find that all of them are strong in their concepts. This is also true among us in the Lord's recovery. On the one hand, I worship the Lord for all the growth and improvement among us. On the other hand, I realize that many veils still remain. These veils are the concepts that blind us.

With respect to receiving revelation, there is no problem on God's side. On His side everything is ready. The problem is altogether on our side. We need to drop the veils, that is, to drop our concepts. It is important for us to pray, "Lord, help me to drop everything that is a veil." If you hold on to your concepts while reading the Bible, you will be like the ancient Jews who had a veil on their mind whenever the Scriptures were read. But if you drop your concepts as your read the Word, you will read it with an unveiled face. Then the light will shine into you subjectively.

I was born into Christianity, and from childhood I heard about Christ. However, I was not saved until I was nineteen years old. I knew about Jesus, and I was in favor of Christianity. But I was not saved until the Son of God was revealed in me. One day, when I was nineteen, God shined into me, and I received a revelation of the Lord Jesus. At that time I began to have direct personal contact with Him and to know Him as a living Person. I touched

Him, and I was touched by Him. Between Him and me there was a living transaction, a living contact. We all need a direct, personal, living contact with the living Person of the Son of God.

TURNING OUR HEARTS TO THE LORD

Today many of us earnestly desire to live Christ. But to live Christ we need revelation. As we have pointed out again and again, the only way revelation can come to us is if we drop our concepts. We also need to pray, "Lord, I trust in You to defeat the god of this age. Apart from You, I do not worship anything. Lord, I turn my heart to You, and I drop all my concepts. I don't want to worship anyone other than You." If you pray in this way, the light will shine, and you will receive revelation. If you drop your concepts and turn your heart to the Lord, the veils will be taken away, and the god of this age will have no ground in your being.

The light is here, and it is shining. Our problem is that our heart is turned away to many other things, and therefore we are covered with layer upon layer of veils. This enables the god of this age to have ground in us. As a result, our thoughts are darkened, blinded, and hardened, and we cannot receive revelation, even though we may read the Bible and listen to messages. Oh, how we need revelation!

The Lord was very merciful to Saul of Tarsus. First, He knocked him down and then caused him to drop all the veils. Before the Lord appeared to him on the way to Damascus, Saul was altogether veiled. According to his opinion, Jesus the Nazarene had been terminated. He had been crucified and buried, and was in the tomb. But when Saul was on the way to Damascus, the Lord Jesus appeared to him from the heavens, and spontaneously Saul called, "Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord Jesus replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." The Lord's answer took away a thick veil. The light of the gospel of the glory of Christ shined into Saul of Tarsus, and he saw the glory of God in the face of Christ.

If we would see such a revelation of the living Person, we must begin by dropping our veils, our concepts. Second, we need to turn our hearts to the Lord. According to 2 Corinthians 3:16, when the heart turns to the Lord, the veil will be taken away. The more you turn your heart to the Lord, the less ground the god of this age will have in your life and in your being. Then you will be under the shining of the heavenly light, and you will receive the revelation of the living Person.

I can testify that in the early years of my Christian life, I had little revelation. I was veiled. But one day the veils began to drop, and the light shined into me. Since that time, the light has been coming again and again. For this reason, it is not difficult for me to receive revelation. Let us all drop the veils and, by His mercy and grace, turn our hearts to Him.

GOD'S PLEASURE

In 1:15 and 16 Paul says that it pleased God to reveal His Son in him. This indicates that to reveal the Son of God brings pleasure to God. Nothing is more pleasing to God than the unveiling, the revelation, of the living Person of the Son of God.

AN INWARD REVELATION

Furthermore, this revelation is an inward revelation. Although I have never seen the Lord Jesus outwardly in a physical way, I have seen Him inwardly. I have received an inward revelation of this living Person. This inward revelation is in our spirit through our enlightened mind. Because the mind plays an important part, it is crucial that we drop our concepts, all of which are in the mind. If we hold on to concepts in our mind, the revelation may be in our spirit, but it will not be able to penetrate our veiled mentality. We need to drop our concepts so that our mind may be released and become transparent. Then when the Spirit shines in our spirit, this shining will come into our

transparent mind. Then we shall receive an inward revelation.

A SUBJECTIVE REVELATION

This inward revelation of Christ is subjective. It is not objective like the so-called visions in the Pentecostal movement. I have been in meetings where people claimed to see a bright light in a certain corner of the room. The revelation about which we are speaking in this message is nothing of such an outward nature. Rather, it is altogether subjective.

IN OUR SPIRIT BY THE SPIRIT

This subjective revelation is given in our spirit by the Spirit (Eph. 1:17; 3:5). Our spirit and the Spirit of God both are realities. We cannot deny that within us we have a human spirit. Neither can we deny that the divine Spirit is in our spirit. In order to receive the revelation of the Son of God, we must first drop our concepts. Second, we must turn our hearts to the Lord and worship nothing other than Him. Third, we must take care of the depths of our being, that is, of our spirit. It is in our spirit that the Spirit is shining, revealing Christ in us and speaking to us concerning Christ. It is also helpful to pray-read the Word, especially verses from the Epistles of Paul. This will enable us to see Christ and to receive a subjective revelation of this living Person.

The subjective revelation about which we are speaking here is concerned only with the living Person of the Son of God. For the sake of receiving such a revelation, may we all learn to drop our concepts, to turn our heart to the Lord, to pay attention to our spirit, and to pray over verses from the writings of Paul. Then the Spirit will enlighten us and speak to us of Christ. As a result, we shall receive a subjective revelation of the Son of God.

MAKING US A NEW CREATION

The more revelation we receive of the Son of God, the

more He will live in us. The more He lives in us, the more He will become to us the unique and central blessing of the gospel which God promised to Abraham. This means that He will be to us the all-inclusive land realized as the all-inclusive, processed, life-giving Spirit. This should not simply be a doctrine to us. If we drop our concepts, turn our heart to the Lord, pay attention to the spirit, and spend time in the Word, Christ will be revealed in us, He will live in us, and He will be formed in us. Day by day, He will become more of an enjoyment to us. As a result, this living Person will make us a new creation in a practical way. The book of Galatians eventually brings us to the new creation by way of the inward revelation of the living Person of the Son of God.

Let us daily practice receiving revelation by dropping our concepts and turning our hearts to the Lord. The way to receive an inward, subjective, spiritual revelation is always to drop our concepts, to turn our heart to the Lord, and to tell the Lord that we hold on to nothing besides Him and that our heart is wholly for Him. Then if we pay attention to our spirit and spend time in the Word, we shall receive revelation. The living Person will live in us and be formed in us. We shall enjoy Him more and more, and He will make us a new creation.

Paul's burden in writing the book of Galatians, and our need today, is that we be brought into a state where we are full of the revelation of the Son of God and thereby become a new creation with Christ living in us, being formed in us, and being enjoyed by us continually as the all-inclusive Spirit.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE FIVE

THE FORMATION OF PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP

Scripture Reading: Gal. 1:15-24

In 1:15-24 we see the formation of Paul's apostleship. As we consider these verses, we need to see not only how Paul's apostleship was formed, but also how we can be formed into today's apostles, God's present-day sent ones. In the Life-study of Ephesians we pointed out that all the believers in Christ can be apostles, those sent by the Lord to fulfill His purpose and to carry out His plan.

We should not hold the concept that we cannot be an apostle like Paul. The apostles are examples of what all believers should be. Paul was not an extraordinary person, and he did not reach a state that no one else can attain. The concept that the apostles are unique is a Roman Catholic tradition. This tradition is related to the concept that Peter was the unique successor of Christ and therefore the first pope. What a devilish concept! Far from being unique, Peter is an example of one who followed the Lord. In particular, he is an example to Jewish believers in Christ. Paul is a pattern especially for Gentile believers. In 1 Timothy 1:16 he says, "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." Since Paul is our pattern, none of us should say that we cannot be like him.

Although the brothers may believe that they can be today's apostles, the sisters may find it very difficult to believe that this also applies to them. As a help to the sisters, we need to point out that in God's household there are no daughters. God has only sons, not daughters. Christ, the firstborn Son of God, has brothers, but He does

not have sisters. This indicates that, according to life, all the believers, including the sisters, are sons of God and brothers of Christ. For this reason, in his Epistles Paul addresses the brothers, but not the brothers and sisters. The sisters, of course, are included in the term brothers.

According to life, all the believers are males. However, according to love, we all are females. Christ is our Bridegroom, and we are His Bride. The relationship between the Bride and the Bridegroom is a matter of love, not a matter of life. Love is the unique requirement of married life. Therefore, we are living sons of the living God, whereas we are the loving Bride of our dear Bridegroom. How, then, would you answer this question: Are we, the believers in Christ, males or females? The proper way to answer is to reply that according to life we are males, but according to love we are females.

Paul was made an apostle not according to love, but according to life. It was as a matter of life that he was made a pattern for all the believers, the brothers and the sisters as well. This indicates that by taking Paul as our pattern, we all, brothers and sisters, can be God's sent ones today. Paul's status was that of an apostle, and ours should be the same. Hence, as we study the formation of Paul's apostleship, we are also studying the formation of our own apostleship.

All of us in the Lord's recovery need to be sent ones. At the least, a young sister can be sent by the Lord to her parents to testify to them about the Lord Jesus. Are you ready to be sent by the Lord? We all should be prepared to be sent forth by Him. Concerning this matter of apostleship, our minds need to be renewed. Therefore, as we consider the various points in this message, we need to see how we can follow Paul's pattern and be formed into apostles. All the points we shall cover are prerequisites for the formation of our apostleship.

I. SET APART BY GOD FROM HIS MOTHER'S WOMB

In 1:15 Paul says that God set him apart from his mother's womb. The Greek indicates being designated or

distinguished for a specific purpose. This setting apart took place before Paul was born.

When we read about Paul being set apart from his mother's womb, we may have the concept that this was true of him, but not of us. This was my point of view when I read these verses years ago. According to my concept, Paul had been set apart, but I had not. This concept, however, is wrong. We were chosen, selected, before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). Surely to be chosen from before the foundation of the world is more crucial than to be set apart from our mother's womb. Since you have been chosen from before the foundation of the world, do you not believe that you were also set apart from your mother's womb? Certainly you were. As we shall see, this refers to the carrying out in time of God's eternal selection.

Some teachers of the Bible have different opinions concerning the time that Paul was separated from his mother's womb. According to one school of thought, he was set apart from the time he was conceived. But according to another school, he was set apart at the time of birth. There is no need for us to split hairs concerning this. The main point here is that according to His selection we were chosen by God in eternity, before the foundation of the world. This means that we were chosen before the beginning of time, in eternity. However, there was the need for us, at a definite time, to be separated from our mother's womb. To be set apart from our mother's womb is related to the accomplishment in time of the selection God made in eternity. It was necessary for us to be born at a certain time. We thank the Lord that Saul of Tarsus was not born a hundred years before the Lord Jesus, nor six hundred years afterward. He was born at just the right time and in the right place, in the city of Tarsus. It was sovereign of the Lord that Paul was not born in Galilee, where Peter was born. Both Peter and Paul were chosen before the foundation of the world, and both were set apart at precisely the right time. According to God's timing, He caused these two of His selected ones to be conceived in their mother's womb. The same is true of us today. We were selected from before the foundation of the world.

Then God waited until the time was right for us to be born. Hence, regarding our birth God had His timing. We all were selected in eternity when Paul was selected; however, we were set apart from our mother's womb at different times. Therefore, to be set apart from our mother's womb is to have God's selection carried out in a practical way.

Do not think that Paul was set apart from his mother's womb, but that you were not. Because Paul was made a pattern, what happened to him should happen to us also. Whenever I recall my past, I worship the Lord. As I consider my youth, I sometimes weep before Him. How I thank Him that He caused me to be born at just the right time and in just the right place, more than seventy-four years ago in a small village in China. We all can say, "Lord, thank You for setting me apart from my mother's womb." I hope that we all shall have a full realization of this. We need to realize that God set us apart in order to carry out His eternal selection. This was true of Paul, and it is just as true of us today.

II. CALLED BY GOD THROUGH HIS GRACE

In 1:15 Paul also says that God called him through His grace. Paul was called to be an apostle through the grace of Christ, not through the law that came by Moses. This calling took place at the time of his conversion. We also can testify that we have been called by God. Actually, God's calling of us began with His setting us apart from our mother's womb. If we spend time to review our past, we shall see that God's calling of us began with our conception in the womb. God arranged the time and place of our birth. Then He called us. How grateful I am to the Lord that He caused me to be conceived in the womb of one who was in Christianity, although she was not saved at that time. In this way God caused me to be born into Christianity, beginning His calling of me by setting me apart from my mother's womb. Then one day, in 1925, God's calling was accomplished in a full way when I believed in the Lord Jesus. None of us should have any doubt about being called by God. Rather, let us worship Him and thank Him for His calling. Everything related to

us, such as our family and education, is according to God's sovereignty and related to His calling of us.

III. HAVING THE SON OF GOD REVEALED IN HIM

In 1:15 and 16 Paul says that God was pleased to reveal His Son in him. The Son of God was unveiled to Paul and shown to him. This means that he received a vision of the living Person of the Son of God. Since Paul is a pattern of the believers and the Son of God was revealed in him, we also should have Christ revealed in us. When the Son of God is revealed in us, something divine is added to us. Selection and calling do not cause anything to be added into us. But the revelation of the Son of God in us causes divinity to be added to our humanity. God Himself is added into our being to become our life. He who has the Son has life (1 John 5:12). Hence, to have the Son of God revealed in us means to have God added to us to become our life.

IV. NOT CONFERRING WITH FLESH AND BLOOD

After the Son of God was revealed in Paul, he "did not confer with flesh and blood." This means that he did not confer with man, who is made up of flesh and blood. This confirms the fact that Paul did not receive the gospel from man (1:12).

After we believed in the Lord Jesus, many of us immediately conferred with others. If we recall our experience, we shall realize that much of this was of no avail. As soon as I was saved, I turned to various people for help. However, I was only frustrated by them and cooled down. Some of you may have spoken to certain preachers or ministers, only to find that you were discouraged by your contact with them.

When young believers contacted me thirty years ago, I had a great deal to say. But it is much different today. Now when others contact me, I simply tell them to pray and to seek the Lord, to bring everything to Him for His

leading. I do not want to be the flesh and blood with which others confer. We should neither confer with flesh and blood, nor should we be the flesh and blood with whom others confer. Let us leave others and their situation to the Lord.

V. NOT GOING UP TO JERUSALEM TO THOSE WHO WERE APOSTLES BEFORE HIM

Paul opens verse 17 with the words, "Neither did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me." We all have made mistakes in this regard. We have gone to a place we consider today's Jerusalem seeking to confer with certain leaders. To go to some Jerusalem to those who were apostles before us is something of tradition and of religion. Actually, it is to confer with flesh and blood.

Some of the leading ones may be concerned that such a word will cause the saints not to seek the proper fellowship. Furthermore, they may think that this will ruin the leadership. But would it not be wonderful for all the saints to be trained not to confer with flesh and blood? How good it would be if we all brought ourselves with our needs and problems directly to the Lord! If we would be today's apostles, we should follow Paul's pattern in not going up to Jerusalem to confer with others.

VI. GOING AWAY TO ARABIA AWAY FROM OTHER CHRISTIANS AND RETURNING TO DAMASCUS

In verse 17 Paul says that he "went away to Arabia." It is difficult to trace where in Arabia Paul went and how long he stayed there after his conversion. However, it must have been a place away from other Christians, and the time of his stay there must not have been short. His purpose in saying this was to testify that he did not receive the gospel from man. In Arabia he must have received some revelation concerning the gospel directly from the Lord.

By going to Arabia, Paul went to a place apart from both Jewish culture and Christian influence. According to

traditional understanding, Paul stayed in Arabia for three years. Actually, we do not know how long he remained there. We simply know that for a period of time he went apart from Jewish religion and Christian influence. During his stay in Arabia, he probably compared his experience with the Old Testament, which he had come to know so well through the instruction of Gamaliel. I believe that in Arabia Paul had a quiet, sober time of checking his experience with the Old Testament Scriptures. No doubt, he also spent much time in prayer.

Here we see another principle for us to follow. After we have a certain amount of experience directly from the Lord, we need to withdraw from every kind of religious influence to quietly and soberly check our experiences with the Bible. This will be a great help to us. I believe that as Paul was comparing his experience with Scripture, much light and revelation came to him.

In verse 17 Paul also says that he "again returned to Damascus."

VII. AFTER THREE YEARS GOING UP TO JERUSALEM TO SEE CEPHAS AND JAMES

In verses 18 and 19 Paul goes on to say, "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and I remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the brother of the Lord." Three years after his return to Damascus, Paul went up to Jerusalem. I believe that during these years he also spent much time in prayer and in checking his experience with the Old Testament.

Although Paul did not confer with flesh and blood, at a certain time he did go up to Jerusalem. To confer with flesh and blood is wrong. However, to isolate ourselves from other members of the Body of Christ is also wrong. After receiving revelation, at the proper time we need to contact those members of the Lord's Body who came to know the Lord ahead of us. There is the need for this kind of fellowship.

VIII. GOING TO SYRIA AND CILICIA OF THE GENTILE WORLD

In verse 21 Paul continues, "Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia." Arabia, Syria, and Cilicia were all regions of the Gentile world. By mentioning his journeying to all these places, Paul testifies that the revelation he received concerning the gospel was not from any men, any Christians, most of whom at that time were in Judea (v. 22). I believe that in the regions of Syria and Cilicia Paul spent more time praying and considering the Scriptures. Probably he also received further revelation.

IX. UNKNOWN BY FACE TO THE CHURCHES OF JUDEA

Verse 22 says, "Yet I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which are in Christ." To say this is also to strengthen the point that Paul did not receive the gospel from any who were believers in Christ before him. Hardly any of the saints in Judea had seen him.

X. THE CHURCHES IN JUDEA HEARING THAT THE FORMER PERSECUTOR NOW PREACHES THE FAITH WHICH ONCE HE RAVAGED

In verses 23 and 24 Paul concludes, "But they only heard that he who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which formerly he ravaged. And they glorified God in me." The churches, including all the believers in Christ in Judea, only heard the news of Paul's conversion and glorified God in him. They had nothing to do with his receiving of the revelation concerning the gospel.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE SIX

PAUL'S FAITHFULNESS AND PETER'S UNFAITHFULNESS TO THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL

Scripture Reading: Gal. 2:1-14

In the foregoing messages we have pointed out that Paul was a pattern for the believers, especially for Gentile believers. In particular, the formation of Paul's apostleship is a pattern for the formation of our apostleship today. In this message we come to 2:1-14. In these verses not only do we have a record of how Paul kept the truth; we have a pattern by which we may learn of Paul how we also may keep the truth. Let us firstly consider Paul's faithfulness to the truth of the gospel. Then we shall consider Peter's unfaithfulness.

I. PAUL'S FAITHFULNESS

In Galatians we see that Paul was faithful, honest, frank, and bold. At the same time, he also displayed a spirit of meekness. He refers to such a spirit in 6:1, where he says that those who are spiritual should restore the one overtaken in an offense in a spirit of meekness. In writing this Epistle, Paul was endeavoring to restore the Galatian believers who had been overtaken by their weakness. No doubt, in their subtlety the Judaizers had taken advantage of the weakness of the Galatian believers. Therefore, Paul exercised a spirit of meekness in order to restore the ones who had been overtaken. On the one hand, he was bold; on the other hand, he was meek in spirit. Regarding this, we all need to learn of Paul.

Throughout the years, both in the Far East and in the West, I have learned that much that passes for meekness

is actually the playing of politics. Paul certainly was not meek in this way. For example, in 2:4 he speaks of "false brothers, brought in secretly, who stole in to spy out our freedom." In making such a statement, Paul surely was not political. In his choice of terms he was bold and frank.

Those who take the lead in the churches must learn to be honest, faithful, frank, and bold, yet all of this with meekness. We should never play politics. However, if we are short of grace and lack the wisdom to handle a particular situation, we may need to be silent. But we must never be political.

In dealing with the problem in Galatia, Paul faced a situation which was serious and very touchy. In 4:20 he said that he was perplexed about the Galatians. He was puzzled, not knowing how to deal with these distracted believers. But even though Paul was puzzled, he did not play politics. On the contrary, he was still frank, honest, and bold.

Playing politics is a form of lying. In the eyes of God, politics is more evil than an outright lie. This is the reason that the international political situation is so evil, so deplorable, in God's sight. Many diplomats and ambassadors are experts at lying in a subtle way. Some have even been trained to behave in such a manner. The church is altogether another realm, another kingdom. In this realm, the realm of the kingdom of the heavens, there should not be any lying; neither should there be any playing of politics. In John 8:44 the Lord Jesus said that the Devil, Satan, is the father of lies. Since playing politics is even worse than lying, it must also issue from the devilish father of lies. Because the playing of politics is so evil and devilish, negotiations can never bring peace among the nations. How can there be peace among nations when the representatives of those nations lie and play politics? In the church, the earthly embassy of the heavenly kingdom, there should be no playing of politics.

Paul, a good example of a heavenly ambassador, was not political in dealing with the Galatians. He spoke the

truth in a frank way. You may feel that Paul was extreme in his frankness. Who else would use such a term as "false brothers"? Would you dare to call someone a false brother? Would you write a letter in which you speak of false brothers who have stolen in to spy out our freedom? Probably none of us would dare to be as frank as Paul was. Furthermore, in 3:1 he addressed the believers as "foolish Galatians." How bold, honest, and genuine Paul was! The Galatian believers certainly were foolish to turn from Christ to the law. They surely were foolish in following the Judaizers. Therefore, Paul addressed them in a bold and frank manner. Let us learn from him to be faithful and bold and not to play politics. If we lack grace or the wisdom, we may be quiet. But if we speak regarding a particular situation, we should not be political.

A. Going Up to Jerusalem according to Revelation

In 2:1 and 2 Paul said, "Then after a period of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus with me also. And I went up according to revelation." As recorded in Acts 15, this happened after a number of churches had been raised up in the Gentile world by Paul's preaching (see Acts 13 and 14). This also indicates that Paul's preaching of the gospel to raise up the Gentile churches had nothing to do with the believers in Jerusalem and Judea.

In 1:18 Paul speaks of going up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas. In 2:1 and 2 we see that after a period of fourteen years, he went up to Jerusalem again, according to revelation. Not only Paul's gospel but also his going up to Jerusalem was according to the Lord's revelation, not according to any organization or system. His moves and activity were according to the Lord's instant leading. This again indicates that his preaching of the gospel was not according to man's teaching, but according to the Lord's direct revelation.

From Paul's experience of going up to Jerusalem after fourteen years according to revelation, we learn that it is

often more difficult not to go to a certain place than it is to go there. For example, it is easy for me to make the decision to fly to London. But to refrain from doing so for fourteen years may not be easy. This requires that I be restricted. Because Paul was restricted, he did not go to Jerusalem apart from revelation. However, at a certain time, according to revelation, he went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus.

Paul's visit to Jerusalem refers to the time of Acts 15. The Judaizers had caused a great deal of trouble by telling the Gentile believers that they had to be circumcised in order to be saved. They were making circumcision a condition of God's eternal salvation. This issue was extremely serious. According to revelation, Paul went up to Jerusalem to deal with the source of the problem. Paul did not go to Jerusalem to receive revelation or learn some new teachings. Rather, he went there according to revelation to deal with the source of a serious problem.

In this matter Paul also is a pattern for us. We should learn from his example not to go anywhere or to take any action in a light way. On the contrary, we must be restricted by the Spirit in our spirit. Whenever we go to a certain place, we should move according to revelation.

B. Privately Laying the Gospel Which He Preached before Those of Reputation

In 2:2 Paul also says, "I laid before them the gospel which I proclaim among the nations, but privately to those of reputation, lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain." In doing this, Paul also was restricted. If we were going up to Jerusalem in that situation, we probably would have gone up with a great deal of fanfare. Perhaps we would have sent out advertisements telling people that the apostle to the Gentile world was coming. This is the way practiced in today's Christianity. Announcement of the coming of a well-known preacher or evangelist is made in advance in order to assure a large crowd. Paul, in

contrast to the way of today's Christianity, presented his gospel privately to certain ones. This indicates that he went up to Jerusalem privately with no intention of speaking before a large congregation. He simply wanted to contact the leading ones, the apostles and elders. This is according to the record of Acts 15, which corresponds to the account in Galatians 2.

C. Not Even Titus Compelled to Be Circumcised

In verse 3 Paul goes on to say, "But not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised." This indicates that Paul in his move for the Lord's testimony did not care for the observance of the law. Paul deliberately refused to have Titus circumcised. Paul's purpose was to keep the truth. Since in Christ circumcision is over, to circumcise a believer would cause the truth to be blurred. Therefore, Paul did not compel Titus to be circumcised.

Judaism was built upon the God-given law with three pillars: circumcision, the Sabbath, and the holy diet. All three were ordained by God (Gen. 17:9-14; Exo. 20:8-11; Lev. 11) as shadows of things to come (Col. 2:16-17). Circumcision was a shadow of the crucifixion of Christ in putting off the flesh as signified in baptism (Col. 2:11). The Sabbath was a type of Christ as the rest for His people (Matt. 11:28-30). The holy diet symbolized the distinction between persons called clean and unclean, those whom God's holy people should contact and those they should not contact (Acts 10:11-16, 34-35). Since Christ has come, all the shadows must be over. Hence, the observance of the Sabbath was abolished by the Lord Jesus in His ministry (Matt. 12:1-12), the holy diet was annulled by the Holy Spirit in Peter's ministry (Acts 10:9-20), and circumcision was counted as nothing in the revelation received by Paul in his ministry (Gal. 5:6; 6:15). Furthermore, the law, the base of Judaism, has been terminated and replaced by Christ (Rom. 10:4; Gal. 2:16). Thus, the entire Judaism is gone.

D. Not Yielding in Subjection to the False Brothers

In verses 4 and 5 Paul continues, "And it was because of the false brothers, brought in secretly, who stole in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us into slavery; to whom we yielded in subjection not even for an hour." The false brothers were the Judaizers who perverted the gospel of Christ by smuggling the observances of the law into the church and who troubled the genuine believers in Christ (1:7). The freedom Paul speaks of here is freedom from the bondage of the law. Slavery here refers to slavery under the law.

The false brothers to whom Paul refused to be subject were spreading the concept that believers had to be circumcised in order to be saved. Paul stood against this and did not yield even for an hour. He would not be subject to those who sought to damage our freedom in Christ and to bring us into slavery. To be free in Christ is to enjoy liberation from the bondage of the law with its requirement of circumcision. All the believers are now free from obligation to the law, especially from the obligation to be circumcised. In order to maintain this freedom, Paul refused to have Titus circumcised or to yield in subjection to the Judaizers.

E. Keeping the Truth of the Gospel

Paul refused to yield in subjection to the false brothers so that the truth of the gospel might remain with the believers. All that Paul did, he did on behalf of the believers so that, for their sake, the truth would remain clear.

F. Receiving Nothing from Those of Reputation

In verse 6 Paul says, "But from those who were of reputation as being somewhat (whatever they were, it means nothing to me; God does not accept man's person), for to me those who were of reputation imparted nothing." Here we see that Paul did not receive anything from those

of reputation. Peter, John, and James did not have anything to teach Paul. Rather, Paul had much to teach them. More of the New Testament was written by Paul than by anyone else. In his second Epistle, Peter even admitted that in Paul's writings "are some things hard to be understood" (2 Pet. 3:16).

We have pointed out that in Paul's Epistles a number of great items are covered that are not found elsewhere. For example, Paul speaks of the new man, a matter not even hinted at in the Gospels. Furthermore, in his Epistles Paul presents a thorough analysis of our regenerated being. He describes our regenerated spirit, renewed heart, transformed soul, renewed mind, and the condition of our physical body. Neither Peter nor John speaks of these things in such a full way. Consider the picture Paul presents in Romans 8. What a view we have in this chapter of our regenerated being! According to this chapter, to have a regenerated being is to have divinity mingled with our humanity. This means that the element of divinity has been added to our humanity. No other New Testament writer presents this matter in the way Paul does. This indicates that Paul had a great deal to teach other believers. But although Paul knew more and had more, he was not proud.

In Jerusalem there was a lack of the proper atmosphere for Paul to present what he had within him. From a careful reading of Acts 15 we can realize that in Jerusalem there was an atmosphere of superiority. To some extent at least, the apostles there regarded themselves as superior to Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas were apostles to the uncircumcision, to the Gentiles, whereas those in Jerusalem were apostles to the circumcision. Spiritually speaking, however, Paul was superior to Peter, John, and James. The attitude of superiority that prevailed in Jerusalem was a factor that contributed to the destruction of that city in 70 A.D., about fifteen years after Paul went up to Jerusalem as recorded in Galatians 2.

Paul had seen more than Peter, James, and John had.

They had seen the Lord in the flesh and had come to know Him according to the flesh. But Paul knew Him in a spiritual way. In 2 Corinthians 5:16 Paul says, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." We should seek to know Christ not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. Because Paul knew Christ in spirit, he had seen more and had more than Peter, John, and James.

This shows us that we should not trust in age or seniority. Peter, John, and James were older than Paul and were apostles when he was still a young man persecuting the followers of the Lord Jesus. But after his conversion, Paul came to see more of Christ and of God's economy than anyone else. The book of Romans, for instance, indicates the depth of Paul's knowledge. Paul certainly had a great deal to teach those in Jerusalem. But the atmosphere was not right for him to do so. Therefore, he did not teach them anything; nevertheless, he did not receive anything from those of reputation.

G. Having Been Entrusted with the Gospel of the Uncircumcision

According to verse 7, those in Jerusalem realized that Paul had been "entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with that of the circumcision." It was clear that the Lord had entrusted to Paul the gospel of the uncircumcision. Although concerning this Paul was frank, honest, faithful, and bold, he was not proud. Rather, he simply realized that the One who worked in Peter for the apostleship of the circumcision worked also in him for the nations, for the uncircumcision.

In verse 9 Paul goes on to say, "And perceiving the grace given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and to Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we should go to the nations, and they to the circumcision." In the listing of the

apostles, Peter was mentioned first (Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13). However, here James is mentioned first. This indicates that the foremost leading one in the church at this time was not Peter, but James the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1:19). This is confirmed by Acts 15:13-21, where James, not Peter, was the authority to give the final decisive word in the conference held in Jerusalem. It must be that James came to the forefront to take the lead among the apostles because of Peter's weakness shown in not holding the truth of the gospel, as illustrated by Paul in verses 11 through 14. Hence, both in Galatians 2:12 and Acts 21:18, James was considered the representative of the church in Jerusalem and of the apostles. This is strong proof that Peter was not always the foremost leader of the church. This also implies that leadership in the church is not organizational and perpetual, but it is spiritual and fluctuates according to the spiritual condition of the leading ones. It strongly refutes the assertion of Catholicism that Peter was the only successor of Christ in the administration of the church.

H. Opposing Peter to His Face

Because Paul was honest, faithful, frank, and bold, he opposed Peter to his face when Peter was not faithful to the truth of the gospel. In 2:11 Paul says, "But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he was to be condemned." As we shall see, Peter was not faithful to the vision he had received concerning the Gentiles. When he was in Antioch, he not only played politics, but also acted in a hypocritical manner. For this reason, Paul opposed him.

II. THE UNFAITHFULNESS OF PETER

In 2:11-14 Peter's unfaithfulness to the truth of the gospel is exposed. In referring to this, we are not siding with Paul against Peter; we are simply speaking the facts.

A. Having Eaten with Those of the Uncircumcision

When I first read these verses, I was shocked. I could hardly believe what I was reading. But since these verses

were written by Paul, they must be true. I found it hard to believe that one who had been with the Lord Jesus for three and a half years and who had seen the vision in Acts 10 regarding the abolition of the Levitical diet could practice such hypocrisy. Nevertheless, in Antioch Peter did just this. No wonder he lost his place of leadership. He was disqualified because he was not faithful to the vision he had seen. He did not keep the truth according to the vision he had received from the Lord.

In 2:12 we see that before certain ones came from James, Peter ate with those of the nations. This was against the customary practice of the Jews in keeping the observances of their law. If eating with those of the nations was wrong, Peter should not have done it in the first place. Since he ate with them, he indicated that it was proper to do so.

B. Shrinking Back and Separating Himself, Fearing Those of the Circumcision

When certain ones came from James, Peter "shrank back and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision." The phrase "from James" means from the church in Jerusalem. This is another indication that at that time James, not Peter, was the first among the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. The fact that Peter shrank back proves that he was very weak in the pure Christian faith. He had received an exceedingly clear vision from the heavens concerning fellowship with the Gentiles, and he took the lead to put that vision into practice in Acts 10. What weakness and backsliding to shrink from eating with Gentile believers out of fear of those of the circumcision! No wonder he lost the leadership among the apostles.

In verse 12 Paul specifically points out that Peter

feared those of the circumcision. This indicates that in Jerusalem there was an atmosphere that strongly favored the observance of circumcision. Probably all the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, including Peter, were still in favor of this practice.

C. The Rest of the Jews Joining Him in Hypocrisy

In verse 13 Paul says, "And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy." When the leading one backslid, the rest easily followed. It is almost incredible that Peter, the leading apostle, practiced hypocrisy in relation to the truth of the gospel.

At least twice in the New Testament we are told that Peter took the lead in a negative way and that others followed him. In John 21 Peter led the way to go fishing. In this he was followed by some of the other disciples. Here in Galatians 2 Peter practiced hypocrisy, and others followed him.

D. Barnabas Carried Away by Their Hypocrisy

Paul points out that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. Barnabas participated in Paul's first journey to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and to raise up the Gentile churches. Even one who had so much fellowship with the Gentile believers was carried away by Peter's hypocrisy. What a negative influence Peter exerted upon others! Surely he deserved to lose his leadership.

Although there was a prevailing atmosphere in favor of circumcision, Peter should not have been subdued. The Lord had shown him an impressive vision, and he should not have forgotten it. Nevertheless, even though he did not forget the vision, he behaved in a hypocritical way with respect to eating with the Gentiles.

E. Not Walking Straightforwardly in Relationship to the Truth of the Gospel

Because Peter and the others were hypocritical, Paul

rebuked him when he "saw that they did not walk straight-forwardly in relation to the truth of the gospel" (v. 14). Peter was absolutely wrong, and Paul rebuked him to his face. He would not allow the clear truth of the gospel to be damaged. Probably Paul was the only one with the boldness to rebuke a leading apostle such as Peter. Thank the Lord for Paul's faithfulness. If he had not been faithful there at Antioch, the truth of the gospel might have been blurred.

F. Compelling Those of the Nations to Live like Jews

In front of all, Paul said to Peter, "If you, being a Jew, live like the nations and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the nations to live like Jews?" To live like the nations is to eat, live, and fellowship with the Gentiles. To live like Jews, or to Judaize (Gk.), is not to eat or have fellowship with the Gentiles.

We praise the Lord that through Paul's faithfulness the truth of the gospel was preserved. Today it is crystal clear according to the New Testament that in Christ there is no circumcision. We have been set free from slavery under the law and from the bondage of circumcision. There is no need for us to keep the law or to be circumcised. Rather, we only need faith in Christ. Because of Paul's faithfulness and boldness, this truth was preserved and has remained clear for us today. We thank the Lord for this.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE SEVEN

FREEDOM IN CHRIST VERSUS SLAVERY UNDER LAW

Scripture Reading: Gal. 2:4; 4:24-25, 28, 30-31; 3:3, 21; 2:20a; 5:1

In the book of Galatians Paul presents a number of contrasts between things that are superior and things that are inferior. In a foregoing message we pointed out the contrast between God's Son and man's religion. In this message we shall consider another contrast: freedom in Christ versus slavery under law. Christ is versus law, and freedom is versus slavery. When we come to chapter three, we shall see the contrast between the Spirit and the flesh. To touch the depths of this book, we need to keep in mind the writer's practice of making contrasts.

In 2:4 Paul says, "And it was because of the false brothers, brought in secretly, who stole in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into slavery." The King James Version renders the Greek word for slavery as bondage. Although this is not wrong, the root word in Greek means to be a slave. Hence, the thought here is not simply to be in bondage, but to be enslaved, to be held in slavery.

If we would understand the contrast between freedom in Christ and slavery under law, we need a proper definition of the terms freedom and slavery. As we read these terms in the Scriptures, we may take them for granted without having a proper and adequate understanding. In 2:4 Paul speaks of false brothers who stole in to spy out our freedom. Such strong negative terms as "false brothers," "stole in," and "spy out" should impress us with the fact that freedom in Christ is a great

matter. Otherwise, the Judaizers, the false brothers, would not have crept in to spy out this freedom.

What is this freedom in Christ? First, freedom in Christ implies liberation from obligation. Because we are free in Christ, we are no longer obligated to the law and its ordinances, practices, and regulations. Anyone who tries to keep the law makes himself a debtor to the ordinances, practices, and regulations of the law. Hence, if you try to keep the law, you will place yourself under slavery and you will serve the law as a slave. Freedom in Christ, however, liberates us from all such obligation.

Second, freedom in Christ includes satisfaction with a rich supply. If we are free outwardly but do not have anything to support us or satisfy us, this freedom is not genuine. Proper freedom is not only liberation from obligation; it is also full satisfaction because of an adequate supply and support.

Third, to be free in Christ is to enjoy rest. Those who still observe the Sabbath day do not have true rest because their efforts to keep the Sabbath place them under a heavy burden. But in Christ we have true rest.

Fourth, freedom in Christ implies the enjoyment of Christ. Because we are free in Him, we enjoy all that He is. Real freedom in Christ is the full enjoyment of the living Christ.

If we would have a proper definition of freedom in Christ, a definition that matches our experience, we need to see that such a freedom involves liberation from obligations, satisfaction through the Lord's rich supply, genuine rest, and the enjoyment of Christ. Those who have this kind of freedom are not enslaved by anything. Although Satan may sometimes put us into a difficult situation, we can still be at rest. We need not be enslaved by any situation. Instead, we can enjoy the Lord. This means that we are free in the depths of our being. This is our freedom in Christ.

As you consider this description of freedom in Christ, you will find that it corresponds to your experience with

the Lord. Our experience may differ in degree, but it does not differ in nature.

Freedom in Christ is a treasure. Satan, the subtle one, sent in the Judaizers to spy out this freedom and to deprive the Galatian believers of this treasure. He wanted to take away their liberation from obligation and their satisfaction, their rest, and their enjoyment of Christ.

Once we have a proper understanding of freedom in Christ, it is easy to understand what slavery is. It is the opposite of freedom. Slavery under law obligates us to the law with its commandments, ordinances, practices, and regulations. However, no one can fulfill the requirements of the law. Most of the Ten Commandments control people outwardly. But the commandment related to coveting exercises an inward control. We may be able to keep the other commandments, but not this one. We simply cannot escape the greediness within us. For example, we may see someone with a new pen that is better than ours. Deep within, we desire to have a pen just like it. This is covetousness.

Because we all have human shortcomings, we cannot fulfill the requirements of the law. Throughout history, only one person--the Lord Jesus--has kept the law. The requirements of the law are too heavy for us to fulfill. If we try to keep the law, we come under the yoke of the law. In Acts 15:10 Peter said, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Slavery under law is this yoke.

To be enslaved under the law also means to be without satisfaction. Under the law there is no satisfaction because there is no supply. The law makes demands, but it offers no supply to meet those demands.

Furthermore, with slavery under law it is not possible for us to be at rest. In Matthew 11:28 the Lord Jesus said, "Come to Me all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." This promise was spoken especially to those who were trying to keep the law. It refers in particular to

the labor of striving to keep the commandments of the law and religious regulations. To have rest here means to be set free from labor and burden under law and religion. In making this declaration, the Lord Jesus seemed to be saying, "Come to Me, all who are burdened under the law, and I will release you. I will set you free from the yoke of the law. Under the law, you have no rest. True rest is found in Me."

Finally, with slavery under law there is no enjoyment of Christ. Those who place themselves under obligation to the law have no satisfaction, rest, or enjoyment.

If we consider this contrast between freedom in Christ and slavery under law, we shall be full of praise to the Lord. In Christ we have been liberated from all manner of obligation. In Him we also have satisfaction, rest, and enjoyment. This freedom in Christ is versus slavery under law. Many of us can testify that we have such liberation, satisfaction, rest, and enjoyment.

Concerning New Testament truth, Galatians is a more basic book than Colossians. Colossians deals with Christian experience, but Galatians touches the basic truths of the New Testament. Galatians is even more basic than Romans. Galatians is the most basic book with respect to God's New Testament economy. This book is unique in its revelation of God's economy.

The slavery under law spoken of in Galatians is not the same as the slavery of the children of Israel under Pharaoh. These two kinds of slavery should not be confused. Egypt was satanic, whereas the law is spiritual and was given by God. Realizing this distinction will help us to be impressed with the fact that no other New Testament book presents the basic truths in the way Galatians does.

I. SLAVERY UNDER LAW

A. The Law, Typified by Hagar, Having No Position in God's Promise and Grace

We need to see something further concerning slavery under law. The law was typified by Hagar, Abraham's

concubine, who had no proper standing. This indicates that in God's promise and grace, the law has no position (4:24-25). As Abraham's wife, Sarah had the proper position in God's promise and grace. The wife could even tell Abraham to cast out the maidservant and her son. This shows that the law typified by Hagar has no position in God's promise and grace.

The Seventh-Day Adventists need to hear such a word. In obligating themselves to keep the Sabbath, they place themselves in the position of a concubine. When they do this, they have no position in God's grace.

B. The Law Unable to Give Life

In 3:21 Paul spoke like a skillful debater: "If a law was given which was able to give life, righteousness would have indeed been of the law." Because the law is composed of dead letters, it cannot give life.

Since the law is not able to give life, the law cannot produce sons. It can only produce slaves. Ishmael was not a proper son of Abraham; he was a slave. Hagar was not able to produce a son to be Abraham's heir. Because Ishmael's mother was a maidservant, Ishmael also was a slave. All those who endeavor to keep the law, such as the Seventh-Day Adventists, are today's Ishmaels brought forth by Hagar.

C. Slaves under Law Striving to Keep the Law by the Flesh

Those who strive to keep the law do so, not by the Spirit, but by their flesh. For this reason, they do not participate in God's promise and have no enjoyment of life in grace by the Spirit (3:3). Life, grace, and the Spirit have nothing to do with the keeping of the law. The law does not have life, it does not give grace, and it does not depend on the Spirit. Hence, in the keeping of the law we have no life, grace, or Spirit. Instead, we have only our striving in the flesh.

II. FREEDOM IN CHRIST

A. Christ, Being the Life-giving Spirit, Imparting Life by Grace

As we consider the matter of freedom in Christ, we need to see that Christ as the life-giving Spirit imparts life by grace. This grace is typified by Sarah, the freewoman (2:20a; 4:31). As we have pointed out a number of times, grace is God processed to be our enjoyment. In 1:15 Paul says that God called him through His grace. This indicates that when God called us, He called us by Himself as the One processed to be our enjoyment. Christ as the life-giving Spirit imparts life into us by the Triune God who has been processed to become our enjoyment.

Many Christians regard grace merely as unmerited favor. According to this concept, to receive something from the Lord that we do not deserve is to receive grace. Many Christians think that the experience of grace is especially related to receiving material blessings. This understanding of grace is far from adequate. In John 1:14 we are told that when the Word (Christ) became flesh and tabernacled among us, He was full of grace. This surely does not mean that the Word which became flesh was full of material blessings. Furthermore, in John 1:16 we are told that of His fullness we have received grace upon grace. This definitely does not refer to receiving one material blessing upon another. The grace revealed in the New Testament is the very God incarnate who comes to us to be our enjoyment.

In 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul says that he labored more than others. In this verse he also says that it was not he who labored, but the grace of God which was with him. This indicates that the grace which was with Paul was actually God Himself. Christ imparts life into our being by the Triune God processed to be our enjoyment. This is grace.

Grace is typified by Sarah, who also typifies God's promise. As we have pointed out, Hagar, the concubine,

typifies the law. When we come to chapter four, we shall see that these women are an allegory signifying two covenants that bring forth two kinds of children. The grace typified by Sarah is the means Christ uses to impart Himself into us as life. This is absolutely different from law.

B. Life, Imparted by Christ, Producing Sons Like Isaac to Inherit God's Promise

The life imparted by Christ produces sons like Isaac, sons of the freewoman, who inherit God's promise (4:28, 30-31). When we received Christ as life, we became sons of God to inherit the blessing promised by God for the fulfillment of God's purpose.

C. Sons of Promise Participating in God's Grace of Life, Enjoying Freedom of Life

As sons of promise, we participate in God's grace of life and thereby enjoy the freedom of life (5:1). This means that we have liberation from obligation, and we have satisfaction, rest, and the enjoyment of Christ. This is the freedom that is versus slavery under law.

Galatians 2:4 presents the basic contrast between freedom in Christ and slavery under law. This indicates the fact that the book of Galatians gives us a number of basic truths and principles so that we may know God's New Testament economy in a proper way. Some saints in the Lord's recovery still may not be clear about God's New Testament economy. These messages on Galatians should help all of us to know God's economy in a basic way.

It is crucial for us to understand the basic terms, truths, and principles presented in Galatians. Thus far, we have covered two basic matters. The first is God's Son versus man's religion; the second is freedom in Christ versus slavery under law. We need to know the Son of God and also man's religion and tradition. We also must know the contrast between freedom in Christ and slavery under

law. Praise the Lord for our freedom in Christ! We are not in slavery under law--we enjoy freedom in Christ. We are free from obligation, and we have satisfaction, rest, and enjoyment in Christ.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE EIGHT

THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL

Scripture Reading: Gal. 2:5b, 14a, 16, 19-20a; 3:11, 23-25; 4:2; 6:15

In 2:5 and 14 Paul speaks of the truth of the gospel. The word truth in these verses does not mean the doctrine or teaching of the gospel; it denotes the reality of the gospel. Although Galatians is a short book, it affords us a complete revelation of the reality of the gospel. This revelation, how-ever, is given not in detail, but in certain basic principles. Therefore, in this message we shall cover the truth of the gospel revealed in these basic principles.

I. MAN NOT JUSTIFIED BY WORKS OF LAW

The first aspect of the truth of the gospel is that fallen man cannot be justified by works of law. In 2:16 Paul says, "Knowing that a man is not justified by works of law." At the end of this verse Paul declares, "By works of law no flesh shall be justified." The word flesh in 2:16 means fallen man who has become flesh (Gen. 6:3). No such man will be justified by works of law. Furthermore, in 3:11 Paul goes on to say, "Now that by law no one is justified before God is evident." In these verses Paul tells us clearly that no one is justified by works of law.

The Seventh-Day Adventists insist on strict observance of the Sabbath. However, they seem to forget that by endeavoring to keep the law with respect to the Sabbath, they make themselves debtors to keep all the commandments. The New Testament says that if we keep all the commandments except one, we transgress the whole law (James 2:10). Romans 7 proves that we cannot keep all the commandments. In verse 7 Paul refers to the commandment about coveting: "I had not known coveting

except the law had said, You shall not covet." Then in verse 8 he goes on to say, "But sin, taking occasion through the commandment, wrought in me coveting of every kind." The more Paul tried to keep this commandment, the more he failed. This indicates that it is impossible for fallen man to keep all of God's commandments. How ridiculous it is to go back to the law and try to keep it! We simply do not have the ability to keep the law. As Paul says in Romans 7:14, the law is spiritual, but we are fleshly, sold under sin. Therefore, by works of law shall no flesh be justified.

II. LAW BEING THE CUSTODIAN TO KEEP GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE UNTIL CHRIST CAME

Since it is not possible for fallen man to keep the law, we may ask why the law was given. It was not God's intention in giving the law that man should keep it. When God gave the law, He knew that man would not be able to keep it. God's purpose in giving the law was to use it as a custodian to keep His people until Christ came (3:23-24; 4:2). God's intention was to use the law as a fold in which to keep His sheep.

Perhaps you are wondering why Christ did not come earlier than He did. Why did He not come at the time of Moses? If Christ had come sixteen hundred years earlier, there would have been no need for the law. Why did He not come before the law was given? The best way to answer this question is to turn to the Scriptures. Romans 3:19 and 20 say, "Now we know that whatever things the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become subject to the judgment of God; because by the works of law no flesh shall be justified before Him; for by law is knowledge of sin."

In Galatians 3:19 Paul asks, "Why then the law?" In the same verse he answers his own question: "It was added because of transgressions." The law was given to expose what man is and where man is. The best way for man to be exposed is to cause his situation to be seen in the light of God's attributes. The Ten Commandments are composed

mainly of four divine attributes: holiness, righteousness, light, and love. God is holy and righteous; He is also light and love. If you look into the Ten Commandments, you will see that they embody the divine holiness, righteousness, light, and love. For this reason, the law became God's testimony. In other words, the Ten Commandments testify that God is holy and righteous and that God is light and love. God used this testimony to expose man. As man stands before this testimony, his sinfulness is exposed.

When the law was given, the children of Israel promised to obey God's commandments (Exo. 19:8). Before the children of Israel responded in this way, the atmosphere around Mount Sinai was not threatening. But when the people declared that they would keep God's commandments, the atmosphere changed and became terrifying. God exercised His holiness, and the people were not allowed to approach further. Frightened by the manifestation of God's holiness, the people asked Moses to go to God on their behalf. This indicates that the function of the law is to expose fallen mankind.

As the law functions to expose people, it keeps them. Thus, the law was used by God as a custodian to keep His people just as a fold keeps a flock of sheep during the winter or during a storm. The time before the coming of Christ can be compared to a winter season. Hence, God used the law as a fold in which to guard the people. In their blindness the Judaizers thought that the law had been given for them to keep. They did not realize that the law was given to guard God's people in custody. Paul makes this basic principle clear in Galatians 3:23. "But before faith came we were guarded under law, being shut up unto the faith which was about to be revealed." In verse 24 he goes on to say, "So the law has become our child-conductor unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." These verses reveal clearly that the law functions as a custodian. As it exposed man's transgression, it guarded God's people until Christ came.

Now that Christ has come, the law is over. But the foolish Judaizers wanted to go back to the law and try to

keep it. They did not realize that the law has a dispensational function. When this function has been fulfilled, the law should not remain any longer. The stubborn Judaizers did not know God's purpose in giving the law. Therefore, even after Christ came, they held to the law. This is against the basic principle of God's economy.

III. LAW BEING OVER AFTER CHRIST CAME

In 3:25 Paul says, "But faith having come, we are no longer under a child-conductor." Since Christ has come, the law is over. The Seventh-Day Adventists need to learn this basic truth. Now that Christ has come, God's purpose in giving the law has been fulfilled. The law has handed God's people over to Christ. It is rebellion against God's economy to snatch the people away from Christ and lead them back to the law. We must be bold to tell the Seventh-Day Adventists that, as Christians, we must not go back to the law. The law has fulfilled its purpose.

IV. UNDER GOD'S NEW TESTAMENT ECONOMY

A. Man Justified by Faith in Christ

Under God's New Testament economy, we are not to keep the law. On the contrary, we are justified by faith in Christ (2:16). We may be so familiar with the expression "justified by faith in Christ" that we take it for granted. But what actually is faith in Christ, and what does it mean to be justified by faith in Christ? Faith in Christ denotes an organic union through believing. The proper preaching of the gospel is not the preaching of a doctrine; it is the preaching of the Person of the Son of God. The Son of God is the embodiment of the Father and is realized as the Spirit. To preach the gospel is to preach this Person. Whenever we preach the gospel, we must impress those who hear us with the living Person of the Son of God. No matter what the subject of our gospel message may be, the focal point of our preaching must be this living Person.

The faith in Christ by which believers are justified is related to their appreciation of the Person of the Son of

God. For example, in Hong Kong there are salesmen who are skillful in presenting jade and its values to people. The more they talk about jade, the more the listeners spontaneously appreciate jade. This appreciation can be compared to what we mean by faith. In our preaching of the gospel we must present Christ as the real jade. We need to present Christ as the most precious One to people. The more we describe Him and speak of His preciousness, the more something will be infused into the being of the listeners. This infusion will become their faith, and this faith will cause them to respond to our preaching. In this way they will appreciate the Person we present to them. This appreciation is their faith in Christ. Out of their appreciation for the Lord Jesus, they will want to possess Him. The Christ who has been preached to them will become in them the faith by which they believe. Faith is Christ preached into us to become our capacity to believe through our appreciation of Him.

When I was young, I heard a very precious gospel message. Although I had been in Christianity for years, I had never heard such a message. After hearing that message, my heart was captured, for some precious element had been infused into my being. I did not try to believe, but I had a spontaneous appreciation for the Lord Jesus. I was willing to give up the world in order to have Him. This is faith.

We may quote Hebrews 11:1, but still have only a doctrinal definition of faith. The genuine experiential definition of faith is that faith is the preciousness of Jesus infused into us. Through such an infusion, we spontaneously have faith in the Lord Jesus. This definition of faith matches our experience. The teaching of doctrine did not impress us with the preciousness of the Person of the Son of God. But one day we heard a living message filled with the preciousness of Christ. When this preciousness was infused into us through the preaching of the gospel, we spontaneously began to appreciate the Lord Jesus and to believe in Him. We said, "Lord Jesus, I love You. I treasure You." This is what it means to have faith in Christ.

This faith creates an organic union in which we and Christ are one. Therefore, the expression "by faith in Christ" actually denotes an organic union accomplished by believing in Christ. The term "in Christ" refers to this organic union. Before we believed in Christ, there was a great separation between us and Christ. We were we, and Christ was Christ. But through believing we were joined to Christ and became one with Him. Now we are in Christ, and Christ is in us. This is an organic union, a union in life.

This union is illustrated by the grafting of a branch of one tree into another tree. Through faith in Christ we are grafted into Christ. Through this process of spiritual grafting, two lives are grafted and become one.

Many Christians have a shallow understanding of justification by faith. How could Christ be our righteousness if we were not organically united to Him? It is by means of our organic union with Christ that God can reckon Christ as our righteousness. Because we and Christ are one, what-ever belongs to Him is ours. This is the basis upon which God counts Christ as our righteousness.

Marriage is a helpful illustration of this, although it is inadequate. Suppose a poor woman is united in marriage to a wealthy man. Through this union she participates in the wealth of her husband. In like manner, through our organic union with Christ, we share whatever Christ is and has. As soon as this union takes place, in the eyes of God Christ becomes us, and we become one with Him. Only in this way can we be justified before God.

Many Christians have a mere doctrinal understanding of justification by faith. According to their concept, Christ is the just One, the righteous One on the throne in the presence of God. When we believe in Christ, God reckons Christ to be our righteousness. This understanding of justification is very shallow. As we have pointed out, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, we need to believe in the Lord Jesus out of an appreciation of His preciousness. As Christ's preciousness is infused into us through the preaching of the gospel, we spontaneously appreciate the Lord and call on Him. This is genuine

believing. Through such a believing we and Christ become one. Therefore, God must reckon Him as our righteousness.

When we believed in the Lord Jesus, we had this kind of experience, although we did not have the terminology to explain it. When we heard the gospel, we began to sense the Lord's preciousness. This gave rise to the living faith that joined us to Christ organically. From that time onward, Christ and we became one in life and in reality. Therefore, justification by faith is not merely a matter of position. It is also an organic matter, a matter in life. The organic union with Christ is accomplished spontaneously through the living faith produced by our appreciation of Him. This is to be justified by faith in Christ.

B. Man Having Life and Living by Faith

In God's New Testament economy, man also has life by faith and lives by faith. In 3:11 Paul says, "The just by faith shall live." The word "live" here implies to have life. As a result of the organic union, we have life in us. Furthermore, we live by the faith which is our appreciation of the precious Lord Jesus. We not only have life, but we also live by this life.

C. Man Being Dead to Law That He Might Live to God

In 2:19 Paul says, "For I through law have died to law that I might live to God." It is very difficult to explain in doctrine what it means to die to the law so that we might live to God. It is most helpful to consider this matter in the light of our experience. Our Christian experience proves that as soon as our organic union with Christ took place, we had the sense that we were dead to the world, to sin, to the self, and to all the obligations of the law. At the same time, we were conscious of the fact that we were alive to God. Probably when we first realized this, we had neither the knowledge nor the terminology to explain it. Perhaps you said, "Lord Jesus, from now on I don't care for anything other than You. I don't care for my education, my work, or my future. I don't even care for my family or my

own life. Lord Jesus, I care only for You." This is to be dead to everything in order to live to God.

D. Man Having Christ Living in Him

As those who are dead to the law and alive to God, we have Christ living in us. In 2:20 Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." This also is a basic aspect of the truth of the gospel.

E. Man Being a New Creation

Another aspect of the truth of the gospel is that in Christ man is to be a new creation. Galatians 6:15 says, "For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." The new creation is the mingling of God with man. The new creation takes place when the Triune God in Christ through the Spirit is wrought into our being. This is the mingling of divinity with humanity. Living in this new creation far surpasses trying to keep the law. How foolish the Galatian believers were in going back to the law! They should remain in Christ by faith. In this union with Christ, Christ lives in us, and we become a new creation. Although we remain God's creature, we are nonetheless mingled with God the Creator. Having become one with the Creator, His life becomes our life, and our living becomes His living. This mingling produces a new creation. This is not accomplished by works of law, but by faith in Christ.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE NINE

DEAD TO LAW BUT LIVING TO GOD

Scripture Reading: Gal. 2:19-20; 3:3; 5:16, 25; Rom. 7:4, 6; 6:4, 8, 10

This message is a continuation of the foregoing message on the truth of the gospel. The crucial point in that message was the organic union with Christ which takes place spontaneously when we believe in Christ. In this message we shall go on to see that we have died to law so that we might live to God (2:19).

ORGANIC UNION

How can we die to law in order to live to God? Galatians 2:19 indicates that we have already died to law. According to your experience, have you actually died to law, or is this simply a matter of doctrine to you? Furthermore, how can we live to God? If we would answer these questions, we must know the truth, the reality, of the gospel. If we are not actually organically united with Christ but are in our-selves, then we are neither dead to law nor are we living to God. Apart from the organic union with Christ, we cannot live to God. On the contrary, we shall be alive to many things other than God.

The concept of organic union is implied in Romans 7. In this chapter Paul uses the illustration of married life. Marriage is a union of life. In this union the wife is one with the husband, and the husband is one with the wife. In Romans 7:4 Paul speaks of our being married to Christ: "So that, my brothers, you also have been made dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you might marry another, even Him Who has been raised from among the dead."

According to this verse, we have been married to the resurrected Christ. Between Him as the Bridegroom and us as the Bride, there is a wonderful union. We are one with Him in person, name, life, and existence. This shows that our Christian life is a life of organic oneness with Christ.

In Romans 11 Paul goes on to use another illustration--the grafting of a branch from one tree into another tree. In Romans 11:17-24 Paul uses the illustration of branches from a wild olive tree being grafted into a cultivated olive tree. As a result of grafting, the branches from the wild olive tree and the cultivated olive tree grow together organically. We, branches of the wild olive tree, have been grafted into Christ, the cultivated olive tree.

Some may say that the cultivated olive tree in Romans 11 refers to Israel. Although this is correct, it is also true that in the Bible the real Israel is always identified with Christ, and Christ with the real Israel. In the eyes of God, there are not two trees on earth. There is just one tree, the olive tree which includes Christ and God's chosen people. Once we were wild olive branches, but now we have been grafted into Christ. This illustration indicates that the Christian life is not an exchanged life, the exchange of a lower life for a higher one, but a grafted life, the grafting of the human life into the life of Christ. After a branch has been grafted into another tree, it no longer lives by itself. On the contrary, it lives by the tree into which it has been grafted.

CUTTING AND JOINING

In the matter of grafting, there are two main aspects: cutting and joining or uniting. Without the cutting, there cannot be any grafting. If the branch from one tree is to be grafted into another tree, the branch must firstly be cut. After the cutting occurs, the joining or union takes place. This union is organic. Therefore, in grafting we have the cutting, the joining, and the organic union. The cutting corresponds to the death of Christ, and the uniting, to the

resurrection of Christ. In the death of Christ our old life was cut off, and in Christ's resurrection we were united to Him for further growth. The experience of the death of Christ causes us to die to the law, whereas resurrection enables us to live to God. Hence, to be dead to the law and alive to God implies the death and resurrection of Christ. Only by being grafted into Christ can we be one with Him in His death and resurrection.

In ourselves it is not possible for us to die to law or live to God. However, when the preciousness of the Lord Jesus was infused into us and we began to appreciate Him, we were grafted into Him. On the one hand, we were cut; on the other hand, we were joined to Christ in His resurrection life. After this union took place, we were organically united with Christ. Now we should simply live in this organic union. On the negative side, we have been cut in Christ's death; on the positive side, we have been united to Christ in His resurrection. In this cutting we died not only to the law, but to everything other than God. According to Galatians 6, we are dead to the world, particularly to the religious world, through the crucifixion of Christ (vv. 13-14). By the all-inclusive cutting of Christ's all-inclusive death on the cross, we are dead to everything other than God. Because we have been grafted into Christ, His experience has become our history. When He died on the cross, we died in Him. When He was crucified, we were cut off from the wild olive tree. This means that we were cut off from the self, the flesh, the world, religion, and the law with its ordinances. Furthermore, because we have been grafted into Christ, His resurrection has also become our history. Therefore, we can strongly declare that with Christ we have been crucified, buried, and resurrected. What a wonderful history we have!

Having been cut off from everything other than God, we are dead to religion, including Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism. One aspect of our history includes the crucifixion by which we have been cut off from everything other than God. But the other aspect of this history

includes the resurrection in which we have been united to the Triune God. In this union, we are absolutely one with the Triune God.

It is crucial that we all see this vision. However, few Christians have seen it. If we see the vision of this organic union, our living will be changed. We shall realize that we have been cut off from the old source and united to the living One.

BY FAITH IN CHRIST

It is by faith in Christ that we enter into such an organic union with Him. We have pointed out that faith is the appreciation of Jesus. This appreciation is implied even in Galatians 2:20. In this verse we see that we have been crucified with Christ. This refers to one aspect of our history. We also see that Christ lives in us and that the life that we now live in the flesh we live in the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. It is significant that in this verse Paul specifically refers to the Son of God as the One "who loved me." If we do not have any consciousness of Christ's love for us, we shall not be able to have faith in Him. Living faith comes from our sense of His love. This indicates that the faith by which we believe in Him is related to our appreciation of His loveliness. As we sense His preciousness, spontaneously an appreciation for Him wells up within us. This appreciation is our faith. When Paul referred to the Son of God as the One who "loved me and gave Himself for me," he was filled with appreciation for the Lord Jesus. This appreciation is the very faith about which he speaks in this verse. The life he lived in the flesh he lived in this faith, the faith of the Son of God.

Whenever we say from the depths of our heart, "Lord Jesus, I love You," our faith is strengthened. Our organic union with Christ is strengthened also. Furthermore, we sense that we have been cut away from sin, the world, the flesh, and religion. Some who have seen the light concerning the church have not been willing to give up the

denominations. But one day they told the Lord how much they loved Him. Spontaneously they had the sense within that they should give up their association with the denominations. Because their organic union with Christ was strengthened, they experienced more cutting. The more we say, "Lord Jesus, I love You," the more we sense that we have been cut off from everything other than Christ.

As we tell the Lord Jesus that we love Him, we experience the operation of genuine faith that is implied in our appreciation of Him. By this faith we realize our union with Christ. In this union we realize that His history is our history; with Christ we have been crucified, buried, and resurrected. We are dead to everything other than God, and we are living to God.

How foolish the Galatians were in turning from the Lord to the law! Did they not realize that they had been cut off from the law and joined to the living God? Through the organic union we are released from slavery under law. In this union we enjoy the freedom that is ours in Christ.

LIVING TO OUR OWN LAWS

In your experience do you know that you are dead to law and alive to God? I do not have much assurance that many Christians realize this. Few Christians are actually living to God. For the most part, they are still living to something other than God, especially to their own kind of law. Instead of caring for God, we may care for our type of law. Different persons have different laws. The young people have their law, and the older ones have their law. This is the reason that the older ones unconsciously condemn the young ones. This condemnation comes from their law. Instead of living to God, we live to our kind of law. We have been cut off from the Mosaic law, but in our experience we have not been cut off from our own law. The fact that we still have our own laws indicates that our love for the Lord is not adequate. We are still short in our appreciation of Him. This lack weakens our faith. However,

when our love for the Lord Jesus increases, our condemnation of others will decrease. If the older saints have a greater appreciation of the Lord, their condemnation of the young people will be swallowed up.

Just as the older saints have the tendency to condemn the young ones, the young ones may not appreciate the older ones. Suppose the young saints and the older saints come together for a prayer meeting. It will be difficult for them to work together. Either the older ones will be prevailing and dominating, or the younger ones will. The reason for this problem is that the older ones have their law and the younger ones have theirs.

It is easy for us to proclaim in a doctrinal way that we have died to law and that we are now living to God. Our practical experience, however, may be quite different. We may not have died to certain things, and we may not be living to God. Therefore, we need to turn to the Lord and receive more infusion from Him. As a result, we shall have a greater love and appreciation for Him. This will strengthen our faith, which will then operate in us to strengthen our union with Christ. As our organic union with Him is strengthened, we shall experience more cutting. If we all have this experience, in the meetings we shall no longer have the consciousness of the difference between the young ones and the old ones. Instead, we all shall realize that we have been cut away from everything other than the Triune God. Then in the prayer meetings we shall function, not conscious of our age, but in the organic union in which we are truly dead to law and living to God.

In this message I am concerned with experience, not with passing on mere knowledge. If we condemn others, we are deficient in our love for the Lord. Instead of living to God, we live to our own law. Those who do not fulfill the requirements of our law we condemn. However, if our appreciation of the Lord is adequate, the operating faith will work to strengthen our union with Christ, and we shall experience more cutting. Then in reality we shall have no law. We shall truly be dead to law and alive to God.

LIVING IN THE ORGANIC UNION

In 2:19 Paul says, "For I through law have died to law that I might live to God." The law requires me, a sinner, to die, and according to that requirement Christ died for me and with me. Hence, I have died in Christ and with Christ through the law. Therefore, the obligation under the law, the relationship to the law, has been terminated. To live to God means to be obligated to God in the divine life. In Christ's death we are through with the law, and in His resurrection we are responsible to God in the resurrection life.

We have become dead to the law so that we may live to God. As long as we still hold to any kind of law, whether the Mosaic law or our self-made law, we cannot live to God. However, when we are cut off from the law by means of the organic union with Christ, we spontaneously live to God.

To be dead to law means that we have been discharged from the law in which we were held. Romans 7:6 says, "But now we are discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held." Having been liberated from obligation to the law, we may now walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). However, walking in newness of life depends upon the cutting we experience in the organic union with Christ. The more we experience the cutting, the more we live to God and walk in newness of life.

Because we have died to law, we are no longer obligated to keep the law by the striving of the flesh (Gal. 3:3). Whenever we have a certain self-made law, we always strive to keep it by the strength of the flesh, not by the Spirit.

To be living unto God is to be obligated to God in the divine life, to be responsible to God in the resurrection life. In the organic union with Christ, we experience resurrection life. In this resurrection life we are held to God spontaneously and are obligated to Him. This also depends on the organic union.

Because we have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer we who live, but Christ lives in us. We no longer live

in the old man, the natural man. Rather, Christ lives in us. Then in resurrection we live in the faith of the Son of God. To live in the faith of the Son of God means to live in the organic union with the Son of God which comes through our believing in Him.

We live to God with Christ (Rom. 6:8, 10) and through the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25). This is the enjoyment of the processed Triune God in our experience. This experience depends on our appreciation of the loveliness and preciousness of the Lord Jesus.

PRESENTING CHRIST IN HIS LOVELINESS

In principle, in preaching the gospel we should be like the top salesmen, who are able to present something precious in a way that others will appreciate it. We need the proper salesmanship. The Lord Jesus is infinitely precious, but our presentation of Him is not always adequate. Since we do not know how to present the loveliness of the Lord Jesus in a proper way, it is difficult for those who listen to our gospel preaching to have faith in Him. But if we present Him adequately, others will be infused with His preciousness, and they will spontaneously appreciate Him. This appreciation will become their faith which will operate in them to unite them with the Lord Jesus organically. Here in this organic union we are dead to the law and alive to God.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TEN

NO LONGER I, BUT CHRIST LIVING IN ME

Scripture Reading: Gal. 2:19-20; Rom. 6:6a, 8; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; John 6:57b; Phil. 1:21a

Galatians 2:20 is a familiar verse. In this verse is one of the basic items of God's New Testament economy: no longer I, but Christ living in me. According to God's economy, we should no longer live; rather, Christ should live in us. This is a basic aspect of the truth of the gospel. How-ever, most Christians do not have the proper and adequate understanding of what it means to say no longer I, but Christ living in me.

NOT AN EXCHANGED LIFE

Because this has not been made clear, some Christians, including certain Christian teachers, think that 2:20 speaks of what has been called an exchanged life. According to this concept, we are replaced by Christ. Christ comes in, and we go out. According to the concept of an exchanged life, our life is pitiful, and the life of Christ is far better. Therefore, we should exchange our life for Christ's life. As we shall see, this concept is wrong.

Galatians 2:20 does not speak of an exchanged life. Here Paul says, "No longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." Then he goes on to say, "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God." On the one hand, Paul says, "It is no longer I who live"; on the other hand, he says, "I live." If you consider this verse as a whole, you will see that there is no thought of an

exchanged life. Here what is presented is not an exchange; rather, it is a profound mystery.

We have pointed out that the book of Galatians reveals the basic truths of God's New Testament economy. Among these basic truths, the most basic one is found in 2:20. Because the truth of no longer I, but Christ living in me is so basic, it is also mysterious; and because it is mysterious, it has not been properly understood by Christians throughout the centuries. Therefore, we look to the Lord that He would make this basic truth clear to us.

THE OLD "I" AND THE NEW "I"

We have pointed out that in this verse Paul says, on the one hand, "no longer I" and, on the other hand, "I live." How can we reconcile this? Once again I wish to point out that this is not an exchange of life. The way to interpret the Bible properly is by the Bible itself. This means that other verses are needed if we are to understand this verse. Romans 6:6 tells us that our old man has been crucified with Christ. This verse helps us to see that the very I who has been crucified with Christ is the old "I," the old man. As regenerated people, we have both an old "I" and a new "I." The old "I" has been terminated, but the new "I" lives. In Galatians 2:20 we have both the old "I" and the new "I." The old "I" has been crucified with Christ, terminated. Therefore, Paul can say, "no longer I." However, the new "I" still lives. For this reason, Paul can say, "I live."

Now we must go on to see the difference between the old "I" and the new "I." Because we are so familiar with 2:20, we may take this verse for granted and assume that we understand it. But what is the difference between the old "I" and the new "I"? According to the natural understanding, some would say that the old "I" is evil, whereas the new "I" is good. This concept of the difference between the old "I" and the new "I" must be rejected. The old "I" had nothing of God in it, whereas the new "I" has received the divine life. The old "I" has become a new "I"

because God as life has been added to it. The "I" that has been terminated is the "I" that was without divinity. The "I" who still lives is the "I" into which God has been added. There is a great difference here. The old "I," the "I" without God, has been terminated. But the new "I" still lives, the "I" that came into being when the old "I" was resurrected and had God added to it. On the one hand, Paul has been terminated. But, on the other hand, a resurrected Paul, one with God as his life, still lives.

Because of their rejection of God's light many Christians are blind to this understanding of 2:20. If they heard such a word about the old "I" and the new "I," they would reject it. Their rejection, however, would be completely without ground. As genuine Christians, they have been regenerated. When a person is regenerated, he is not annihilated or destroyed. To be regenerated means to have God added into us. In regeneration, we who once did not have God in us now have Him added to us. The very "I" who did not have God in it is over. This is the old "I," the old man, who has been crucified with Christ. But from the time that we began to appreciate the Lord Jesus and the operating faith began to work in us, this faith brought the processed Triune God into us and added Him to our being. From that time onward, we have had a new "I," an "I" with God in it. Hence, the new "I" is the old "I" which has become an "I" resurrected with God added to it. Praise the Lord that the old "I" has been terminated and the new "I" now lives!

LIVING WITH CHRIST

In 2:20 Paul says, "Christ lives in me." According to the concept of an exchanged life, our life is terminated and Christ lives. But we need a more thorough understanding of what it means to say that Christ lives *in us*. It is rather easy to understand that Christ lives. But it is difficult to understand how Christ lives in us. This does not mean that I have been crucified and live no longer, and that Christ lives instead of me. On the one hand, Paul said, "no longer I"; on the other hand, he said, "Christ lives in me."

The phrase "in me" is of great importance. Yes, it is Christ who lives, but it is in us that He lives.

In order to understand how Christ can live in us, we need to turn to John 14. Before His death and resurrection, the Lord Jesus said to the disciples, "Because I live, you shall live also" (v. 19). Christ lives in us by causing us to live with Him. Christ does not live alone. He lives in us and with us. He lives by enabling us to live with Him. In a very real sense, if we do not live with Him, He cannot live in us. We have not been altogether ruled out, and our life has not been exchanged for the divine life. We continue to exist, but we exist with the Triune God. The Triune God who now dwells within us causes us to live with Christ. Hence, Christ lives in us through our living with Him.

ONE LIFE AND ONE LIVING

Once again the illustration of grafting helps our understanding. After a branch has been grafted into a productive tree, the branch continues to live. However, it lives not by itself, but by the tree into which it has been grafted. Furthermore, the tree lives in the branch which has been grafted into it. The branch now lives a grafted life. This means that it lives, not by itself, but by the life of the tree into which it has been grafted. Furthermore, this other life, the life of the productive tree, does not live by itself, but through the branch grafted into it. The life of the tree lives in the branch. Eventually, the branch and the tree have one life with one living. In the same principle, we and Christ also have one life and one living.

In John 6:57 the Lord Jesus said, "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me shall also live because of Me." The Son did not live by Himself. However, this does not mean that the Son was set aside and ceased to exist. The Son, of course, continued to exist, but He did not live His own life. Instead, He lived the life of the Father. In this way the Son and the Father had one life and one living. They shared the same life and had the same living.

It is the same in our relationship with Christ today. We and Christ do not have two lives. Rather, we have one life and one living. We live by Him, and He lives in us. If we do not live, He does not live; and if He does not live, we cannot live. On the one hand, we are terminated; on the other hand, we continue to exist, but we do not live without Him. Christ lives within us, and we live with Him. Therefore, we and He have one life and one living.

DEAD TO THE LAW

Galatians 2:20 explains how through law we have died to law. When Christ was crucified, we were included in Him according to God's economy. This is an accomplished fact. We have died in Christ through His death, but now He lives in us through His resurrection. His living in us is entirely by His being the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). This point is fully developed in the following chapters of Galatians, where the Spirit is presented and emphasized as the very One whom we have received as life and in whom we should live.

LIVING CHRIST

"I," the natural person, is inclined to keep the law that I might be perfect (Phil. 3:6), but God wants me to live Christ that God may be expressed in me through Him (Phil. 1:20-21). Hence, God's economy is that "I" be crucified in Christ's death and Christ live in me in His resurrection. To keep the law is to exalt it above all things in my life; to live Christ is to make Him the center in my life, even to make Him everything to me. The law was used by God to keep His chosen people in custody for Christ for a period of time (Gal. 3:23), and eventually to conduct them to Christ (3:24) that they might receive Him as life and live Him as God's expression. Since Christ has come, the function of the law has been terminated; therefore, Christ must replace the law in my life for the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose.

CHRIST AND THE SON OF GOD

In 2:20 Paul speaks both of Christ and of the Son of God. The title "Christ" mainly denotes Christ's mission to carry out God's plan. "The Son of God" denotes Christ's Person to impart God's life into us. Hence, the faith in which we live God's life is in the Son of God, the life-imparting One. The Son of God loved us and purposely gave Himself for us that He might impart the divine life into us.

The life which we now live in the flesh is not *bios*, the physical life, not *psuche*, the soulish life, but *zoe*, the spiritual and divine life.

THE FAITH WHICH OPERATES IN US

Paul says that the life we now live in the flesh we live in faith, the faith of the Son of God. We live the divine life, not by sight or by feeling in the way we live the physical and soulish life. The divine life, which is the spiritual life in our spirit, is lived by the exercise of faith stimulated by the presence of the life-giving Spirit.

In speaking of faith, Paul refers to "the faith of the Son of God." What is the meaning of the little word "of" here? This word implies that the faith mentioned in this verse is the Son of God's faith, the faith which He Himself possesses. However, in interpreting this verse, we and many others have said that this phrase actually means faith *in* the Son of God. Nevertheless, the Greek does not use the preposition "in" here. I have spent a good deal of time trying to understand this matter. After consulting the writings of a number of leading authorities, I have become fully convinced that here Paul is not speaking of the Son's faith, but of faith in the Son. However, we still need to explain why in this verse, as well as in 2:16 and 3:22, Paul does not use the preposition "in." We cannot gain a proper understanding of this simply by studying the Scripture in black and white letters. We also need to consider our experience.

Paul wrote the book of Galatians both according to

truth and according to his experience. According to our Christian experience, the genuine living faith which operates in us is not only *in* Christ, but also *of* Christ. Hence, Paul's meaning here actually is "the faith of and in Christ." Paul's thought is that the faith is both of Christ and in Christ.

We have pointed out that faith is our appreciation of what the Lord is and of what He has done for us. We have also pointed out that genuine faith is Christ Himself infused into us to become our ability to believe in Him. After the Lord has been infused into us, He spontaneously becomes our faith. On the one hand, this faith is *of* Christ; on the other hand, it is *in* Christ. However, it is too simple merely to say that this faith is Christ. We need to say that it is Christ revealed to us and infused into us. Faith is related not only to the Christ who has been infused into us, but also to the Christ who is infusing Himself into us. As Christ operates in us, He becomes our faith. This faith is of Him and also in Him.

APPRECIATING THE LORD JESUS

Proof that the faith in 2:20 is both the faith of Christ and the faith in Christ is found in Paul's words at the end of the verse. He concludes the verse by referring to the Son of God as the One "Who loved me and gave Himself for me." In writing these words, Paul was filled with appreciation of the Lord Jesus. Otherwise, at the end of such a long verse there would have been no need for him to speak of Christ loving him and having given Himself for him. He could have concluded with the expression, "the faith of the Son of God." But as he was speaking of the way he now lived, his heart was filled with gratitude and appreciation. Faith comes from such an appreciation of the Lord Jesus. The faith in Christ and the faith of Christ issues from the appreciation of Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 5:14 and 15 Paul says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all,

that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." As we consider these verses, we can see that Paul's faith came from an appreciation for the constraining love of Christ. The more we appreciate Christ's constraining love, the more faith we shall have. This faith is not produced by our own ability or activity. Rather, it is produced by the working in us of the very Christ whom we appreciate. In our appreciation for the Lord Jesus, we shall say, "Lord Jesus, I love You and I treasure You." As we speak such words to the Lord, He operates within us and becomes our faith. This faith brings about an organic union in which we and Christ are truly one.

I would like to tell you a true story which confirms the point that the faith which operates in us comes from our appreciation of the Lord Jesus. During the Boxer Rebellion in China, hundreds of Christians were martyred. One day in Peking, the old capital of China, the Boxers were parading down the street. Sitting in the back of a wagon was a young Christian woman who was being led away to be executed. She was surrounded by executioners with swords in their hands. The atmosphere was terrifying, filled with the shoutings of the Boxers. Nevertheless, her face was glowing as she was singing praises to the Lord. The stores were closed because of the rioting. However, a young man was observing this scene through a crack at the front of a store. Deeply impressed with the young woman's glowing face, happiness, and songs of praise, he decided at that moment that he would find out the truth about the Christian faith. Later, he did learn the truth and became a believer in Christ. Eventually, he gave up his business and became a preacher. One day, when he was visiting my home town, he told me this story of how he had become a Christian.

The point here is that this young woman could be filled with praises in the midst of such a terrifying situation because faith was working within her. She was filled with appreciation of the Lord Jesus. Because she loved Him so

much, He spontaneously became the faith within her. This faith produced an organic union in which she was joined to the Lord. This organic union is a basic and crucial aspect of God's New Testament economy.

A REVELATION OF GOD'S ECONOMY

The Galatians had turned from God's economy and had gone back to the law, which they were trying to keep by the efforts of the flesh. But when we endeavor to keep the law in this way, we are far off from God. God's economy is not that we try to keep the law in the strength of our flesh. His economy is to work Himself into us. The Triune God has become the processed God. Through incarnation, Christ came in the flesh to fulfill the law and then to set it aside. Through His resurrection, Christ has become the life-giving Spirit, ready to enter into us. God's New Testament economy is for the processed Triune God to be wrought into us to become our life and our very being. If we see this, we shall be able to proclaim that we have been crucified with Christ and that we live no longer. Nevertheless Christ lives in us, and we live by the faith that is in Him and of Him. Our old person has been crucified, but the new person, the new "I," still lives. Now we live by faith in the Son of God and of the Son of God, a faith that produces an organic union in which we and Christ are one. There is no comparison between keeping the law and such an organic union.

Galatians 2:20 is a revelation of God's economy. In His economy God's intention is for the processed Triune God to be wrought into our being to make us a new person, a new "I." The old person, the old "I," the "I" without God, is over; but the new person, the new "I," the "I" with the Triune God in it, still lives. We live with Christ and by Christ. Furthermore, we live by faith, which is the means to bring us into oneness with Him. In this organic union we are one with the Lord, for we have one life and one living with Him. When we live, He lives. He lives in us, and we live with Him.

THE VISION OF CHRIST LIVING IN US

I believe that now we can understand what it means to say that Christ lives in us and that the life which we now live, we live by the faith of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us. The experience portrayed in this verse implies that God in His Trinity has been processed. After Christ was incarnated, He lived on earth and then was crucified, buried, and resurrected. In resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit. After His ascension, Christ was crowned, enthroned, and made the Lord of all. On the day of Pentecost, He descended as the Spirit upon His Body. From that time until now, He has been working and moving on earth, seeking those who will appreciate Him and call on His name. Whenever we call on the Lord Jesus out of our appreciation of Him, He comes into us and becomes the living faith which operates in us and brings us into an organic union with Him. In this union we can truly say, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." This is God's New Testament economy. I hope that this vision will be infused into all the saints.

I can testify that because I have seen this heavenly vision, nothing can move me. I am willing to give my whole life for such a vision of God's economy. The old person has been crucified with Christ, and Christ now lives in me, the new person. The life I now live, I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God and in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Here we have the mingling of the Triune God with the tripartite man. How wonderful!

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE ELEVEN

NOT NULLIFYING THE GRACE OF GOD

Scripture Reading: Gal. 2:21, 16, 20a; 3:3; 4:21; 5:2, 4, 16, 24-25; John 1:17; 6:57b; 15:4-5; 1 Cor. 6:17; 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; Rom. 5:17-18, 21; 1 Tim. 1:14

In 2:21 Paul says, "I do not nullify the grace of God." If we consider this verse in context, we see that to nullify the grace of God means that in our experience we do not have Christ living in us. In verse 20 Paul says, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." Then he goes on to say that he does not nullify the grace of God. This is a strong indication that for us as believers to nullify the grace of God is for us to deny Christ the opportunity to live in us. The grace of God is simply the living Christ Himself. To allow Christ to live in us is to enjoy the grace of God. But not to allow Him to live in us is to nullify God's grace.

GRACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

It is important for us to find out the genuine and proper significance of the grace of God in the New Testament. In the Old Testament there is actually no mention of God's grace. The word grace used in the Old Testament means favor. John 1:17 tells us that grace came with Jesus Christ. Before the incarnation of the Son of God, grace had not come. Grace came when the Lord Jesus came. Prior to that time, the law had been given through Moses. The promise of grace had also been made to Abraham; it was given before the law was. First, God gave the promise of grace to Abraham. Then, four hundred thirty years later, the law was given at Mount Sinai through Moses. Approximately

another fifteen hundred years passed before grace came with Jesus Christ, with the incarnated Son of God.

According to John 1:1 and 14, the Word that was in the beginning with God and which was God became flesh and tabernacled among us, full of grace and reality. Verse 16 says, "For of His fullness we all received, and grace upon grace." Since grace came with Jesus Christ, grace was not yet present in the Old Testament.

Now we must give a definition of grace. Grace is God in His Trinity processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to be everything to us. After passing through such a long process, the Triune God has become everything to us. He is our redemption, salvation, life, and sanctification. Having been processed to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, the Triune God Himself is our grace.

GREATER THAN THE LAW

If we would understand grace as revealed in the New Testament, we need a clear view of the New Testament as a whole. Grace is a matter of tremendous significance. To the Jews, the giving of the law through Moses was a great event. The fact that the coming of grace is contrasted with the giving of the law indicates that grace is greater than the law. As far as the Jews were concerned, apart from God Himself nothing was greater than the law. But John 1:17 indicates that grace is greater than the law. The law was given, but grace came.

THE SON OF GOD LIVING IN US

According to the concept of many Christians, God's grace is mainly a matter of material blessing. At the end of the year, some Christians gather together to count the blessings God has bestowed on them during that year and to thank Him for His great grace in sending these blessings. Then they proceed to thank the Lord for things such as a large home and new clothes. Such a concept of

grace is much too poor! The Apostle Paul would count such things as dung, not as grace.

We have pointed out that, according to John 1:17, grace is greater than the law. Surely God Himself is higher than the law. However, if God remains objective to us, in our experience He will not be greater than the law. In order to be greater than the law to us, the Triune God must be subjective. Hence, in the New Testament, grace denotes the Triune God processed to become everything to us and to live in us. Nothing can surpass the living in us of the processed, all-inclusive life-giving Spirit.

We have pointed out that in 2:20 Paul says that he has been crucified with Christ and that Christ lives in him. Then in verse 21 he goes on to say that he does not nullify the grace of God. This indicates that the grace of God is the Son of God living in us. Certainly this is much greater than the law. The Son of God was incarnated not only to live on earth, to be crucified, to be resurrected, and to ascend into the heavens; He also came to live in us. This is grace.

To go back to the law is to reject this grace. It is to reject the very Son of God who now lives in us. This is to nullify the grace of God. However, if we remain in Christ, enjoying Him as everything to us, we do not nullify the grace of God.

All of Paul's Epistles begin and end with a word about grace. This is also true of the book of Revelation. In Revelation 1:4 John writes to the seven churches which are in Asia, "Grace to you"; and in 22:21, he concludes with the words, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints." Paul closes the Epistle to the Galatians by saying, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers." If grace were a matter of material blessing, how could grace be with our spirit? Grace is not physical or material; it is divine and spiritual. Actually, as we have pointed out emphatically, grace is God Himself in a subjective way to be everything for our enjoyment. I hope that all the saints could grasp this definition of grace in a clear way.

WHAT GRACE DOES FOR US

Let us now consider according to the New Testament what this grace has done for us and what it will do for us. Although man was created in God's image and likeness in order to express Him and represent Him, man became fallen. In the fall man not only did something wrong outwardly, but the very nature of sin was injected into man's being. Hence, outwardly we are sinful, and inwardly we are evil. Before the righteous God, our conduct is sinful, and in the eyes of the holy God, our nature is evil. Furthermore, there is nothing we can do about our situation. It is utterly foolish for fallen man to go to the law and endeavor to keep it. Even if we could keep the law, what would we do about our evil nature? How we must praise God for His grace and for what it has done for us! First, the Triune God became incarnated to live on earth to fulfill the requirements of God's righteous and holy law. Having fulfilled the law's requirements, He went to the cross and died there for our sins as our substitute. Through His death Christ has redeemed us. Therefore, redemption is the first item of what God's grace has accomplished for us.

After accomplishing redemption through His death, Christ was resurrected from among the dead to release the divine life from within Him. In resurrection He has become the life-giving Spirit to be received by those who will appreciate Him, love Him, believe in Him, call on Him, and repent. As soon as a sinner responds to Him in this way, He as the life-giving Spirit enters into that one and through regeneration is born in him. Is this not an aspect of God's grace? It is the second item of what God's grace has done for us.

Third, from the time of our regeneration, Christ has been dwelling in our spirit to live in us and with us. By living in us, Christ enables us to have the kind of living that satisfies God. In His grace, Christ lives in us and with us.

As Christ lives within us, He also ministers all His riches into our being in order to sanctify us, transform us,

and make us sons of God in reality and practicality. In this way, we enjoy full sonship.

Fifth, at the appointed time, Christ will come back and saturate our physical body with His element. This will cause our body to be transfigured into a glorious body, a body which is the same as Christ's resurrection body. Certainly this is another aspect of God's grace. By saturating us, Christ will glorify us and be glorified in us. He will bring us all into His glory, where we shall be exactly the same as He is, in spirit, soul, and body.

Finally, in eternity and for eternity we shall enjoy Christ as the living water and as the tree of life.

This description of what the grace of God is to us covers the entire New Testament from the opening of Matthew to the end of Revelation. The Triune God--the Father, the Son, and the Spirit--has been processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension in order to come into us, to be one with us, and to be everything to us. Now He is our redemption, salvation, life, living, sanctification, and transformation, and He will become our conformation, our glorification, and our eternity. This is the portion of the saints in light (Col. 1:12).

ENJOYING GRACE

We cannot enjoy God's grace in full in one day or even in a lifetime. It will take eternity for us to have the full enjoyment of this grace. This is the very grace which came when the Lord Jesus came, and this is the grace we need day by day. Praise the Lord that this is the grace we find by approaching the throne of grace daily to meet our timely need. Every morning we should look to the Lord and pray, "Lord, grant me Your grace today. I need today's portion of Your grace. May grace be with me and with all my brothers and sisters." Oh, we all need to pray like this! Then we shall experience grace, the grace who is the very Triune God processed to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit for our enjoyment.

In 2:21 Paul says, "For if righteousness is through the

law, then Christ has died for nothing." Christ died for us that we may have righteousness in Him, through which we may receive the divine life (Rom. 5:18, 21). This righteousness is not through the law, but through the death of Christ. If righteousness is through the law, Christ has died without cause, for nothing. But righteousness is through Christ's death, which has separated us from law. Now, according to Romans 5:17, we who "receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." Grace enables us to reign in life.

It is the grace of God that Christ has imparted the divine life into us through the life-giving Spirit. Not to live by this Spirit is to nullify the grace of God. To nullify God's grace is to reject the processed Triune God who has become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. The Judaizers wanted the Galatian believers to go back to the law. To return to the law is to nullify the grace of God. It is to deny and reject the processed Triune God. Furthermore, it is also to fail to experience and enjoy such a processed God. By this we can see that to nullify the grace of God by returning to the law is extremely serious.

GOD'S ECONOMY

In their blindness the Judaizers were foolish. If they had seen what the grace of God is, they would not have been Judaizers. But because they were blind, they zealously endeavored to turn people away from Christ. They failed to realize that it is not God's economy that His chosen people keep the law. God's economy is for His people to enjoy the Triune God who has been processed to become the life-giving Spirit through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. In His economy God intends that His people enjoy Himself as such a Triune God and become one with Him. Then His people will be one in the divine life to express God corporately. This corporate expression of the Triune God is the church life. The ultimate issue of this will be the New Jerusalem,

the corporate expression of the Triune God in eternity.

If we see this vision of God's economy, how could we go back to the law? How could we turn away from the Triune God who has been processed to become our grace? No wonder Paul said that the Galatians were foolish. In their folly they were nullifying the grace of God.

STANDING IN GRACE

If we would be those who do not nullify the grace of God, we need to abide in Christ (John 15:4-5). To abide in Christ is to remain in the processed Triune God. Furthermore, we need to enjoy Christ, especially by eating Him (John 6:57b). Then we should go on to be one spirit with Christ (1 Cor. 6:17), to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25), to deny the natural "I" (2:20), and to abandon the flesh (5:24). We should not be distracted by things such as the law, circumcision, the Sabbath, and dietary regulations. Rather, we should enjoy Christ and live with Him in one spirit. If we walk in spirit, deny the natural "I," and abandon the flesh, we shall be those who do not nullify the grace of God.

We praise the Lord that in His recovery we are enjoying and experiencing His grace. Many Christians, how-ever, are not in the experience of this grace. In Romans 5:2 Paul says that by faith we have access into this grace in which we stand. Let us stand fast in the grace into which we have entered.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWELVE

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:1; 1:4; 2:20; 3:13; 2:21, 19; 5:24; 6:14-15

In the foregoing message we considered the grace of God. In this message we come to Christ crucified. Christ crucified has a great deal to do with our enjoyment of God's grace. The enjoyment of the grace of God is altogether dependent on the crucifixion of Christ.

In 3:1 Paul says, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly portrayed crucified?" The crucifixion of Christ indicates that all the requirements of the law have been fulfilled by the death of Christ, and that Christ through His death has released His life that it may be imparted into us in His resurrection to free us from bondage under the law. This was fully portrayed before the eyes of the Galatians in the word of the gospel. How could they neglect this and be bewitched, drifting back to the law? How foolish!

Before the eyes of the Galatians, Christ had openly been portrayed crucified. Paul wondered how the Galatian believers could forget such a portrait. Those who go back to the law have nothing to do with such a crucified Christ. If God wants us to keep the law and if we are able to keep it, then there was no need for Christ to be crucified. For this reason, Paul declares in 2:21, "If righteousness is through law, then Christ has died for nothing." Galatians 3:1 is the direct continuation of 2:21. Christ certainly was not crucified without cause. On the contrary, He was crucified for a very great cause. In fact, the cross is the center of God's operation in His economy, just as Christ Himself is the center of God's economy. In the carrying out of God's economy, the cross is the center. Without Christ,

God's

economy has no center, and without the cross of Christ the operation of God's economy is without a center. Thus, the carrying out of God's economy wholly depends on the cross of Christ. The cross is the center of God's operation in the universe to carry out His economy.

This is the reason that in such a short book Paul many times refers to the cross. He constantly brings us back to the cross. In 2:21 Paul points out that Christ was not crucified for nothing. Then in 3:1 he goes on to remind the Galatians that the crucifixion of Christ was openly portrayed before their eyes. When Paul came to Galatia, he preached a crucified Christ. In order to be righteous, we need such a Christ. If we could have righteousness through keeping the law, then we would not need a crucified Christ. If this had been the case, there would have been no reason for Christ to die.

In 3:1 Paul brought the Galatians back to the cross. He wanted them to have a thorough look at the crucified Christ. In this message I am burdened that we also have such a view of Christ crucified. Therefore, let us consider the verses in Galatians which refer to the cross or to the death of Christ on the cross, and let us see all the important points in these verses.

I. TO GIVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS THAT HE MIGHT RESCUE US OUT OF THE PRESENT EVIL AGE

In 1:4 Paul says that Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might rescue us out of the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." Here we see that in His crucifixion Christ gave Himself for our sins. How foolish were the Galatians, and how stubborn and rebellious were the Judaizers! In returning to the law, they had no way to deal with their sins. In this book Paul seems to be saying, "You have committed many sins. What will you do about them? Apart from the death of Christ on the cross, there is no way to be redeemed from your sins."

Although Christ was crucified for our sins, the goal of His crucifixion was to "rescue us out of the present evil

age." Sins are devilish, whereas this age is satanic. We have pointed out that the present age is the present section of Satan's cosmos, his world system. As the Devil, God's enemy is involved with sins; and as Satan, he is involved with the evil age. Even if the Galatians and the Judaizers could have been successful in keeping the law, how would they have dealt with the Devil, Satan? Can you overcome Satan? He is subtle, lurking behind sins and the evil age. Apart from the crucifixion of Christ, we have no way to deal with sins, behind which the Devil hides, or the evil age, behind which Satan hides. Christ was crucified for our sins that He might rescue us from this evil age. This indicates that only Christ can save us from the Devil and Satan. Both sins and the evil age have been dealt with by Christ crucified. He gave Himself for us on the cross according to the will of God.

II. TO GIVE HIMSELF FOR US THAT HE MIGHT IMPART LIFE TO US AND LIVE IN US IN RESURRECTION TO FREE US FROM THE BONDAGE UNDER LAW

Christ was crucified in order to give Himself for us that He might impart life to us. This is altogether positive, whereas dealing with sins and rescuing us from the evil age are negative. On the positive side, Christ crucified imparts the divine life to us so that He might live in us in resurrection to free us from bondage under law (2:20). Through His death on the cross, Christ released His divine life and imparted the divine life into us. This makes it possible for Him to live in us in resurrection.

If Christ had not been crucified, it would not be possible for Him to come into us. A "raw," unprocessed Christ cannot dwell in us. Before Christ could come into us and live in us, He had to deal with our sins and with our fallen nature. The old "I," the "I" without God, had to be dealt with. To deal with sin and with our fallen nature, Christ had to be crucified. Dealing with these negative things opened the way for Christ to impart Himself into us as our

life and thereby to live in us. Thus, Christ's living in us is based upon His death on the cross.

Furthermore, the Christ who lives in us is a Christ in resurrection. If Christ had not been crucified, how could He have been resurrected? This would, of course, have been impossible. And if Christ were not in resurrection, He could not live in us. The only Christ who can dwell in us is a resurrected Christ, a processed Christ, a Christ who has passed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. The process through which Christ has passed affords Him the ground and the way to enter into us and to live in us in His resurrection life. A "raw" Christ could never be life to us. The Christ who is our life and who lives in us is the processed Christ. Through His crucifixion He dealt with our sins and with our fallen nature. Now, based upon the work accomplished in His crucifixion, He lives in us in resurrection. This indicates clearly that the cross is the center of God's operation for the carrying out of His economy.

III. TO REDEEM US OUT OF THE CURSE OF THE LAW

Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse on our behalf; because it is written, Cursed is every one hanging on a tree." Christ as our substitute on the cross not only bore the curse for us, but also became a curse for us. The curse of the law issued from the sin of man (Gen. 3:17). When Christ took away our sin on the cross, He redeemed us out of the curse.

The Galatians surely were foolish in going back to the law. What did they expect to do about the curse of the law? As descendants of Adam, they were under the curse like everyone else. If we read Romans 5, we see that Adam brought us all under the curse. But the curse was not altogether official until the law was given. But the law now declares that all the fallen descendants of Adam are under the curse. In Galatians 3:13 Paul seemed to be telling the Galatians, "The law is not good to you, for it has made the curse official. The curse brought in by the fall of Adam has

been made official by the law. You are very foolish to return to the law. The law condemns you and makes your curse official. But through His crucifixion, Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law. On the cross He was even made a curse for us."

Sin, the evil age, and the curse were all serious problems. Without the cross of Christ, how could God deal with these problems and carry out His economy? We certainly need Christ crucified. We need the Christ who has died on the cross to solve all these problems.

IV. TO FULFILL THE REQUIREMENT OF THE LAW THAT WE MAY HAVE RIGHTEOUSNESS IN HIM

Galatians 2:21 says, "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness is through law, then Christ has died for nothing." This verse indicates that Christ died to fulfill the requirements of the law that we may have righteousness in Him. In Adam we do not have righteousness; rather, we have a sinful nature. But Christ was crucified on the cross to fulfill all the requirements of God's holy and righteous law. Now we may have righteousness in Christ.

Some Christians have seen only that Christ died on the cross for our sins. They have not also seen that He died to become our righteousness. Dying for our sins is related to redemption, whereas dying to become our righteousness is related to justification. Redemption is on the negative side, but justification is on the positive side. The cross of Christ is both for redemption and justification. Through His death we have been redeemed from our sins, and through His death we have also obtained righteousness in Him.

V. TO MAKE US DEAD TO LAW THAT WE MIGHT LIVE TO GOD

In 2:19 Paul says, "For I through law have died to law that I might live to God." Apart from the crucifixion of Christ, there is no way for us to die to the law. Christ was crucified to make us dead to the law. Even if we in ourselves could die to the law, that type of death would not count in the eyes of God. The only death that matters in

His eyes is the death of Christ. Death in Adam is horrible, but the death of Christ is lovely and even lovable, for it accomplishes a great deal for us. Through Christ's death, we have become dead to the law so that we might live to God.

VI. TO HAVE US CRUCIFIED WITH HIM THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO CRUCIFY OUR FLESH

Through the crucifixion of Christ we have been crucified with Christ. This enables us to crucify our flesh with the passions and lusts (5:24). In other words, we have been crucified with Christ so that we may be able to crucify our flesh.

We all are troubled by the old man, the self, and the flesh. Romans 6:6 says that our old man, not our flesh, has been crucified with Christ. Galatians 5:24 says that those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh. This verse does not say that those who belong to Christ have crucified their old man. However, there is no verse which tells us that the self has been crucified with Christ. The "I" in 2:20 does not refer to the self; it denotes the old man, the person without God. Thus, our old man, not our self, has been crucified with Christ. Furthermore, according to 5:24, it is our flesh which must be crucified. Christ has crucified the old man, but we who belong to Christ must crucify the flesh. Our crucifying the flesh with its passions and lusts is based upon the fact that our old man has been crucified with Christ. Could we crucify our flesh if Christ had not been crucified? Certainly not!

We need to have a clear understanding concerning the old man, the self, and the flesh. There is no need for us to deal with the old man, for the old man has already been crucified with Christ. However, day by day we need to crucify our flesh. The problems in our daily living do not come from the old man, but from the flesh with its passions and lusts. Therefore, based upon the fact that our old man has already been dealt with through the death of Christ, we must go on to crucify our flesh in a practical way.

It is crucial to see the difference between Romans 6:6

and Galatians 5:24. In 5:24 Paul does not say that those who are Christ's have crucified the old man. He says that they have crucified the flesh. Furthermore, we need to see that no one can crucify himself. It is not possible to commit suicide by crucifixion. For this reason, it is not possible for us to crucify our old man, our old "I." Although we cannot crucify the old man, we can crucify the flesh. This is not suicide. The crucifixion of the old man had to be accomplished by someone else, but the crucifixion of the flesh must be carried out by us.

How then shall we deal with the self? We must deny the self through bearing the cross. The self is already on the cross. Let us leave it there and not allow it to come down. To cause the self to stay on the cross is to bear the cross.

Now we can see that if Christ had not been crucified, we would not have any basis or foundation for the crucifixion of our flesh. Furthermore, if Christ had not been crucified, we would have no place to leave the self. But since Christ has died on the cross, we can crucify our flesh, based on the fact that the old man has been crucified. Also, we have a place to leave the self. Whenever the self rises up, we need to say, "Pitiful self, go back to the cross and stay there. I do not allow you to come down from the cross and make proposals to me. Your place is the cross." This is the proper way to deny the self.

The cross of Christ is the basis both for the crucifixion of the flesh and the denial of the self. By means of Christ's resurrection life we can crucify the flesh and keep the self on the cross. When Christ was crucified, we were crucified also. Now in His resurrection life He lives in us, and we live in Him. With His crucifixion as the foundation, we are now able in Christ's resurrection life to crucify the flesh and deny the self.

VII. TO HAVE THE WORLD CRUCIFIED TO US AND US CRUCIFIED TO THE WORLD

Finally, Christ was crucified to have the world crucified to us and us to the world. This especially refers to the religious world. In 6:14 Paul declares, "But far be it from

me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world." The following verse indicates that the world in verse 14 refers mainly to the religious world. This religious world is the evil age from which we have been delivered through the cross of Christ.

To go back to the law is to turn away both from Christ and from the cross. To do this is to nullify the grace of God. It is of vital importance for us to see what the cross of Christ has accomplished for us. Through the cross Christ redeemed us from our sins, rescued us from the present evil age, and redeemed us from the curse of the law. Through the cross Christ has fulfilled the requirements of the law so that we may be righteous, and He has enabled us to be dead to the law so that we might live to God. Through Christ's crucifixion we now have the ground to crucify the flesh and the way to be separated from the world.

As we consider all these matters, we see that not one of them could be accomplished through keeping the law. Because the Galatians were endeavoring to keep the law, Paul considered them foolish and told them that they had been bewitched. In this Epistle Paul was bringing them back to the cross and encouraging them to behold Christ crucified. If we have a clear vision of Christ crucified, we shall never go back to the law. On the contrary, we shall put the law under our feet and remain with Christ who was crucified for us. This Christ is the center of God's economy, and the cross of Christ is the center of God's operation to carry out His economy. Today we have no need of the law. What we need is Christ and the cross.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THIRTEEN

CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:1-5, 13-14; 4:6; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; Rom. 8:2, 9-10

Chapter three of Galatians is crucial, but it is also extremely difficult to understand. It is one of the most difficult chapters in the New Testament. Therefore, it is not easy to explain in a few sentences what this chapter reveals. As we read this important chapter, we should not take it for granted, assuming that we understand all the terms used by Paul. For example, in this chapter Paul refers to the hearing of faith (v. 2). We should not assume that we understand this term.

In 3:1--4:31 we see a basic contrast between the Spirit by faith and flesh by law. In this contrast we have two sets of opposites: the Spirit and the flesh as one set, and faith and law as another. The law goes along with the flesh, whereas faith accompanies the Spirit. Hence, the Spirit is by faith, and the law is by flesh.

The first two chapters of Galatians may be regarded somewhat as the outer edge of this book. Chapter three, however, is the center of the book, its inner core. In this central section of Galatians is presented the contrast between the Spirit and the flesh, and also the contrast between faith and law. Therefore, it is correct to say that the subject of chapters three and four is the Spirit by faith versus the flesh by law. To have this understanding of these chapters is to have something of great value. Apart from seeing this contrast, we have no way to understand what these chapters reveal.

As we come to 3:1-14, we see that the Spirit is the blessing of the promise by faith in Christ. Here we have the Spirit, the blessing, the promise, the faith, and Christ.

The Spirit is the blessing, the blessing is of the promise, the promise is by faith, and faith is in Christ. What does it mean to say that the Spirit is the blessing and that the blessing is of the promise? What does it mean that the promise is by faith? Understanding such matters is not easy. Nevertheless, these are the very matters to which we must pay attention as we consider these chapters.

In 3:1-5 Paul refers to the Spirit three times. In verse 2 he asks, "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" In verse 3 he goes on to ask, "Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" Then in verse 5 Paul asks whether the Galatian believers are supplied the Spirit by works of law or by the hearing of faith. Therefore, the Spirit is a crucial matter in 3:1-5.

Another crucial matter is the hearing of faith. Paul mentions the hearing of faith both with respect to receiving the Spirit (v. 2) and to God's supplying the Spirit (v. 5). Both the receiving of the Spirit and the supplying of the Spirit are related to the hearing of faith. Doctrinally speaking, the hearing of faith is of greater importance here than the Spirit, for Paul's point is the contrast between the works of law and the hearing of faith. Although the hearing of faith is of such vital importance, it is neglected by many readers of Galatians, who either ignore this matter or take it for granted. Rarely does anyone seek to know what actually is the hearing of faith.

In Romans 8:2 we see the relationship between the Spirit of life and Christ: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and of death." What does it mean to say that the Spirit of life is in Christ? Traditional teaching would lead us to believe that the Spirit and Christ are separate and distinct Persons. But if the Spirit is a Person separate from Christ, how can the Spirit be in Christ? Some Christian teachers say that Christ the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, is sitting on the throne in the heavens and that the Holy Spirit, the

third Person of the Trinity, is now working within us. In contrast to the traditional teaching that the Spirit and Christ are separate and distinct, the Bible tells us that the Spirit is in Christ.

The Lord's answer to Philip's question in John 14 helps us to understand this matter. When Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father and it suffices us" (v. 8), the Lord answered, "Am I so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How is it that you say, Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words which I speak to you, I do not speak from Myself; but the Father Who abides in Me, He does His works" (vv. 9-10). The Lord's word indicates clearly that the Father and the Son are not two separate Persons. On the contrary, the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. They cannot be separated. Furthermore, the Son was sent *from with* the Father (John 6:46, Gk.). On the one hand, He was sent from God; on the other hand, He was always with God. The Son did not actually leave the Father; neither was the Father separated from the Son. Therefore, the Lord said, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me" (John 14:11).

The principle is the same concerning the relationship of Christ and the Spirit as the relationship between Christ the Son and the Father. The fact that the Spirit of life is in Christ means that an intrinsic relationship exists among the Three of the Godhead. The Son is the Son, and the Father is the Father. Nevertheless, the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. Likewise, while the Son is the Son and the Spirit is the Spirit, yet the Spirit is in the Son. This indicates that the Three of the Triune God cannot be separated.

A further indication of this truth is found in Romans 8:9-10. In these verses Paul says, "But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if any one has not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him. And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead

because of sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness." In these verses we read of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ. These titles all denote one reality--the all-inclusive Spirit. The Spirit of God is God, the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of God, and Christ Himself is the Spirit of Christ. Christ is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God is God Himself. All these titles refer to the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. This One is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of life, Christ, and God.

In Romans 8:2 and 9 there are three titles of the Spirit: the Spirit is the Spirit of life, the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ. Hence, the Spirit is of life, of God, and of Christ. Certainly these titles do not refer to three Spirits. It is utterly wrong to say that the Spirit of life is separate from the Spirit of God or that the Spirit of God is distinct from the Spirit of Christ. On the contrary, the one Spirit is the Spirit of life, of God, and of Christ. Life, God, and Christ are not three separate entities or substances. Rather, life is God, God is Christ, and Christ is life. Therefore, the Spirit of life is the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ. These three are one entity, the all-inclusive Spirit.

I. CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT BEING ONE

First Corinthians 15:45b says that the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. Second Corinthians 3:17 tells us that now the Lord is the Spirit. The last Adam in 1 Corinthians 15:45b and the Lord in 2 Corinthians 3:17 both refer to Christ. This indicates clearly that today Christ and the Spirit are one.

II. CHRIST CRUCIFIED ON THE CROSS

In 3:1 Paul declares that before the eyes of the Galatian believers "Jesus Christ was openly portrayed crucified." The Lord was crucified on the cross as Christ, not as the Spirit. We cannot say that the Spirit was crucified for us. It was Christ who was crucified.

III. CHRIST ENTERING AS THE SPIRIT INTO THE BELIEVERS

The Galatians through hearing the gospel believed in the crucified Christ, but they received the Spirit (3:2; 4:6). The One who was crucified on the cross was Christ, but the One who entered into the believers was the Spirit. In crucifixion for the believers' redemption He was Christ, but in the indwelling to be the believers' life He is the Spirit. This is the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, who is the all-inclusive and ultimate blessing of the gospel. The believers receive such a divine Spirit by the hearing of faith, not by the works of law. He enters into the believers and lives in them, not by their keeping the law, but by their faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ.

We should not think that the One who died on the cross is different from the One who enters into us. The One who died for us is the very One who has entered into us as our life. When this One died on the cross, He died as Christ. When He enters into us to be our life, He comes in as the Spirit. In crucifixion for our redemption He was Christ (3:13). But in the indwelling to be our life He is the Spirit (Rom. 8:2, 9-10).

IV. THE SAVED ONES BELIEVING IN THE CRUCIFIED AND RESURRECTED CHRIST, BUT RECEIVING THE SPIRIT

We believe in the crucified and resurrected Christ, but we receive the Spirit (3:2). The title of the One in whom we believe is Christ, not the Spirit. However, when we believe in Christ, we receive the Spirit. Christ is the One who was crucified for the accomplishment of redemption and who was resurrected. Hence, we believe in Him. But when He comes into us, He comes in as the Spirit. In the function of redemption, His title is Christ, whereas in the function of life, His title is the Spirit. As the most important Person in the universe, Christ has more than one status. Although Christ and the Spirit are one, there is a difference in function, title, and status.

V. CHRIST IN THE REVELATION OF GOD'S ECONOMY AND THE SPIRIT IN OUR EXPERIENCE OF LIFE

In the revelation of God's economy in the first two chapters of Galatians, the emphasis is on Christ. But in our experience of life as presented in the last four chapters, the emphasis is on the Spirit. Have you noticed that in Galatians 1 and 2 there is no mention of the Spirit? However, verse after verse speaks of Christ. Beginning with 3:2, the Spirit is revealed. The Spirit in chapter three is the very Christ in chapter two. Do not think that the Spirit is separate from Christ. In the chapters which deal with the revelation of God's economy, we read of Christ, but in those chapters which unfold our experience of life, we read of the Spirit. On the one hand, Galatians gives us a revelation of God's economy; on the other hand, it affords us a revelation of our experience of life. The former is objective, whereas the latter is subjective. In the objective revelation of God's economy the emphasis is on Christ, but in the subjective experience of life the emphasis is on the Spirit.

VI. THE BELIEVERS RECEIVING THE SPIRIT AS THE ALL-INCLUSIVE AND ULTIMATE BLESSING OF THE GOSPEL

As believers, we have received the Spirit, the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, as the all-inclusive and ultimate blessing of the gospel. According to the understanding of many Christians, the One they received when they believed in the Lord Jesus was only Christ, the Son of God. Not many realize that the One they received was not the objective Christ, but the subjective Spirit. Because many are not clear concerning this, they talk about a so-called second blessing, or about receiving the Spirit apart from regeneration. When some Christians learn that another has believed in Christ, they proceed to ask him if he has received the Holy Spirit. However, to be a genuine Christian is to believe in Christ and to receive the Spirit. To be a real Christian is to believe in Christ, and to believe

in Christ is to receive the Spirit. Nevertheless, those who regard Christ as separate and distinct from the Spirit may consider that it is possible to believe in Christ without receiving the Spirit. This is a serious misunderstanding! As we have pointed out again and again in this message, we simultaneously believe in Christ and receive the Spirit.

When certain Christians are asked if they have received the Spirit, they are not clear or do not know how to answer. They need to see that when we believed in the Lord Jesus, an organic union took place. At the very time of our conversion, a wonderful organic union between us and the Lord Jesus was accomplished. Because they are ignorant of the fact of such an organic union, they do not enjoy the Spirit as the ultimate blessing of the gospel. Instead of enjoying this blessing, they are distracted to regulations, doctrine, or to the study of the Bible in dead letters. Others may pursue what is called the second blessing or the outpouring of the Spirit with speaking in tongues. But in the four books which make up the heart of the divine revelation in the New Testament--Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians--nothing is said about tongues-speaking or about the outpouring of the Spirit. Instead, Paul places strong emphasis on the sealing of the Spirit, the earnest of the Spirit, and the foretaste of the Spirit. When we believed in the Lord Jesus, we were sealed with the Spirit. At the very moment the organic union took place, the earnest of the Spirit was given. In other words, when we believed in the Lord Jesus, we received the Spirit, and the Spirit became to us the ultimate blessing of the gospel.

The Judaizers were ignorant of this mysterious organic union with Christ, and the Galatian believers were not clear about it and were distracted from it. The same is true of many Christians today. Because so many believers do not realize what took place within them at the time they believed in the Lord Jesus, they are distracted and occupied with other things. Therefore, it is crucial for us to see what happened in us when we believed in the Lord. By means of an organic union we were grafted into the Triune

God. Now all the Triune God is, has done, has accomplished, and has obtained and attained has become our portion. Because the Judaizers were troubling the believers in Galatia and because the believers themselves were lacking in understanding, Paul was burdened to write this Epistle. He was especially burdened to cover the matters in chapter three. Every believer must be clear that Christ and the Spirit are one. This oneness is a mystery for our enjoyment.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE FOURTEEN

HEARING OF FAITH VERSUS WORKS OF LAW

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:2, 5, 3, 20, 9, 14, 22-25; Rom. 7:10-11, 24; 8:2, 6, 10-11, 30

Galatians 3:2 says, "This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" Surely we have received the Spirit by the hearing of faith, not by the works of law.

In 3:5 Paul goes on to ask the Galatian believers, "He therefore Who is supplying to you the Spirit and doing works of power among you, is it by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" God continues to supply the Spirit to us also through the hearing of faith, not at all by the works of law.

SUPPLYING AND RECEIVING

God's New Testament economy is a matter of supplying the Spirit and receiving the Spirit. On God's side, He supplies the Spirit; on our side, we receive the Spirit. The supplying of the Spirit and the receiving of the Spirit do not take place once for all. On the contrary, they are continual. According to 3:2, we have already received the Spirit. But according to 3:5, God continues to supply the Spirit to us. Day by day God supplies the Spirit, and day by day we receive this supply of the Spirit. Therefore, by our experience we know that the supplying of the Spirit and the receiving of the Spirit take place continually.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN FAITH AND LAW

Both the supplying of the Spirit and the receiving of the Spirit are by the hearing of faith, not by the works of law.

The law was the basis for the relationship between man and God in God's Old Testament economy (3:23); faith is the unique requirement for man to contact God in His New Testament economy (Heb. 11:6). Law is related to the flesh (Rom. 7:5) and depends on the effort of the flesh, the very flesh that is the expression of "I." Faith is related to the Spirit, and trusts in the operation of the Spirit, the very Spirit who is the realization of Christ. In the Old Testament, "I" and the flesh played an important role in keeping the law. In the New Testament, Christ and the Spirit take over the position of "I" and the flesh, and faith replaces law that we may live Christ by the Spirit. To keep the law by the flesh is man's natural way; it is in the darkness of man's concept and results in death and wretchedness (Rom. 7:10-11, 24). To receive the Spirit by faith is God's revealed way; it is in the light of God's revelation and issues in life and glory (Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11, 30). Hence, we must treasure faith, not the works of law. It is by the hearing of faith that we have received the Spirit that we may participate in God's promised blessing and live Christ.

In 3:22-25 we see a contrast between law and faith. According to 3:23, "before faith came we were guarded under law, being shut up unto the faith which was about to be revealed." This verse indicates clearly that there was a time when faith came and was revealed. According to verses 24 and 25, now that faith has come we are no longer under the law as our child-conductor. Faith and law cannot co-exist. Before faith came, we were under law. But now that faith has come and has been revealed, this faith replaces law.

FAITH AND GRACE

In fundamental Christianity it is commonly taught that the law has been replaced by grace. Theological terms such as the dispensation of law and the dispensation of grace are used to point out this distinction. According to this understanding, the Old Testament was the dispensation of

law, whereas the New Testament is the dispensation of grace. Hence, grace is versus law and replaces law. But have you ever heard that faith has come to replace law and that faith is versus law? It is possible even to say that in the Old Testament there was a dispensation of law, but in the New Testament there is a dispensation of faith. The dispensation of grace is also the dispensation of faith. When grace came, faith came also. Both grace and faith came with the coming of Jesus Christ.

What a contrast there is between the works of law and the hearing of faith! We must distinguish between a working Christian and a hearing Christian. What kind of Christian are you? We all should declare that we are hearing Christians, not working Christians. To hear is a great blessing. In the meetings of the church we come together for the hearing of faith. By this hearing we receive the supply of the Spirit.

If we would understand the meaning of the hearing of faith, we need to know what faith is and also what grace is. Both grace and faith refer to the same thing. Grace is on God's side, but faith is on our side. As we have pointed out, grace is the Triune God processed to be everything to us. As we hear of this grace, we spontaneously have faith.

If I were preaching the gospel to primitive people who had never heard of God, Christ, the Spirit, the cross, redemption, salvation, or eternal life, I would tell them that the true God is a loving and lovable God. I would go on to tell them the story of how God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to accomplish redemption for us by dying on the cross. I would continue by telling them how wonderful Christ is. I would want them to know about His death on the cross and how He shed His blood so that we might be forgiven. I would tell them that through Christ's death and resurrection, the divine life within Him has been released. I would also tell them that now Christ, the living One, is the life-giving Spirit who is waiting to be received. Those who hear such a gospel message would spontaneously have the hearing of faith. The word that I would preach would

be a word of grace. But once they have heard such a word, in their experience it would become the faith by which they believe.

When people hear of the grace of God in the preaching of the gospel, something rises up within them to appreciate what they have heard. The grace presented to them becomes in them the faith by which they believe. Spontaneously they begin to appreciate God, Christ, and the Spirit. They appreciate what Christ has done in accomplishing redemption. This appreciation is faith. Faith comes when they begin to appreciate what they hear in the gospel.

THE OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE ASPECTS OF FAITH

Concerning faith there are two aspects, the objective aspect and the subjective aspect. Objectively faith is what we believe. Subjectively faith is our believing. Therefore, faith denotes both the act of believing and that in which we believe. Regarding the act of believing, faith is subjective, but regarding what we believe, faith is objective. As we hear about those things in which we are to believe, faith is produced within us. The more we hear about these good things, the more we appreciate them. Spontaneously this appreciation issues in our believing in those very things about which we have heard. Therefore, faith is both objective and subjective.

In 1:23 we are told that Paul, who once persecuted the believers in Christ, now preached "the faith which formerly he ravaged." Faith here and in 3:2, 5, 7, 9, 23, 25, and 6:10 implies our believing in Christ, taking His Person and His redemptive work as the object of our faith. This, replacing the law, by which God dealt with people in the Old Testament, becomes the principle of God's dealing with people in the New Testament. This faith characterizes the believers in Christ and distinguishes them from the keepers of law. This is the main emphasis of this book.

The subjective aspect of faith implies at least eight

items. First, faith involves hearing. Without the hearing of the word, there can be no faith. Faith comes from hearing. The word we hear includes God, Christ, the Spirit, the cross, redemption, salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life. It also includes the fact that God has been processed to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. According to the New Testament, the gospel tells us of all these matters. When the gospel is preached in a proper way, those who hear it will be stirred up and filled with appreciation. Their hearing of the word of the gospel is the beginning of their believing. The reason Christians are lacking in faith is that their hearing is poor. If they heard a living message on how the Triune God has been processed to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, no doubt this hearing would produce faith in them.

Second, faith also implies appreciation. After hearing the word of the gospel, a sense of appreciation spontaneously rises up in those who hear. This is true not only of those hearing the gospel for the first time, but for all believers in Christ. Whenever we hear the word in a proper way, this hearing awakens more appreciation for the Lord.

This appreciation is followed by calling, the third item implied in the subjective aspect of faith. All those who appreciate the Lord Jesus will spontaneously call on His name. If our gospel preaching is cold, dull, and dead, it will be necessary to persuade people to pray and call on the Lord's name. But if our preaching is precious, rich, living, inspiring, and stirring, there will be no need to persuade people. Rather, they will spontaneously call, "O Lord Jesus." Perhaps instead of calling on Him in this way, they will utter some word of appreciation for the Lord. Perhaps they will say, "Oh, how good the Lord Jesus is!"

Fourth, faith implies receiving. By appreciating the Lord Jesus and calling on Him, we spontaneously receive Him.

With receiving, we have the fifth aspect, that of accepting. It is possible to receive something without accepting it. Faith involves both receiving and accepting.

Those who hear the gospel and appreciate the Lord Jesus automatically accept Him as well as receive Him.

Sixth, faith includes becoming joined to the Lord Jesus. By receiving and accepting Him, we are joined to Him.

Then, as the seventh and eighth items, we partake of Him and enjoy Him. Faith partakes of and enjoys what it receives and accepts.

In the preaching of the gospel, people hear of God's grace. Then they appreciate it and call upon the Lord. They go on to receive, accept, join, partake of, and enjoy this grace, which is the Triune God processed to be everything to us. This is faith.

THE HEARING OF FAITH IN THE MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

Faith was not to be found in the Old Testament; it came with Jesus Christ. When Christ came, grace came, and faith came also. Faith has come to replace law. Therefore, as believers in Christ, we are hearers, not workers. In the church meetings we gather together for the hearing of faith. Those who do not attend the meetings cut them-selves off from opportunities for the hearing of faith. If we are cut off from the hearing, we are also cut off from the supply.

Do not stay away from the meetings because you think you will simply hear the same things over and over again. We need to eat breakfast every morning even though we may eat the same thing almost every day. If we refuse to eat because the food is the same, we shall not receive our necessary supply of food. In the same principle, we need to attend the church meetings in order to receive God's supply. We can testify that it makes a great difference whether or not we come to the meetings for the hearing of faith. Time and time again, we may hear of Christ and the church, of Christ's death and resurrection, and of how Christ has been processed to become the life-giving Spirit. But each time we hear these things, we receive the supply

of the Spirit. Therefore, a proper Christian meeting is a hearing meeting, a meeting for the hearing of faith.

Those who speak in the church meetings should also be hearers, for they also hear the very things they are speaking. Those of us who speak in the church can testify that the more we speak, the more we hear. A proper speaker speaks first to himself and then to others. If you do not speak to yourself first, your speaking is not genuine. If we are genuine speakers, we should be the first to enjoy our speaking.

Meeting by meeting we come together for the hearing of faith. This faith is the appreciation, receiving, and accepting of God's grace. Through faith we are joined to God's grace, we partake of God's grace, and we enjoy God's grace. As we have pointed out again and again, this grace is the Triune God processed to become our enjoyment and every-thing to us.

GOD'S INTENTION IN HIS ECONOMY

How wrong the Galatian believers were to turn back to the law! God does not want us to be workers of law; He wants us to be hearers of His grace. As we hear His grace, grace spontaneously becomes our faith. Before faith came, God used the law to keep us, hold us, and retain us. But now that faith has come, we no longer need the law. With the law there is no enjoyment, no grace. But with faith there is an abundance of enjoyment, for faith is related to grace. Today we experience the hearing of faith. By this hearing of faith we continually receive the supply of the all-inclusive Spirit.

According to the revelation in the book of Galatians, God's New Testament economy is not that we strive in the flesh to keep the law. In this matter the Judaizers had altogether missed the mark. No genuine believers in Christ should be distracted by such folly. In His New Testament economy God intends to make us hearers of faith. This faith is the reflection of the Triune God processed to become our all-inclusive grace. God desires that we become

those who continually hear the faith which reflects His grace. Grace is nothing less than the Triune God--the Father, the Son, and the Spirit--to be our life and our everything so that we may enjoy Him in a full way. Through this enjoyment we become one with Him. We become a universal and eternal entity to express His marvelous divinity. This is the revelation contained in the depths of this book.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE FIFTEEN

THE SPIRIT--THE BLESSING OF THE GOSPEL

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:5, 8-9, 14; Eph. 1:13; Acts 2:33, 39; John 7:39; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; Phil. 1:19

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN FAITH AND LAW

In chapter three there is a strong contrast between faith and law. Law was the basis for the relationship between man and God in the Old Testament, whereas faith is the principle by which people contact God in the New Testament. The Old Testament was a dispensation of law, whereas the New Testament is a dispensation of faith. As the basis for the relationship between man and God, the law requires that man use his own effort to fulfill the law's requirements in order to please God. The law is not related to God intrinsically. Rather, it stands apart from God and places demands upon man that must be fulfilled if man is to please God. According to the principle of faith, man is not required to strive in his flesh to please God. Instead, man is to hear how God desires to be everything to him. God has planned to bless us. For our sake, He became incarnated, lived on earth, and died to accomplish redemption. He has been resurrected from among the dead and has become the life-giving Spirit. Now He is calling people to receive Him. He is eagerly expecting to come into people and to be their life and their everything so that they may be one with Him. This is the hearing of faith.

In this hearing of faith, we hear all the well-speaking of God, all His blessing. Faith involves the hearing concerning all the good things of God toward us. Through this hearing an appreciation for the Lord Jesus is awakened within us. Out of our appreciation for the Lord,

we spontaneously call

on His name. In this way we receive Him, accept Him, and join ourselves to Him. Then we go on to partake of Him and enjoy Him. All this is related to faith. Law requires man to work, but faith receives all that God is, all that God has planned and purposed, all that God has accomplished, all that God has obtained and attained, and all that God intends to impart into us. With law, there are demands. But with faith there are no demands; there is only the receiving of the processed Triune God. By receiving the Triune God, we also receive redemption, salvation, forgiveness, eternal life, and all the heavenly, divine, and spiritual things. What a contrast between law and faith! Surely it is foolish to turn from faith and go back to the law.

TWELVE CRUCIAL SUBJECTS

We have pointed out that Galatians 3 is a very difficult chapter, one of the most difficult chapters in the New Testament. In this chapter Paul seems to go from one subject to another. Many read this chapter without having any idea what Paul is talking about. It seems that the points covered are not related to one another. The way to understand this chapter is not to go verse by verse. Rather, it is to concentrate on the main points. In this chapter Paul covers at least twelve major subjects: Christ crucified; Christ and the Spirit; the hearing of faith versus works of law; the Spirit as the blessing of the gospel; the Spirit versus the flesh; the gospel preached to Abraham; the promise versus the law; faith replacing law; the seed of Abraham and the sons of Abraham; baptized into Christ; putting on Christ; and all one in Christ. These are the crucial points in this chapter. If we spend time to consider them and to dwell on them in prayer, we shall be greatly helped in understanding this chapter.

Having covered the subjects of Christ crucified, Christ and the Spirit, and the hearing of faith versus works of law, we come in this message to the Spirit as the blessing of the gospel. During the years I have been a Christian, I

have heard that many things are the blessing of the gospel: salvation, redemption, forgiveness, eternal life. In Christianity people are often told that being able to go to heaven and to live in a mansion is a great blessing related to the gospel. Have you ever heard that the blessing of the gospel is the Spirit?

THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD

In the Bible, where words are always used economically, *the* Spirit has a particular meaning, somewhat different from the Holy Spirit. In Galatians Paul speaks not of the Holy Spirit, but of *the* Spirit. The total blessing of the gospel is not salvation, redemption, forgiveness, life, or going to heaven--it is the Spirit. The Spirit denotes the Triune God--the Father, the Son, and the Spirit--who has been processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Only after He had entered into resurrection did the Lord Jesus command His disciples to baptize people into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The reason for this is that prior to the resurrection of Christ, the Triune God had not been fully processed. In the words of John 7:39, the Spirit was "not yet," even though the Holy Spirit was already in existence, as indicated by the record of Matthew 1 and Luke 1. The New Testament tells us clearly that the Holy Spirit was involved in the conception of the Lord Jesus in the womb of the virgin Mary. But *the* Spirit as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit was "not yet" until the resurrection of Christ. John 7:39 tells us that the Spirit was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified. The Lord was glorified in His resurrection (Luke 24:26). Therefore, after His glorification by resurrection, *the* Spirit was in existence.

From the Gospels we proceed to the Acts and to the Epistles. Paul's ministry was a completing ministry. In Colossians 1:25 he says that he became a minister according to the stewardship of God to complete the word of God. Hence, the completion of God's word is found neither in the Gospels, nor in the Acts, but in the Epistles

of Paul. In particular, the divine revelation is completed in four books: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. In Paul's Epistles the Spirit is revealed in a full way. We do not have such a revelation of the Spirit in the Gospels or in the Acts. The Spirit as revealed in Paul's writings is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit processed to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. This Spirit enters into the believers to be their life and everything to them. Such a Spirit is the total blessing of the gospel. As the blessing of the gospel, the Spirit includes forgiveness, redemption, salvation, reconciliation, justification, eternal life, the divine nature, the uplifted and resurrected human nature, and the very Triune God Himself.

THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM

Galatians 3:13 and 14 say, "Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse on our behalf; because it is written, Cursed is every one hanging on a tree, in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations in Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Because it combines the promise of the Spirit with the blessing of Abraham, verse 14 is extremely important. The blessing of Abraham is the blessing promised by God to Abraham (Gen. 12:3) for all the nations of the earth. This promise was fulfilled, and this blessing has come to the nations in Christ through His redemption by the cross. The context of verse 14 indicates that the Spirit is the blessing which God promised to Abraham for all the nations and which has been received by the believers through faith in Christ. The Spirit is the compound Spirit and actually is God Himself processed in His Trinity through incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and descension, for us to receive as our life and our everything. This is the focus of the gospel of God.

The physical aspect of the blessing God promised to Abraham was the good land (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 17:8; 26:3-4), which was a type of the all-inclusive Christ (Col. 1:12).

Since Christ is eventually realized as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17), the blessing of the promised Spirit corresponds to the blessing of the promised land. Actually, the Spirit as the realization of Christ in our experience is the good land as the source of God's bountiful supply for us to enjoy.

If we read the book of Genesis, we shall see that the focal point of God's promise to Abraham was that Abraham's seed would inherit the land. According to Galatians 3, Christ is this seed, the unique seed. Furthermore, as we have often pointed out, the good land is a full type of the all-inclusive Christ. On the one hand, the seed is Christ; on the other hand, the land is a type of Christ. The blessing of Abraham is altogether related to Christ. Christ is the focus of the promised blessing.

RECEIVING THE SPIRIT AS THE BLESSING

However, verse 14 does not say that in receiving the blessing of Abraham we receive Christ. Instead, this verse tells us that we receive the Spirit. Surely this indicates that the Spirit here is the blessing of Abraham.

What kind of Spirit could be the blessing God promised to Abraham? What Spirit would be the all-inclusive blessing, which is Christ as the seed and as the land? It must be *the* Spirit, the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. First Corinthians 15:45 says that the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit, and 2 Corinthians 3:17 declares that now the Lord is the Spirit. In 2 Corinthians 3:17 the King James Version says "that Spirit." This rendering is not accurate, for the Greek word uses the definite article. Hence, the proper rendering is "the Spirit," referring to the Spirit who was "not yet" until Christ had been glorified.

At the time of the Lord's incarnation, the Holy Spirit began to have the element of humanity as well as divinity. From that time, the Holy Spirit was compounded with the Lord's human living, crucifixion, and resurrection and became the Spirit, the all-inclusive Spirit compounded with divinity, humanity, and the Lord's human living, death,

and resurrection. All that God has purposed and planned and all that He has accomplished through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection is included in *the* Spirit. Hence, *the* Spirit is all-inclusive, the Triune God processed to be everything to us. This Spirit is the blessing of the gospel.

RECEIVING THE SPIRIT BY FAITH

We have received this Spirit by faith. When we began to appreciate the Lord Jesus and believe in Him, we received the Spirit. In this receiving of the Spirit, the manifestation of gifts or the speaking in tongues had no place, for we received the Spirit by the hearing of faith.

A TESTIMONY TO THE PROPER EXPERIENCE OF THE INNER LIFE

Let me tell you something of my own history. I was born into organized Christianity. After I was saved, I came to love the Bible. During my years with the Brethren, I acquired a considerable amount of Bible knowledge. Eventually, I met Brother Nee, one who knew both the inner life and the church. He helped me to experience the inner life and also the church life. Then in 1936, along with others, I began to pursue the so-called Pentecostal experiences, in particular, the experience of speaking in tongues. For a period of time, I was bold and strong in this matter. However, I came to realize that nothing can compare with the experience of the inner life in the church, and I gave up my involvement with the Pentecostal things. I spontaneously dropped those things in favor of enjoying the inner life in the church life. We did not receive any benefit from the Pentecostal things. On the contrary, those things only caused problems.

In 1943 the church in my home town, Chefoo, was carried away from the proper inner life to the excesses of the Pentecostal things. I was ill at the time, and the leading ones did not know how to handle the situation. We realized that this problem was related to the power of

darkness and that the only way to deal with it was to pray. Awhile later, a sister in the church died of tuberculosis. Immediately, a sister who took the lead among those who spoke in tongues prophesied that the deceased sister would be raised from the dead at noon the following day. This particular sister went on to tell the husband of the sister who had died that there was no need for him to make funeral arrangements since his wife would be raised from the dead. The next day hundreds of people gathered together, waiting for this miracle to take place. They waited until twelve noon, but nothing happened. Finally, about three o'clock in the afternoon, one of the elders told the people that they should pay no further attention to the nonsensical prophecy which had been given. He further advised the husband of the deceased sister to make the necessary arrangements for the funeral. The crowd was dispersed, and everyone went home, disappointed and dejected. This one incident caused the church to come back to the proper experience of the inner life, and to turn away from the Pentecostal things.

As the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, the processed Triune God inspires His servants to preach the good word of the gospel. As people listen to this well-speaking, spontaneously an appreciation for the Lord Jesus is stirred up within them. They also appreciate Christ's redemption, eternal life, and the precious forgiveness of sins. Out of their appreciation they call on the Lord and thereby receive the Spirit as the full blessing of the gospel of God. The experience and the expression may differ, but we all are the same in having received the Spirit. No matter how we were brought to the Lord, we all have received the Spirit as the blessing of the gospel through the hearing faith.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIC UNION

In God's New Testament economy, the principle of the hearing of faith replaces the law. By faith we are brought into an organic union with the Triune God. If we had not

been frustrated by religion with its teachings, this organic union would have been fully developed by now. Today in His recovery the Lord is developing this organic union, and He will cause it to be developed to the uttermost. The more this union is developed, the more we enjoy the total blessing of the gospel.

THE COMPOUND SPIRIT

The Spirit we have received as the blessing of the gospel is the all-inclusive, compound Spirit typified by the compound ointment in Exodus 30:23-25. The compounding of the spices with the olive oil to produce the ointment typifies the compounding of Christ's humanity, death, and resurrection with the Spirit of God to produce the all-inclusive Spirit. This Spirit is the bountiful supply to the believers in God's New Testament economy (Gal. 3:5; Phil. 1:19). By faith we have received this Spirit as the blessing of the gospel promised to Abraham by God. As the processed Triune God, the Spirit is the full realization of the all-inclusive Christ as the good land. This is the Spirit as the total blessing of the gospel.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE SIXTEEN

THE SPIRIT VERSUS THE FLESH

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:2-3, 5, 14; 5:16-19; 1:16; 2:16; 4:23, 29; 5:13, 22; 6:8, 12-13; 4:6; 5:5, 25

In this message we come to a very crucial subject: the Spirit versus the flesh. Because of the influence of our background in Christianity, our understanding of the terms Spirit and flesh in the New Testament is limited. Actually, these terms have a very broad significance. They are two of the most important expressions used in the New Testament.

DEFINITIONS OF THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

In 3:3 Paul asks the Galatian believers, "Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" The Spirit, who is the resurrected Christ, is of life. The flesh, which is our fallen man, is of sin and death. We should not begin by the Spirit and attempt to be perfected by the flesh. Those of us who have begun by the Spirit should be perfected by the Spirit and have nothing to do with the flesh. In 2:20 the contrast is between Christ and "I"; here the contrast is between the Spirit and the flesh. This indicates that the Spirit is Christ and the flesh is "I" in our experience. From chapter three to the end of the Epistle, the Spirit is Christ in our life experience. In revelation it is Christ; in experience it is the Spirit.

The flesh is condemned and repudiated throughout this entire book (1:16; 2:16; 3:3; 4:23, 29; 5:13, 16-17, 19; 6:8, 12-13), and from chapter three, every chapter gives a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit (3:3; 4:29; 5:16-17, 19, 22; 6:8). The flesh is the uttermost expression of the fallen tripartite man, and the Spirit is the ultimate realization of

the processed Triune God. The flesh inclines to keep the law and is tested by the law. The Spirit is received and enjoyed by faith. God's economy delivers us from the flesh to the Spirit that we may participate in the blessing of the riches of the Triune God. This cannot take place by the flesh keeping the law, but takes place by the Spirit being received by faith and experienced through faith.

In the book of Galatians, the flesh does not refer merely to man's fallen and corrupted body. Rather, it refers to the totality of man's fallen being. The flesh is therefore the uttermost expression of the fallen tripartite man. Hence, the flesh in this sense includes man's body, soul, and spirit. If you consider the works of the flesh listed in 5:19-21, you will find that some, such as fornication, uncleanness, sensuality, and drunkenness, are related to the lust of the corrupted body; others, such as enmities, strife, angers, and divisions, are related to the fallen soul; and still others, idolatry and sorcery, are related to the deadened spirit. This proves that the three parts of our fallen being are involved with the evil flesh. Therefore, in Galatians the flesh denotes the whole of man's fallen being. The flesh is not just a part of man's fallen being; it includes the totality of the fallen tripartite man.

According to the revelation in the New Testament, the Spirit is the ultimate realization of the processed Triune God. God is the Spirit, and fallen man is the flesh. God is the processed Triune God, and the flesh is the fallen tripartite man. Have you ever realized that man today is the fallen tripartite man and that God is the processed Triune God? The fallen tripartite man is the flesh, and the processed Triune God is the Spirit. Just as the flesh in Galatians refers not only to the corrupted and lustful body, but to the totality of fallen man, so the Spirit refers not only to the third Person of the Triune God, but to the Triune God who has been processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. The flesh refers to our entire fallen being, and the Spirit, to the entire Triune God, to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Having been processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, the Triune God is today the Spirit. When we read of the flesh in the New Testament, we need to realize that it denotes the totality of man's fallen being. In the same principle, when we read of the Spirit in the Epistles of Paul, we need to understand that the Spirit denotes the Triune God--the Father, the Son, and the Spirit--processed to become the all-inclusive life-imparting Spirit.

SATAN'S MISUSE OF THE LAW

God's economy is to dispense Himself as the processed Triune God into our being to be our life and our everything, to make Himself one with us and us one with Him so that we may express Him in a corporate way for eternity. However, in the attempt to frustrate God's economy, Satan, the enemy of God, uses the law, which was given by God to serve His purpose temporarily, to keep God's chosen people from His economy and to distract them from it. If we look at the book of Galatians from this point of view, we shall find that it is not difficult to understand. As we read this Epistle, we need to see that God's economy is to impart Himself as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit into us to produce an organic union between us and the Triune God so that we may express Him in a corporate way. But Satan utilizes the law given by God in order to distract God's people from His economy and to hinder the fulfillment of God's economy.

It is important to understand clearly what it means for the law to be misused. The law is misused when it is used to stir up fallen man's desire to uplift himself by keeping the law in order to have a self-made righteousness. The Judaizers misused the law in this way to distract the believers from God's economy. What we see in the book of Galatians is this misuse of the God-given law. The law given by God was misused by Satan to keep God's chosen people from God's economy.

THE WAY OF FAITH

In a foregoing message we have pointed out that the works of law are contrary to the hearing of faith. Faith is the way for God's people to apprehend, comprehend, grasp, enjoy, and participate in all that God is to His people through His having been processed to become the Spirit. According to Galatians, the law has been replaced by faith. In our experience, the law should be over, and faith should be prevailing.

Just as the law and the flesh go together, so faith and the Spirit go together. Whenever we try to keep the law, we are immediately in the flesh. But when we take the way of faith to hear, appreciate, call upon, receive, accept, join, partake of, and enjoy, we spontaneously experience the Spirit. This can be confirmed by our experience. Whenever we strive to keep the law, we are in the flesh, in the fallen tripartite man. But whenever we take the way of faith, we are in our spirit enjoying the Spirit. Here, in the way of faith, we enjoy the Spirit as the processed Triune God. Furthermore, the way of faith causes the organic union between the processed God and regenerated man to be developed and cultivated. God intends that this organic union be developed to the uttermost.

HOW SATAN FRUSTRATES THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIC UNION

However, I am burdened to point out that in his subtlety, Satan has frustrated the cultivation and development of this organic union. He has done this through the use of three isms: Catholicism, Protestantism, and Pentecostalism. These three isms in today's Christianity have been utilized by Satan to hinder God's economy by frustrating the development of the organic union between the regenerated man and the processed Triune God. Suppose that in this country these three isms did not exist, and there was only the Lord's recovery. If this were the situation, surely the organic union between us

and God would become highly developed in a short period of time. However, it is a fact that this organic union has been frustrated. It has been frustrated not mainly by Judaism, Islam, or Buddhism, but by Catholicism, Protestantism, and Pentecostalism. Just as Satan used Judaism in ancient times, so he uses these isms today to keep God's people from the proper development of their organic union with the Triune God.

The principle Satan follows in doing this is to take something given by God and to cause it to be used in a wrong way. This principle can be seen, for instance, in Catholicism, where certain God-given things can be found. Many genuine believers in Catholicism have been bewitched by Satan's use of these God-given things. Because certain things of God can be found in the Catholic Church, many will rise up to vindicate it, arguing that there is certainly something of God to be found there. Let us remember the Lord's prophecy in Matthew 13:33 concerning the Catholic Church: "Another parable He spoke to them: The kingdom of the heavens is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." Like the woman in this parable, the Catholic Church has mixed leaven with fine flour. It has blended satanic things with the things given by God. Therefore, what we find in Catholicism is a mixture of Satanic things and God-given things. In Revelation 17 the Catholic Church is presented as a woman with a golden cup full of abominations. This is the actual situation of Catholicism.

In the same principle, we cannot deny that there is something of God in Protestantism. Some things given by God are found there. However, Satan utilizes these things to frustrate God's economy and to hinder the development of the organic union. Most of the genuine believers in the Protestant denominations have never even heard of this organic union. Many do not even know that Christ lives in them. People may be brought to the Lord through Catholicism or Protestantism. But after they have been brought to Him, they are hindered from going on to

experience Him. Through the gospel preaching in Protestantism, many sinners have been saved. Nevertheless, after they were saved and became believers, they were kept from experiencing Christ by the very denominations through which they were saved.

The third ism, Pentecostalism, is more subtle than Catholicism and Protestantism. After more than fifty years of study and experience, I can testify that nothing is more subtle in hindering God's people from experiencing Christ than today's Pentecostalism. For a number of years, we in the Lord's recovery in China were under the influence of the Pentecostal things. Through our experience we can testify that our involvement with Pentecostalism was more of a loss than a gain.

The greatest damage of Pentecostalism is that it makes it difficult for believers to appreciate the inward organic union with the Triune God. The emphasis in Pentecostalism is on outward manifestations. It is difficult for those who emphasize such things to calm down and know the Spirit in their regenerated spirit and to follow the inner anointing. Many in Pentecostalism neither know nor care that they have a regenerated spirit. Rather, they care mainly for the manifestation of the so-called gifts. They are interested in speaking in tongues, healing, and miracles, not in the development and cultivation of the organic union with the Triune God.

In 1963 I was invited to speak to a certain Pentecostal group. After one of the meetings, the leader of this group and his wife tried to get a particular Chinese brother to speak in tongues. The wife told him not to speak either English or Chinese, but any other words which came to mind. The brother realized that in order to get out of that situation he had to say something. Remembering a few words in the Malay language he happened to know, he uttered some nonsensical expression in that language. Immediately the leader of this Pentecostal group and his wife clapped their hands and rejoiced that this brother had spoken in tongues. The next day I pointed out to that

couple what had actually happened and went on to question them about this practice.

Furthermore, in one of the meetings of this same Pentecostal group, a woman gave a short word in tongues. Then a young man gave a long interpretation of that word. Later the leader of the group admitted that the interpretation given by the young man was not genuine. I then asked him why he engaged in these practices when we have such a rich Christ to minister to others. He had nothing to say in response to my question. Much later the young man who had given that interpretation denied that what he spoke was intended to be the interpretation of that woman's message in tongues. I reminded him that he had clearly indicated to all present that he was giving an interpretation. I went on to say, "There is no need for us to do these things. I definitely believe that you love the Lord. Why don't you simply preach the truth and minister the riches of Christ to others?"

The claim has even been made in some Pentecostal groups that in their meetings people's teeth have been filled with gold miraculously. I absolutely do not believe such reports. Why would God not restore the teeth instead of filling them with gold? That would be more in agreement with the principle in the Bible. Furthermore, if such miracles had actually taken place, newsmen would learn of them and publicize them.

Another case concerns the leader in a Pentecostal group who claimed that he had been given the ability to speak Chinese. One day he uttered certain peculiar sounds, believing that he was speaking the Chinese language. I and another Chinese-speaking brother pointed out that we could not understand a word he said, even though I spoke Mandarin, the other brother spoke Cantonese, and we both had understanding of other Chinese dialects. However, this Pentecostal leader proceeded to utter some different sounds. We also had to tell him that we could not recognize them as words in the Chinese language. When this brother heard this, he was disappointed. In his self-deception he

had the assurance that he was able to speak Chinese. But the Chinese he spoke was a self-made language. Such incidents are common in today's Pentecostalism.

A certain charismatic magazine printed an article in which the writer said that he had contacted two hundred people who claimed to speak in tongues. Without exception, all of these two hundred doubted that the tongue spoken was genuine. However, the writer encouraged them all to go on speaking in tongues regardless of their doubts about the genuineness of what they were uttering. We read this article publicly in the training in 1963. Then I asked the trainees if Peter and the others on the day of Pentecost had any doubt whether the tongues spoken by them were genuine. Certainly Peter and the others had no such doubts. However, these two hundred tongues-speakers had doubts because the tongues they spoke were not genuine.

In 1963 and 1964 there were newspaper reports about some Pentecostal prophecies that an earthquake would strike the city of Los Angeles and that the city would fall into the ocean. However, the date of the predicted earthquake passed, and nothing happened. Certainly this lack of fulfillment is sufficient to prove that this prophecy was a falsehood.

I would like to cite another example from our experience in the Far East. After we had moved to Taiwan and had begun the work there, I pointed out to the saints that, according to our experience on the mainland, it was best that we leave Christianity alone. I also advised them not to become involved with Pentecostal things. Instead, I encouraged them simply to preach the gospel to unbelievers. For years we preached the gospel in an aggressive way, flooding the cities with tracts and posters. After six years, our number increased from less than five hundred to more than twenty thousand. During the early 1960s, while I was away from Taiwan, a certain Pentecostal woman minister became quite prevailing in Malaysia and exerted a considerable influence over some

saints in the Lord's recovery. She even seized control of a small church in Malaysia. However, one elderly brother and three young people refused to go along with this situation, for they were clear concerning the truth. In 1965 this lady preacher planned to hold a conference in Taiwan, especially for those in the local churches. She intended to take over all the churches on the island of Taiwan. Although I had no knowledge of this situation, I became burdened to visit Taiwan in September 1965, the very month this conference was scheduled. When I arrived, I learned for the first time of this conference. This woman, who was noted for saying that it was not necessary for tongues-speaking to be a real dialect or language, suddenly developed cancer of the tongue and was not able to go to Taiwan for the conference. Prophecies were given that a world-wide revival would begin from Taiwan in 1966 and that she would be healed. However, there was no revival, and she died. After her death, a prophecy was made and put in writing that she would be resurrected. But this so-called prophecy was not fulfilled.

WALKING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT IN OUR SPIRIT

Because of all that I have learned and experienced, sometimes with much suffering, I have come to realize that along with Catholicism and Protestantism, Pentecostalism is a frustration to God's economy. It is a great hindrance to the development of the organic union between us and the Triune God. According to Paul's Epistles, the Triune God has been processed to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. When this Spirit comes into man's spirit, an organic union is created. Now that we are organically united to the Triune God, we can live by Him in our spirit.

In 1 Corinthians Paul was dealing with the misuse of tongues-speaking. In chapter seven of this book we find an excellent example of living according to the organic union. In verse 25 Paul says, "Now concerning virgins I have no

commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." After presenting his opinion on the matter, Paul concludes by saying, "I think also that I have the Spirit of God" (v. 40). Here we see the New Testament way, the way of incarnation. According to this way, there is the mingling of divinity with humanity. God does not act alone, and man does not act alone. Rather, God acts in oneness with His saved people, for an organic union has taken place between the processed Triune God and those who have been regenerated. All that we say and do should issue from this union, this mingling of God and man. This is very different from the practice of today's Pentecostalism, which in its so-called prophecies follows the Old Testament way of saying, "Thus saith the Lord." In the New Testament, however, we do not read of "Thus saith the Lord"; instead we read of what Paul says or of what Peter and John say. According to 1 Corinthians 7, even though Paul had no commandment from the Lord regarding virgins, he could still speak a word in which the Spirit of God was expressed. This is the New Testament way. We need to follow this way to develop the organic union between the processed God and regenerated man.

We have pointed out emphatically that in Galatians the Spirit denotes the processed Triune God and that the flesh denotes the totality of the fallen tripartite man. If we see this contrast, we shall not want to live in ourselves, apart from God. Anything we do independently of the Lord is of the flesh. It is crucial that we realize that we have been joined organically to the Triune God. He and we, we and He, are mingled together as one. Such an organic union has taken place in our spirit. Therefore, we should walk according to the Spirit in our spirit. This is God's New Testament economy, the way in which His eternal purpose is carried out.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE SEVENTEEN

THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO ABRAHAM

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:6-11,14,16-17; Gen. 12:7; Col. 1:12b; Eph. 3:6, 9, 11

When I first learned that long before Christ came the gospel was preached to Abraham, I was greatly surprised. Galatians 3:8 says, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham: In you all the nations shall be blessed." According to Genesis 12:3, in Abraham all the nations would be blessed. In Genesis 12:7 the Lord went on to say to Abraham, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." There are two main aspects of God's word to Abraham in Genesis 12: the first is that in him all nations would be blessed; the second is that the land would be given to Abraham's seed. In Christ, Abraham's unique seed, the nations would be blessed. Furthermore, to this unique seed the land would be given. This was God's word to Abraham.

In Galatians 3:16 Paul refers to God's word to Abraham as a promise: "To Abraham were the promises spoken and to his seed." Then in verse 17 Paul goes on to speak of a covenant ratified beforehand by God. This indicates that the promise God gave to Abraham became a covenant, which is more firm than a promise. The word, the promise, and the covenant are the gospel which was preached to Abraham. The gospel is the covenant, the covenant is the promise, and the promise is the word spoken by God.

It is important to see the difference between these four terms. A word is common or ordinary, whereas a promise is much more specific. If you give a promise to someone, your

word is not common; it is specific. You promise to do certain things for that person. The word God spoke to Abraham in Genesis 12 was not common; it was a specific word in which God promised Abraham that in him and in his seed the nations would be blessed. We have pointed out that in this chapter God also promised Abraham that his seed would possess the land. Because the word spoken to Abraham in Genesis 12 is very specific, it is a word of promise.

In Genesis 15 this promise became a covenant. Here God appeared to Abraham, and Abraham offered a sacrifice to Him. The sacrifice was divided, and God passed through it. This was a custom in ancient times by which two parties ratified a covenant. By walking through the sacrifice, these parties ratified a covenant in an official and proper manner. In this way the promise given in Genesis 12 was ratified as a covenant in Genesis 15. Then in Genesis 17 the covenant was confirmed by the sign of circumcision.

In Galatians 3 Paul says that the word spoken to Abraham, the word which became a covenant confirmed by circumcision, was the gospel preached to Abraham. In Galatians 3 we are given Paul's understanding and interpretation. Perhaps this interpretation came as a revelation to Paul during the years he was alone with the Lord. Paul came to see that what God had spoken to Abraham was not just a promise or merely a covenant ratified and confirmed, but that it was the very gospel. In this covenant, Paul learned, the main items of the new testament gospel were included. Thus, the covenant ratified with Abraham was a forerunner of the new covenant, of the new testament.

The new testament is a new covenant ratified by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. The Lord offered Himself up as a sacrifice to God. In a sense, God walked through the sacrifice offered to Him on the cross by Christ. This new covenant may be considered as either a repetition or a continuation of the covenant ratified with Abraham. The

gospel we are preaching today is not merely a promise; it is also a covenant.

In message forty-one of the Life-study of Hebrews, we pointed out the difference between a covenant and a testament. A covenant refers to an agreement concerning things promised, but not yet accomplished. A testament denotes an agreement in which the promised items have been accomplished. When all the items of the promise are accomplished, the covenant becomes a testament. The modern term for testament is will. The new testament is the new will. A will is not an agreement in which the testator promises to do certain things for others. No, a will is a testament which says that the testator has already done certain things or given certain things to particular people. The gospel we preach is first a covenant. Ultimately, however, it is a testament. At the time of Abraham this gospel could not have been a testament. It could only have been a covenant in which God promised to bless all the nations in Abraham and to give the good land to Abraham's seed. Later, in Genesis 15, this promise became a ratified covenant. But for us the new covenant is a new testament because all the promised things have been accomplished by Christ. All the nations have been blessed in Christ, and the good land has been given to Abraham's seed. Therefore, what we receive today is not a new covenant; it is a new testament, a new will. This will is the gospel.

Paul received a marvelous understanding of spiritual things. Without the revelation given to him, we would not have the confidence to say that the covenant ratified with Abraham was the gospel preached to Abraham. But Paul boldly declares that the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham (3:8). Apart from Paul's word in Galatians 3, we would not realize that God's word to Abraham was the gospel. Although the gospel is a matter of the new testament, it is important for us to realize that the new testament is a continuation or repetition of God's promise to Abraham.

I. THE GOSPEL BY FAITH THROUGH MAN'S BELIEVING

In 3:6-9 we see that the gospel is by faith through man's believing. This gospel was altogether by faith, not by works of law. In Genesis 12, 15, and 17 Abraham had the hearing of faith. This hearing stirred up a sense of appreciation within him. We are told that Abraham believed God and that God reckoned his believing as righteousness (Gen. 15:6). The preaching of the gospel was received by Abraham through the hearing of faith.

II. NOT AS THE LAW BY WORKS THROUGH MAN'S WORKING

The gospel is not as the law, which is by works through man's working. In 3:10 and 11 we see a contrast between the gospel by faith and the law by works. The one is through man's believing; the other, through man's working.

III. PREACHED BEFORE THE GIVING OF THE LAW THROUGH MOSES

The gospel was preached not only before the accomplishing of redemption by Christ, but also before the giving of the law through Moses. In 3:17 Paul says, "And I say this, a covenant ratified beforehand by God, the law having come four hundred and thirty years after does not annul, so as to make the promise of none effect " God's promise to Abraham was given first. The law came four hundred thirty years later. The promise was permanent, but the law was temporary. The temporary law, which came later, cannot annul the permanent promise, which came first. The Galatians left the first and permanent promise and went back to the later and temporary law.

The four hundred thirty years mentioned in 3:17 are counted from the time God gave Abraham the promise in Genesis 12 to the time He gave the law through Moses in Exodus 20. This period was considered by God as the time

of the children of Israel's dwelling in Egypt (Exo. 12:40-41). The four hundred years mentioned in Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6 are counted from the time Ishmael mocked Isaac in Genesis 21 to the time the children of Israel came out of Egyptian tyranny in Exodus 12. This is the period when Abraham's descendants suffered the persecution of the Gentiles.

Paul's intention was to show that the law given through Moses was not God's original intention, but something secondary and additional. Because the law is not like Sarah, the genuine wife, but like Hagar, the concubine, it does not have the proper position. It was given four hundred thirty years after the gospel was preached to Abraham. Since God does not change, how could He preach the gospel to Abraham and then, four hundred thirty years later, command the people to fulfill the law in order to satisfy Him? The law was given for the purpose of exposing God's chosen people and keeping them in His custody.

IV. AS A PROMISE GIVEN TO ABRAHAM

The gospel was preached to Abraham as the promise that in him all nations would be blessed. The word blessed in Genesis 12:3 is of great significance. Through Adam's fall, the human race was brought under the curse. But God promised Abraham that in him and because of him the nations, which had been brought under the curse, would be blessed. According to Galatians 3:13, the curse has been taken away. Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law so that the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations in Him. Christ died a substitutionary death on the cross to deliver us from the curse brought in by Adam. Now in Christ all the nations will be blessed. Hence, the blessing promised to Abraham comes to us through Christ's redemption. The curse has been taken away, and the blessing has come. All the nations have been blessed in Christ, Abraham's unique seed.

This blessing has the good land as the center. The good

land typifies the all-inclusive Christ realized by the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit to be the blessing of the gospel (Gen. 12:7; Col. 1:12b; Gal. 3:14). We have pointed out again and again that the good land is a complete type of the all-inclusive Christ. After His resurrection, Christ is realized as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. Ultimately, this all-inclusive life-giving Spirit is our good land. Since the Spirit in Galatians denotes the processed Triune God, we may say that the good land is the very processed Triune God. In the gospel what God gives us is nothing less than Himself.

To children, their mother is everything. As long as children have their mother, they are happy. Using this as an illustration of our relationship to the Triune God, we can say that the processed Triune God is the all-inclusive One who is everything to us and that this One is our good land. When the children of Israel entered into the good land, they had no lack. Therefore, this good land is a type of the processed Triune God who is realized in full as the all-inclusive Spirit indwelling our spirit. The good land today is in our spirit.

When the all-inclusive Spirit comes into our spirit, a certain transaction takes place. This transaction is what we call the organic union. In his *Word Studies in The New Testament*, M. R. Vincent, commenting on Matthew 28:19, says that "baptizing into the name of the Holy Trinity implies a spiritual and mystical union with Him." The Greek word for "into" in Matthew 28:19 indicates a union in life. Thus, baptism should not be a ritual; it should be the accomplishment of the organic union.

It is ridiculous to ask believers if they have received the Spirit. How could we have failed to receive the Spirit inasmuch as we have entered into an organic union with the Triune God? We have been grafted into Him. The process of grafting begins with appreciating the Lord, and it is accomplished by baptism. When you first heard the gospel, an appreciation for the Lord Jesus was awakened within you. Then you were willing to be baptized, at which

time the organic union, the grafting, was accomplished. You were grafted into the Triune God. A sinner who believes in Jesus can then be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The name denotes the Person. How marvelous that sinners can be baptized into the Triune God! The union accomplished through baptism is an intrinsic union, a union in life. If someone asks you if you have received the Holy Spirit, you may want to tell him that you have received the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

If we were to preach the gospel in a place where no one had heard the gospel before, those who heard our messages would immediately experience the organic union with the Triune God. Then we could easily help them to develop this union and not to live any longer by the self. To live by the organic union is to live by the Spirit, by the processed Triune God. There is no need for us to seek experiences such as speaking in tongues, for we can live by the Triune God in our spirit. In Taiwan we did not practice tongues-speaking, but within six years we increased from five hundred to twenty thousand. By contrast, many of those who emphasize the Pentecostal things have been fruitless. The organic union with the Triune God is much more powerful and prevailing than speaking in tongues. It is not necessary to practice tongues-speaking to have spiritual power. Through the organic union with the Triune God, I am energized and filled with power. The Lord's recovery has spread to five continents, not through speaking in tongues, but through the organic union. Praise the Lord that this organic union is in us all! I have the confidence that the recovery will continue to spread by means of this union. Again and again we need to come back to our spirit to experience the hearing of faith. The more hearing we have, the more appreciation there will be and also more calling, receiving, accepting, joining, partaking, and enjoying.

Galatians 3:8 says that the nations are justified by faith. In verse 11 Paul goes on to say, "Now that by law no one is justified before God is evident, because, The just by

faith shall live." In verse 14 Paul points out that we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Faith in Christ brings us into the blessing God promised to Abraham, which is the promise of the Spirit. The believing ones are justified by faith, and they have life and live by faith. As justified ones, we live by the organic union and participate in the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. This Spirit is the blessing of the gospel. What God promised to Abraham corresponds to what He accomplished by Christ. This accomplishment is the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham. Moreover, it is according to God's eternal purpose and His new testament economy (Eph. 3:6, 9, 11).

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE EIGHTEEN

THE PROMISE VERSUS THE LAW

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:2b, 3b, 6, 9-11, 13-14, 17, 21-25

The New Testament reveals that, in eternity past, God made a purpose, a plan. This purpose was to have a people chosen by Him to receive the sonship and thereby to become sons of God, with the Son of God as the Firstborn, and then to be formed into a corporate man to express God for eternity. This is a brief statement of God's eternal purpose. After conceiving this purpose, God accomplished the work of creation. The focal point of God's creation is man, because God's purpose is to have a people for His expression. We know from Genesis 1 that man was made in God's image and according to God's likeness. In other words, man was created with the potential to express God. At the time of creation, man had neither the divine life nor the divine nature. However, he was created with the capacity to receive God and to become one with Him.

THE FALL, THE CURSE, AND THE PROMISE

We know that after creation, man fell. On the one hand, the fall of Adam brought in sin and sins; on the other hand, Adam's fall brought in the curse. Hence, the man created by God in His own image and according to His likeness became involved with sin and came under the curse. The fact that mankind followed a downward course after Genesis 3 indicates that man is under a curse. We see this curse with Cain, the second generation of mankind. Because Cain's descendants were all under the curse, they fell lower and lower. Eventually, man fell to such a degree that, at Babel, he became divided and

confused. There can be no doubt that fallen man is both involved with sin and under the curse.

In the midst of such a fallen situation, the God of glory appeared to Abraham (Acts 7:2). It is significant that the Bible does not say that the God of love appeared to Abraham, but says that the God of glory appeared to him. With Adam we have sin and the curse, but with Abraham we have God's promise. According to Genesis 12:3, God promised Abraham that in him all the nations would be blessed. The background of this promise was the curse upon mankind. Because mankind was under a curse, man's direction was downward. But God came in, called Abraham, and promised that in him the nations, mankind in a state of division and confusion, would be blessed. Certainly this was good news. It is no wonder, then, that Paul considered it the gospel.

However, the matter we are emphasizing here is the promise. In calling Abraham, God gave him a promise. In Galatians 3:17 Paul speaks of both a promise and a covenant. In this chapter he also tells us, in verse 8, that God's word to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 was the preaching of the gospel to Abraham. The speaking of that promise was the preaching of the gospel. Furthermore, the covenant ratified in Genesis 15 was the confirmation of the gospel.

In Genesis 12:3 the promise was only a promise, for it was still in need of fulfillment. In this chapter we are not told when, how, or where the promise would be fulfilled. Then in Genesis 15 the promise became a ratified covenant, and in Genesis 17 this covenant was confirmed by the sign of circumcision. However, even though the promise had been ratified as a covenant and confirmed, it still had not been fulfilled.

GOD DEALING WITH HIS PEOPLE ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE

At the time God was ratifying the promise in Genesis 15, making it a covenant, a great darkness came upon

Abraham (v. 12). This darkness was an indication that before the promise would be fulfilled, God's people would undergo a time of darkness and suffer intensely. The Bible records that Abraham's descendants went into Egypt and spent at least four hundred years under Egyptian tyranny. These years were a long period of darkness. Then, after those four hundred years, God brought them out of the darkness of Egyptian tyranny. God did not deal with them according to the law, which had not yet been given, but He dealt with them according to the promise He made to Abraham, their forefather.

It is difficult to find a verse in the book of Exodus telling us that God's intention in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt was to give them the law. However, it is clearly stated that God intended for them to hold a feast unto Him. Moses said to Pharaoh, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness" (Exo. 5:1). No doubt, God also planned to reveal to them the pattern of His dwelling place.

Before Exodus 19, there seems to be no indication that God had any intention to give them the law. At the beginning of this chapter, God spoke very pleasant words to the people: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto my-self" (Exo. 19:4). The Lord went on to tell them that if they would obey His voice and keep His covenant, they would be a special treasure unto Him and become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (vv. 5-6). God's word was very gracious. When the people heard what God had spoken, they answered, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (v. 8). After this response of the people, the atmosphere around Mount Sinai changed. The cherishing atmosphere was replaced by a terrifying one. Frightened by this atmosphere, the children of Israel told Moses to be their representative to meet with God. In the midst of such a situation, the Ten Commandments were given. Therefore, with Adam we have the fall; with Abraham, the

promise; and with Moses, the law. Chapters twenty through twenty-three of Exodus are all related to the law.

But immediately following these chapters with their decrees and ordinances, we come to chapter twenty-four, where the situation around Mount Sinai is changed again. Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up the mountain. In the words of Exodus 24:10, "they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness." What a beautiful scene this was! It was in such a setting that God revealed to Moses the pattern of the tabernacle.

ACCORDING TO THE LAW AND THROUGH THE TABERNACLE

After the law with its ordinances was given to the people, God dealt with the children of Israel according to the law through the tabernacle. The people did not contact God through the law, but they contacted Him through the tabernacle with the priesthood and the offerings. All these were the fulfillment, in type, of God's promise to Abraham. God dealt with the people according to the law through the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the offerings. Suppose an Israelite committed a sin. According to the Ten Commandments, he was to be cut off. But, instead of having him cut off, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham to bless all nations by blessing such a sinner through the altar. The one who committed the sin had to bring a sacrifice as a trespass offering. When this sacrifice was offered on the altar, the one who had sinned could be forgiven.

God used the law as a mirror to expose His people. But after the people were exposed, they could turn to the tabernacle, the priesthood, the altar, and the offerings. In type this was the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham. The book of Exodus is not actually a book of law; it is a book of the fulfillment of God's promise, a book of Christ, the cross, and the church. Yes, certain chapters are devoted to the law and its ordinances. But other chapters

give the pattern of the tabernacle and describe the setting up of the tabernacle. As we have pointed out, it was in the midst of a clear atmosphere that the pattern of the tabernacle was revealed to Moses. After this pattern was given, the tabernacle was constructed and set up. Then by means of the priesthood and the offerings those who were condemned under the law were able to have fellowship with God. This fellowship was through the tabernacle, through Christ. This was a fulfillment in type, although not in reality, of God's promise to Abraham.

CHRIST FULFILLING THE PROMISE

We have considered three important persons: Adam, Abraham, and Moses. Now we come to a fourth person, the most important of all--Jesus Christ, who came to fulfill God's promise to Abraham. Christ fulfilled this promise according to the righteous requirements of the law given through Moses. In this way, He brought God's chosen people out from under the curse. Therefore, the promise became not only a covenant, but also a testament, a will, for everything that had been promised was accomplished. The requirements of the law were met, the curse was removed, and the promise was fulfilled. Now in this unique seed of Abraham all the divided and cursed nations are blessed. Today Christ, our good land, is the all-inclusive Spirit for our enjoyment. With Adam there was the curse, with Abraham there was the promise, with Moses there was the law, and with Christ there is the fulfillment of the promise. Now we, the believers, those of the household of faith, enjoy the new testament. Those of the household of faith are the church people. We are not those who work--we are those who hear. As members of the household of faith, we have the hearing of faith and thereby inherit, partake of, and experience the Triune God as our blessing. By the hearing of faith we have become people of faith, the household of faith. The more we hear, the more our faith is strengthened, and the more our capacity to enjoy the blessing is enlarged.

In the Bible there are six outstanding names or titles: Adam, Abraham, Moses, Christ, the church, and the New Jerusalem. God's intention in eternity past was not related to the law. His thought was focused not on the law, but on Adam, Abraham, Christ, the church, and the New Jerusalem, the ultimate consummation of God's work with man. Today we are in the church; in eternity we shall be in the New Jerusalem. God uses the law temporarily to expose His people, who do not have the proper knowledge of them-selves and their condition. He also uses the law as a custodian to guard and keep the people and as an escort, a child conductor, to bring them to Christ. But once the law has fulfilled its function of bringing us to Christ, the law should not be allowed to stand in the way. Moses was not only the one through whom the law was given; he was also the one to receive the pattern of the tabernacle and under whose leadership it was set up.

It is significant that from Adam to Abraham is approximately two thousand years and that from Abraham to Christ is approximately another two thousand years. Furthermore, it has been almost two thousand years since the Lord appeared on earth as a man. I find it very difficult to believe that the church age will continue another thousand years. After the church age, there will be the kingdom age, which will last a thousand years. After that, we shall be in eternity. I dare not say that the seven days in Genesis 1 typify the seven thousand years which may cover the time from Adam to the end of the millennium. However, it is very meaningful that from the fall to the giving of the promise was about two thousand years, that from the giving of the promise to the coming of Christ for the fulfillment of the promise was another two thousand years, and that the age of fulfillment has lasted for approximately yet another two thousand years. Although we look forward to the kingdom age, we will not be satisfied just with the kingdom. The thousand year period of the millennium will be in the eyes of God as one day. Thus, our aspiration is to enter into the New Jerusalem for eternity.

In the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose, the law has only a temporary place. It was given four hundred thirty years after God's promise was made to Abraham. With the coming of Christ the law was fulfilled and terminated.

GRACE AND FAITH

Faith is not related to the law, but related to grace. Our faith is the reflection of the grace of Christ. Faith functions like a camera, which is used to photograph a particular scene. The grace of Christ is the scenery, and our faith is the camera which takes the picture. Thus, our faith becomes the reflection of the grace of Christ. In other words, our faith is the reflection of God's promise in its fulfillment.

Faith has nothing to do with the law. The Galatians were mistaken in giving place to the law once again and allowing it to be brought into the way. The law must no longer be in the scene. Instead, our camera of faith should be focused fully on grace. Instead of trying to keep the law, we should use our faith to photograph the scenery of grace. Now in faith we are enjoying grace, which is the Triune God processed to become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit for our enjoyment. How wonderful! The curse has been taken away, and the law has been set aside. Now we have the unique fulfillment of God's promise, which has become the blessing to all believers. We are believing Abrahams enjoying God's promise in a full way. If we see this and understand it, we shall realize that the promise is versus the law. No longer is there any ground, position, or place for the law. The law has been taken out of the way. Praise the Lord that our camera of faith is photographing the scenery of grace!

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE NINETEEN

FAITH REPLACING LAW

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:6-7, 9-10, 19a, 23-25; 4:2-3; Rom. 2:12; 7:5; John 3:18; 16:9; 3:36; Acts 16:31; Rom. 16:26; 2 Tim. 4:7b; Jude 3, 20; John 3:15; Acts 6:7; 1 Tim. 3:9

In the foregoing message we saw that the promise is versus the law. In this message we shall see that faith replaces law.

In 3:5 Paul asks, "He therefore Who is supplying to you the Spirit and doing works of power among you, is it by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" The Spirit in this verse is the all-inclusive, compound Spirit, typified by the compound ointment in Exodus 30:23-25. It is the Spirit mentioned in John 7:39, who is the life-imparting Christ in resurrection. This Spirit is the bountiful supply to the believers in God's New Testament economy. We receive this Spirit not by the works of law, but by faith in the crucified and glorified Christ.

In verse 6 Paul goes on to say, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." The bewitched Galatians, by drifting back to the law, were clinging to Moses, through whom the law was given. But Paul referred them to Abraham, who was the father of faith. Faith was of God's original economy; the law was later added because of transgressions (v. 19). After Christ fulfilled the law through His death, God wanted His people to return to His original economy. With Abraham it was not a matter of keeping the law, but a matter of believing God. It should be so with all the New Testament believers.

In verses 9 and 10 Paul says, "So that they who are of

faith are blessed with believing Abraham. For as many as are of the works of law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law to do them." Faith in Christ brings us into the blessing God promised to Abraham, which is the promise of the Spirit (v. 14). This faith had brought the Galatian believers into the blessing in Christ. They were enjoying the grace of life in the Spirit. But the Judaizers bewitched them and caused them to come under the curse of the law, thus depriving them of the enjoyment of Christ and causing them to fall from grace (5:4).

According to verse 8, the promise God gave to Abraham, "In you all nations shall be blessed," was the gospel. It was preached to him not only before the accomplishing of redemption by Christ, but also before the giving of the law through Moses. What God promised to Abraham corresponds to what God accomplished in Christ, which is the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham. The New Testament economy is a continuation of His dealing with Abraham and has nothing to do with the law of Moses. All the New Testament believers should be in this continuation and should have nothing to do with the law given through Moses.

I. LAW

A. God's Principle in Dealing with Man in the Old Testament Economy

Law was the principle according to which God dealt with His people in the Old Testament economy. In dealing with the children of Israel according to the law, God dealt with them through the tabernacle with the priesthood and the offerings. On the one hand, He dealt with them according to the law; on the other hand, He dealt with them through the tabernacle. After the giving of the law, God came to dwell in the tabernacle. At the end of the book of Exodus, the tabernacle was set up. Then at the very beginning of Leviticus, we see that God spoke from within the tent of meeting. God was hidden within the tabernacle

and spoke in the tabernacle. Thus, God dealt with His people from within the tabernacle, through the tabernacle, and according to the law.

Suppose an Israelite committed a certain sin. According to the law, that one had to be condemned, perhaps even put to death. The law exposed his sin and condemned him. However, the sinner could present a trespass offering, which was then offered on the altar by the priest. In this way the one who had sinned could be forgiven. After the law exposed and condemned him, it brought him to the tabernacle through the altar. This indicates that the law first exposes us and then brings us unto Christ. If there had been no law to condemn the people, there would have been no need of redemption. We need redemption because we are under the condemnation of the law. By exposing and condemning us, the law brings us to Christ.

The law is a custodian which keeps sinners by condemning them. Apart from the law's condemnation, it could not function as a custodian. Without the law's exposure and condemnation, we cannot realize how many sins we have committed against God. Without the law, we would be without regulation or restriction. But because the law condemns us, we are kept by the law.

In keeping us by condemning us, the law brings us to Christ. In the Old Testament, an Israelite who had sinned was condemned by the law and required to bring a trespass offering. The law functioned as a custodian to bring the sinning Israelite to Christ, his Redeemer, typified by the trespass offering. In this way the law keeps us and brings us to Christ.

On the one hand, Paul put the law in the position of Hagar, Abraham's concubine. On the other hand, the law has a positive position, that of a custodian to keep us and that of a child-conductor to bring us to Christ. We should not return to the law. To do this is to go to Hagar. However, we should not despise the law either, for it serves as a warden to care for those who are weak or childish. In its role as a child-conductor, the law takes care of the child.

It does this by convicting, judging, condemning, and exposing the child. When the child is tempted to do something wrong, the law rebukes him and condemns him in order to keep him and to bring him to the proper place. Therefore, by exposing us and condemning us, the law serves as a child-conductor to bring us to Christ.

We have pointed out that the law was the basic principle according to which God dealt with His people in the Old Testament. If it were not for the law, not many of the children of Israel would have come to the altar with a trespass offering. Because the law exposed them and condemned them, they realized their need to come to the altar with the required offering. In this, the law is very useful to God. Although God dealt with His people according to the law, He did not deal with them through the law, but dealt with them through the tabernacle.

B. To Expose Man's Fallen Condition

In 3:19 Paul tells us that the law "was added because of transgressions." The law was not an original part of God's economy. It was added while God's economy was proceeding because of man's transgression, until the seed, Christ, should come, to whom God's promise was made. Since it was added because of man's transgressions, it should have been deducted when those transgressions were taken away. Because Christ, the seed, has come, the law must be terminated. Its function is to expose man's fallen condition.

C. To Keep Man in Its Custody for Christ

In 3:23 Paul says, "But before faith came we were guarded under law, being shut up unto the faith which was about to be revealed." To be guarded is to be kept in custody, kept in ward. To be guarded under law, by being shut up there, can be compared to sheep being enclosed in a fold (John 10:1, 16). In God's economy, the law was used as a fold to keep God's chosen people until Christ came. Because Christ has come, God's people should no longer be kept under the law.

The Greek word rendered "unto" in 3:23 can also be translated "with a view to." This indicates that the shutting up has an objective or goal in view. It should result in bringing the guarded people to the faith.

In caring for their children, Christian parents need to preach the law to them. We should not first preach grace to the children. If we give them regulations according to the law, the law will keep them in custody for Christ. Thus, we should first give them the law in a strong way. The law will expose them, guard them, and keep them, serving as a custodian to keep them for Christ.

D. To Conduct Man unto Christ

In 3:24 Paul continues, "So the law has become our child-conductor unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." The Greek word for "child-conductor" can also be rendered escort, guardian, or custodian. It denotes one who cares for a child who is under age and conducts him to the schoolmaster. The law was used by God as a custodian, a guardian, a child-conductor, to watch over His chosen people before Christ came, and to escort and conduct them to Christ at the proper time.

Galatians 3:25 says, "But faith having come, we are no longer under a child-conductor." Since faith in Christ has come, we do not need to be under the guarding law any longer.

As a child-conductor, the law brings us unto Christ that we may be justified by faith. When an Israelite came to the altar with a trespass offering, he was justified by faith in that offering. Because of the trespass offering, God forgave him of his sin. The Israelite was justified not by works of law, but by his faith in the trespass offering. In typology, this is to be justified by faith. The principle in the New Testament is the same. The law still condemns all those who have sinned. Those condemned under the law should come to Christ and exercise faith in Him as their trespass offering. In this way, sinners are justified by faith.

E. Related to the Flesh

The law is related to the flesh. This is indicated in Romans 7:5, where Paul says, "For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were through the law, operated in our members to bear fruit to death. " The works of the law are always related to the flesh. A believer's efforts to keep the law are not of the Spirit, but are of the flesh. Even if someone has the intention to please God by fulfilling the requirements of the law, that intention will cause him to be involved with the flesh.

In Romans 7 Paul tells us that the law is good, even spiritual. Thus, we have no right to find fault with the law. Instead, we should blame our flesh. Whenever we try to keep the law, we exercise the flesh.

F. The Works of Law Being under the Curse

In Galatians 3:10 Paul says, "For as many as are of the works of law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law to do them." If we try to keep the law, we shall be in the flesh and automatically be under the curse, for the works of the law are under the curse. Instead of trying to keep the law, we should thank the law for exposing us and condemning us and then bid it farewell. We should not form a permanent relationship with the law. We should leave the law and go to Christ and to the cross. If we stay in the flesh with the law, we shall remain under the curse. But if we go to Christ and the cross, we shall be justified by faith.

II. FAITH

It is difficult to understand faith in a full way. In Acts 6:7 we are told that many priests were obedient to the faith, and in 2 Timothy 4:7 Paul says that he kept the faith. According to Jude 3, we must contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Furthermore, Paul charged the deacons to hold the mystery of the faith (1 Tim. 3:9).

We can define faith in different ways. We may say that

faith is a camera which photographs the scenery of grace. Faith is also the reflection of grace, and it is the appreciation of grace with the calling, receiving, accepting, joining, partaking, and enjoying.

A. God's Principle in Dealing with Man in His New Testament Economy

Just as the law was the basic principle according to which God dealt with His people in the Old Testament, faith is the basic principle according to which He deals with people in the New Testament. All those who refuse to believe in Christ will perish, whereas those who believe in Him will be forgiven of their sins and receive eternal life. In John 16:9 we are told that the Spirit will convict the world concerning sin because of not believing in the Son of God. This indicates that the unique sin which causes people to perish is unbelief. God's commandment to sinners is to believe in the Son of God.

In the New Testament the term faith is all-inclusive. It has both a divine aspect and a human aspect, for it implies something on God's side and something on our side. On God's side, the term "the faith" implies that God sent His Son to earth, that Christ died on the cross to accomplish redemption, that He was buried and was resurrected, that in resurrection He released the divine life and has become the life-giving Spirit--all that He might enter into all those who believe in Him to be grace, life, power, sanctification, and everything to them. On our side, faith is related to hearing, appreciating, calling, receiving, accepting, joining, partaking, and enjoying. Furthermore, faith involves rejoicing, thanking, praising, and overflowing. Faith hears and appreciates. Faith calls, receives, and accepts. Faith also joins, partakes, enjoys, rejoices, gives thanks, and praises. Therefore, faith results in the over-flow of life from within us.

If we do not have faith, all that has been accomplished on God's side will remain objective and not be personally related to us. We need our faith to function as a camera to

photograph the scenery of grace. For faith to operate in this way implies that we apprehend the divine scenery by hearing, appreciating, calling, receiving, accepting, joining, partaking, enjoying, rejoicing, thanking, praising, and overflowing.

Faith is actually the all-inclusive Triune God infused into our being. This infusion takes place as we are under the preaching of grace and hear the word of grace. When the processed Triune God is infused into us, He becomes our faith. This faith is the reflection of grace. Therefore, grace and faith, faith and grace, are two ends of one thing.

Neither grace nor faith has anything to do with the law. Today God deals with people not according to law, but according to faith. We need to keep this faith, turn to it, obey it, and contend for it.

B. The Principle by Which God Dealt with Abraham

In 3:6, 7, and 9 we see that faith was the principle by which God dealt with Abraham. Verse 9 says, "So that they who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham." Under God's dealing, Abraham was not working to please God; instead, he was believing Him.

C. Our Believing in Christ, Taking His Person and Redemptive Work As the Object of Our Faith

On the one hand, faith is our believing in Christ. On the other hand, it is our taking Christ's Person and redemptive work as the object of our faith (John 3:36; Acts 16:31; Rom. 16:26; 2 Tim. 4:7b; Jude 3, 20).

D. Replacing Law

Faith replaces law (Gal. 3:23, 25). Since faith has come, we should not stay with the law any longer. The law kept us and brought us to Christ, but now in our experience it should be replaced by faith.

E. Bringing Us into the Blessing Promised to Abraham

We have pointed out that 3:9 says that "they who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham." Faith brings us into the blessing God promised to Abraham, that is, to the

all-inclusive land which typifies the all-inclusive Spirit. Hence, faith in Christ brings us the promise of the Spirit (3:14).

F. Ushering Us into Christ

Furthermore, faith ushers us into Christ. According to John 3:15, everyone who believes in Christ, or into Christ (Gk.), has eternal life.

G. Characterizing the Believers in Christ and Distinguishing Them from the Keepers of Law

Finally, faith characterizes those who believe in Christ, and it distinguishes them from those who keep the law (Acts 6:7; 1 Tim. 3:9). We are not keepers of law--we are believers in Christ. We are the people of faith.

In 3:7 and 9 Paul speaks of those "who are of faith." According to both Darby's New Translation and the Chinese version, this expression denotes the principle of faith. These versions adopt the rendering "on the principle of faith." To be of faith means to be on the principle of faith. We are those who take faith as our principle. Everything we do should be in keeping with this principle. By this principle we come to Christ, receive Him, and become one with Him.

Galatians 3:23 and 25 say that faith has come. This is another strong expression. Once we were guarded under law, but now faith has come. This means that the processed Triune God as grace has come. The coming of faith also includes the coming of appreciation, receiving, and rejoicing. This is the faith which replaces law!

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWENTY

THE SEED OF ABRAHAM AND THE SONS OF ABRAHAM

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:7, 9, 16, 19, 26-29

In Galatians 3 Paul speaks of the seed of Abraham (vv. 16, 19, 29) and the sons of Abraham (v. 7). The seed is singular, whereas the sons are plural. It is rather difficult for many readers of Galatians to understand the significance of this.

Concerning God's promise to Abraham, there is the aspect of fulfillment and the aspect of enjoyment. To fulfill the promise is one thing, but to enjoy the blessing of the promise is another. Concerning promises made by one person to another, the one who fulfills the promise is seldom the one who enjoys the blessing of the promise. Usually the person who makes the promise is the one to fulfill the promise, and the one to whom the promise is made is the one who enjoys its blessing. In the case of God's promise to Abraham, God, strictly speaking, is not the one to fulfill the promise. Instead, the promise is fulfilled by the seed, Christ (v. 16). Christ has fulfilled God's promise to Abraham. Thus, the fulfillment of this promise does not depend on the many sons of Abraham, but on the unique seed of Abraham. However, with respect to the enjoyment of the blessing of this promise, the many sons are involved. Whereas the unique seed is the fulfiller, the many sons are the enjoyers. If we understand this matter, we shall be able to understand what Paul is talking about in Galatians 3.

Paul wrote the third chapter of Galatians as if he were an attorney writing a legal document. His wording is specific and precise. Consider verse 16: "But to Abraham were the promises spoken and to his seed. He does not say, And to the seeds, as concerning many, but as concerning

one, And to your seed, Who is Christ." In verses 19 and 29 Paul also refers to the seed. But in verse 26 he speaks of the sons of God. The sons of Abraham in verse 7 are the sons of God in verse 26. Now we must ask how the many sons of Abraham can be the many sons of God. The answer to this question involves the seed. On the one hand, the seed is the heir who inherits the promise. However, as the seed of Abraham, Christ also fulfills the promise.

The children of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, inherited the good land of Canaan. In typology, the good land signifies Christ. Christ is both the seed and the land. He is not only the seed inheriting the promise; He is also the good land. Both the seed and the good land are types of Christ. As the unique seed in Galatians 3, Christ not only inherits the promise, but He also fulfills the promise. The promise God made to Abraham was fulfilled by Christ as Abraham's seed.

In the matter of fulfilling the promise, we have no part. Only Christ, the unique seed, is qualified to fulfill God's promise to Abraham. In this sense, the seed is uniquely one. But in the aspect of enjoying the fulfilled promise, the seed becomes many, the many sons of Abraham.

I. THE SEED OF ABRAHAM

A. Only One--Christ

We know from 3:16 that Christ is Abraham's unique seed. Christ is the seed, and the seed is the heir who inherits the promises. Here, Christ is the unique seed inheriting the promises. Hence, in order to inherit the promised blessing, we must be one with Christ. Outside of Him, we cannot inherit the promises given by God to Abraham. In God's eyes Abraham has only one seed, Christ. We must be in Him that we may participate in the promise given to Abraham. He is not only the seed inheriting the promise, but also the blessing of the promise for inheritance. For the Galatian believers to turn back from Christ to the law meant that they would forfeit both the Heir and the inheritance of the promises.

If Christ had not come, there would have been no way for God to fulfill His promise to Abraham. As we have pointed out, the One who fulfilled this promise is not the One who made the promise, but the promised One, the seed. God had promised to give Abraham both a seed and the good land. This promise was fulfilled by the unique, promised seed.

B. Including All the Believers Who Have Been Baptized into Him

As the unique seed of Abraham, Christ includes all the believers who have been baptized into Him (3:27-28). In one sense, when Christ died on the cross, He was crucified alone as our Redeemer. But in another sense, when He was crucified, we were with Him. For the accomplishment of redemption, Christ was crucified alone. But for terminating the old creation, Christ included us in His crucifixion. In the same principle, in the fulfillment of the promise made by God to Abraham, we are not included as part of the unique seed. We can have no share in the fulfillment of this promise. However, for inheriting the promise and enjoying it, we are included. Christ alone fulfilled the promise. But Christ and we share in the enjoyment of the promise. Therefore, on the one hand, the seed is uniquely one; on the other hand, it is all-inclusive. For fulfillment, the seed is one; for inheritance and enjoyment, the seed is all-inclusive, including all believers who have been baptized into Christ.

C. To Whom the Promise Was Made before the Law Was Given

In 3:19 we see that the promise was made to the seed before the law was given. The promise was made not to the many sons, but to the seed who fulfilled the promise.

D. The Unique Seed Being the Good Land

The unique seed is also the good land. The seed here is not only for the fulfillment of the promise, but also for the inheritance of the promise. To inherit the promise is to

inherit the good land. The unique seed is the land. This proves that the seed is also the one to fulfill the promise, not only the one to inherit the promise. If He were only the one to inherit the promise, who then is the land?

II. THE SONS OF ABRAHAM

A. Of Faith, Based upon the Principle of Faith

Galatians 3:7 says, "Know then that they who are of faith, these are sons of Abraham." Works of law make people disciples of Moses (John 9:28) with nothing whatever related to life. Faith in Christ makes the New Testament believers sons of God, a relationship altogether in life. We, the New Testament believers, were born sons of fallen Adam, and in Adam, because of transgressions, we were under the law of Moses. But we have been reborn to become sons of Abraham and have been freed from the law of Moses by faith in Christ. We are sons of Abraham not by natural birth, but by faith. Hence, our being sons of Abraham is based upon the principle of faith. It is based on our believing, not on our working. Our basis for being sons of Abraham surely is not natural descent. We are Abraham's sons according to the principle of faith.

B. Blessed with Believing Abraham

In verse 9 Paul goes on to say, "So that they who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham." Under God's dealing, Abraham was not working to please God. He was believing Him. Now we who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

C. Sons of God through Faith in Christ

Faith is the reflection of grace. We may also say that faith is a photograph of the divine scenery. Through such faith we become true sons of Abraham. When we believed in Christ, an organic union took place. The divine life entered into us, and we were born of God through faith. As our faith photographed the divine scenery of grace, something of a real and substantial spiritual nature was

infused into us. Although this substance is neither material nor physical, it is nonetheless very real. Faith is not superstition. It is related to substantial spiritual reality, a reality which admittedly is very mysterious. This reality is actually the processed Triune God Himself. When we exercise faith in Christ and thereby take a spiritual photograph of the divine scenery, the processed God enters into our being to be our life. This life is divine, spiritual, heavenly, and holy. Entering into us, it causes a spiritual birth to take place. This birth brings about an organic union between us and the Triune God. Because God has been born into our being, we have become sons of God. Thus, we may say that we are God-men.

Some Christians oppose the use of the term God-men and even defame us for saying that the believers in Christ, the sons of God through faith in Christ, are God-men. But according to the Bible, it is a divine fact that human beings can become sons of God. When we believed in Christ, the divine life with the divine nature--in fact, the divine Being of the Triune God Himself--entered into us, and we were born of God to become sons of God. Just as a man's son partakes of his life and nature, so we as God's sons partake of the divine life and nature. The offspring of a tiger is a tiger. In the same principle, God's offspring are His sons possessing the divine life and the divine nature.

Certain early church fathers went so far as to speak of the "deification" of the believers in Christ. I would advise against the use of such a term. To say that the believers are deified to become objects of worship is blasphemy. But it is correct to say that the believers are deified in the sense of possessing the divine life and the divine nature. If at all possible, we should replace the word deification with a more suitable term to convey the fact that we have been born of God to become sons of God. Praise the Lord that God is our Father and that we are the same as He with respect to the divine life and nature! However, we emphatically state that we shall never be the same as God in the sense of deserving to be worshipped. It is blasphemy to claim that, as sons of God, we should be worshipped

along with God. But it is not too much to say that because we are sons of God, we have the very life and nature of our Father. Far from being blasphemy, it is a glory to the Father to declare this fact.

Now we must go on to ask in what way the sons of God are also the sons of Abraham. Christ is both the Son of God and the Son of Abraham. Because we are now in Christ, we are sons of God on the one hand and sons of Abraham on the other hand. How can we be sons of God? Because we are in Christ, who is the Son of God. How can we be sons of Abraham? Also because we are in Christ, who is the Son of Abraham.

It is a matter of tremendous significance for the divine life to be imparted into us. This impartation of the divine life causes an organic union which makes us both the sons of God and the sons of Abraham. This organic union takes place exclusively in Christ. In Christ we enjoy the wonderful organic union with the Triune God. In this union we are, on the one hand, the sons of God and, on the other hand, the sons of Abraham. Christ is the unique sphere in which this all takes place. When we enter into this sphere, we become sons of God and sons of Abraham. Our true status is that in Christ and by the organic union we are both sons of God and sons of Abraham.

D. Baptized into Christ and Putting On Christ

We are both sons of Abraham and sons of God because we have been baptized into Christ and have put on Christ (3:27). To believe is to believe into Christ (John 3:16), and to be baptized is to be baptized also into Christ. Faith in Christ brings us into Christ and makes us one with Christ, in whom is the sonship. We must be identified with Christ through faith so that in Him we may be sons of God. By both faith and baptism, we have been immersed into Christ, we have thus put on Christ, and we have become identified with Him.

Although we all have a natural life with a natural ancestry, we need not live any longer according to that life. Instead, we may live by the divine life with the divine

nature. By living according to this life, we are in reality the sons of God and the sons of Abraham. We have been baptized into Christ, the unique seed who has fulfilled God's promise to Abraham. We and Christ have been joined in a marvelous organic union. Because of this union, we are sons of God and sons of Abraham. Here in this organic union we inherit the promise which has been fulfilled by Christ. Actually, Christ Himself is this inheritance. The promise we inherit is the promise we now enjoy.

E. All One in Christ

Galatians 3:28 says, "There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there cannot be slave nor free man, there cannot be male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Here we see that the sons of Abraham are all one in Christ, without any natural status. In Christ there are no differences among races and nationalities, in social rank, or between the sexes.

F. Included in Abraham's Only Seed

Galatians 3:29 says, "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." Abraham's seed is only one, Christ (v. 16). Hence, to be Abraham's seed we must be Christ's, a part of Christ. Because we are one with Christ, we are also Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise, inheriting God's promised blessing, which is the all-inclusive Spirit as the ultimate consummation of the processed God to be our portion. Under the New Testament, the believers as God's chosen people, being sons of full age, are such heirs, not under law but in Christ. The Judaizers who remained under law and kept themselves apart from Christ were, like Ishmael (4:23), Abraham's descendants according to flesh, not, like Isaac (4:28), his heirs according to promise. But the believers in Christ are such heirs, inheriting the promised blessing. Hence, we should remain in Christ and not turn to law.

Since the law is unable to give us life (3:21), it cannot produce the sons of God. But the Spirit that is received by

faith (3:2) and that gives us life (2 Cor. 3:6) can produce the sons of God. Law kept God's chosen people under its custody until faith came (3:23). Faith in Christ as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit makes God's chosen people Abraham's seed as "the stars of the heavens" (Gen. 22:17) according to God's promise.

Now we are in a position to see a brief sketch of Galatians 3. This chapter reveals that God intended to give the promise to Abraham according to His eternal purpose. Before this promise was accomplished, the law was given to serve as the custodian of God's chosen people. Then, at the appointed time, Christ, the promised seed, came to fulfill God's promise to Abraham. When Christ came, the fulfillment of God's promised blessing also came. This is grace. Hence, grace came with Christ and with the fulfillment. All this is on God's side. On our side, we need a way to apprehend, realize, and grasp all that Christ, the seed, has accomplished. In other words, we need a spiritual camera to photograph the scenery of grace. This "camera" is our faith. Therefore, with the coming of grace on God's side, there is also the coming of faith on our side. Now that we have grace, faith, and the seed which has fulfilled the promise, we no longer need the law to serve as our custodian. Hence, the law should be set aside. It should no longer have any place in the scenery. We must turn from the law, the custodian, and stay with Christ, the One who has fulfilled the promise. Of course, this means we should also stay with grace and faith. Then we shall be included in Christ, the unique seed, to inherit the fulfilled promise and to enjoy the blessing of the promise to Abraham. This blessing is the processed Triune God as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWENTY-ONE

BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST, PUTTING ON CHRIST, AND ALL ONE IN CHRIST

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:27-29; Rom. 6:3; Matt. 28:19b; 1 Cor. 12:13a; Rom. 13:14; Eph. 2:15-16; Col. 3:10-11

In this message we shall consider 3:27-29. In 3:26 Paul tells us that we "are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." Verse 27 opens with the word for, which connects these verses and indicates that verse 27 gives an explanation of how we are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. We are sons of God because we are in Christ, and we are in Christ because we have been baptized into Christ. Verse 27 says, "For as many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." To be baptized into Christ is the way to be in Christ. Based upon the fact that we have been baptized into Christ, we can say that we have put on Christ.

In verse 28 Paul continues, "There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there cannot be slave nor free man, there cannot be male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Here we see that we are one in Christ with His resurrection life and His divine nature to be the one new man, as mentioned in Ephesians 2:15. This new man is absolutely in Christ. There is no room for our natural being, our natural disposition, or our natural character. In this one new man Christ is all and in all (Col. 3:10-11).

In Romans 6:3 Paul says, "Or are you ignorant that as many as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?" Here we see that when we were baptized into Christ Jesus, we were also baptized into the death of Christ. On the one hand, we have been baptized into Christ's person; on the other hand, we have been baptized into Christ's death.

In Matthew 28:19 the Lord Jesus gave a charge to His disciples: "Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." According to this verse, the believers are baptized into the name of the Triune God, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Later we shall consider what it means to baptize, to immerse, someone into the name of the Triune God.

In 1 Corinthians 12:13 we see yet another aspect of baptism: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (Gk.). According to this verse, we have also been baptized into the Body.

In Ephesians 2:15 and 16 Paul says, "Having abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, making peace, and might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, slaying the enmity by it." In these verses we have the thought that all believers, Jews and Gentiles alike, have been reconciled to God in one Body and in Christ have been created into one new man. In Colossians 3:10 and 11 Paul says, "And having put on the new man, who is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him Who created him; where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but Christ is all and in all."

I. BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

We have seen that at the end of Galatians 3 Paul tells us that we have all been baptized into Christ. This is the main factor in our being the sons of God and the sons of Abraham. It is also the factor by which we are included in the seed of Abraham, and in addition the factor which brings us into the enjoyment of the blessing of God's promise through faith. Because we have been baptized into Christ, we now enjoy an organic union with Him.

Concerning baptism, the New Testament reveals that

we have been baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19), into Christ (Gal. 3:27), into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3), and into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). We need to exercise our entire being in order to have a proper understanding of such a wonderful baptism. Regrettably, many Christians today do not have an adequate view of baptism. Some Christians argue about the method of baptism or about the kind of water used. Some reduce baptism to a dead ritual. Other Christians go to another extreme and associate baptism with speaking in tongues. Rarely among today's Christians do we see baptism practiced in a proper, genuine, and living way, with the believers baptized into the name of the Triune God, into Christ, into the death of Christ, and into the Body of Christ. Such a baptism, a baptism into the divine name, a living Person, an effective death, and a living organism, puts the believers into a position where they can experience an organic union with Christ.

Commenting on Matthew 28:19 in his *Word Studies in the New Testament*, M. R. Vincent says, "Baptizing into the name of the Holy Trinity implies a spiritual and mystical union with him." The Greek preposition rendered "into" is crucial, for it points to this spiritual, mystical union. Moreover, Vincent says that the word "name" here "is the expression of the sum total of the divine Being.... It is equivalent to his *person*." Therefore, to baptize believers into the name of the Triune God means to baptize them into the very being, the Person, of the Triune God. The name denotes the Person, and the Person is the all-inclusive, processed Triune God as the life-giving Spirit. When we baptize people into the name of the Triune God, we baptize them into such a divine Person. To baptize anyone into the name of the Trinity is to immerse that one into all the Triune God is.

According to the Gospel of Matthew, baptism brings repentant people out of their old state into a new one, by terminating their old life and germinating them with the new life of Christ that they may become the kingdom people. John the Baptist's recommending ministry began

with a preliminary baptism by water only. Now, after the heavenly King accomplished His ministry on earth, passed through the process of death and resurrection, and became the life-giving Spirit, He charged His disciples to baptize the ones they discipled into the Triune God. This baptism has two aspects: the visible aspect by water, and the invisible aspect by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 41; 10:44-48). The visible aspect is the expression, the testimony, of the invisible aspect; whereas the invisible aspect is the reality of the visible aspect. Without the invisible aspect by the Spirit, the visible aspect by water is vain; and without the visible aspect by water, the invisible aspect by the Spirit is abstract and impractical. Both are needed. Not long after the Lord charged the disciples with this baptism, He baptized them and the entire church in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:4) and in the house of Cornelius (Acts 11:15-17). Then, based upon this, the disciples baptized the new converts (Acts 2:38), not only visibly into water, but also invisibly into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), into Christ Himself (Gal. 3:27), into the Triune God (Matt. 28:19), and into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). The water, signifying the death of Christ with His burial, may be considered a tomb to terminate the old history of the one being baptized. Since the death of Christ is included in Christ, and since Christ is the very embodiment of the Triune God, and the Triune God is eventually one with the Body of Christ, so to baptize new believers into the death of Christ, into Christ Himself, into the Triune God, and into the Body of Christ is to terminate their old life, on the negative side, and, on the positive side, to germinate them with new life, the eternal life of the Triune God, for the Body of Christ. Hence, the baptism ordained by the Lord in Matthew 28:19 is one that baptizes people out of their life into the Body life for the kingdom of the heavens.

We have pointed out that the Greek word rendered "into" indicates union, as in Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27; and 1 Corinthians 12:13. The same Greek word is used in Acts 8:16; 19:3, 5; and 1 Corinthians 1:13, 15. To baptize

people into the name of the Triune God is to bring them into spiritual and mystical union with Him.

Matthew and John are the two books in which the Trinity is more fully revealed, for the participation and enjoyment of God's chosen people, than in all other books of Scripture. John unveils the mystery of the Godhead in the Father, Son, and Spirit, especially in chapters fourteen through sixteen, for our experience of life; whereas Matthew makes known the reality of the Trinity in the one name for all Three, for the constitution of the kingdom. In the opening chapter of Matthew, the Holy Spirit (v. 18), Christ (the Son--v. 18), and God (the Father--v. 23) are all on the scene for the producing of the man Jesus (v. 21), who, as Jehovah the Savior and God with us, is the very embodiment of the Triune God. In chapter three Matthew presents a picture of the Son standing in the water of baptism under the opened heaven, the Spirit as a dove descending upon the Son, and the Father out of the heavens speaking to the Son (vv. 16-17). In chapter twelve, the Son, in the person of man, cast out demons by the Spirit to bring in the kingdom of God the Father (v. 28). In chapter sixteen, the Son is revealed by the Father to the disciples for the building of the church, which is the life-pulse of the kingdom (vv. 16-19). In chapter seventeen, the Son entered into transfiguration (v. 2) and was confirmed by the Father's word of delight (v. 5) for a miniature display of the manifestation of the kingdom (16:28). Eventually, in the closing chapter, after Christ, as the last Adam, had passed through the process of crucifixion, entered into the realm of resurrection, and become the life-giving Spirit, He came back to His disciples, in the atmosphere and reality of His resurrection, to charge them to cause the heathen to become the kingdom people by baptizing them into the name, the Person, the reality, of the Trinity. Later, in the Acts and in the Epistles, it is indicated that to baptize people into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit is to baptize them into the name of Christ (Acts 8:16; 19:5, Gk.), and to baptize them into the name of Christ is to baptize them into Christ the Person

(Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3), for Christ is the embodiment of the Triune God, and He, as the life-giving Spirit, is available any time and any place for people to be baptized into Him. Such a baptism into the reality of the Father, Son, and Spirit, according to Matthew, is for the constitution of the king-dom of the heavens. The heavenly kingdom cannot be organized with human beings of flesh and blood (1 Cor. 15:50) as an earthly society. It can only be constituted with people who are immersed into the union with the Triune God and who are established and built up with the Triune God who is wrought into them.

Whenever we are about to baptize people, we should give them a rich, living message on the meaning of baptism. By hearing such a message, their faith will be stirred up, and they will have a proper appreciation of baptism. We should never baptize believers in a ritualistic way, regarding baptism as a mere act of putting people into the water according to the Bible. Such a baptism is void of the reality of the organic union. But if people hear a rich word on the meaning of baptism and have the hearing of faith, they will earnestly desire to be baptized. Then, as we baptize them, we should exercise our faith to realize that we are not only baptizing them into the water, but baptizing them into a spiritual reality. As we immerse them into the water, we immerse them into the Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit. When a person is baptized into the Triune God, he enters into an organic union, which is able to transform his whole being. By means of our organic union with the Triune God, we are one with the Triune God, and the Triune God is one with us.

II. PUTTING ON CHRIST

In Galatians 3:27 Paul says that as many as are baptized into Christ have put on Christ. To put on Christ is to clothe ourselves with Christ, to put on Christ as a garment. On the one hand, in baptism we are immersed into Christ; on the other hand, in baptism we put on Christ. Christ, the living Spirit, is the water of life. Hence,

to be baptized into Christ is to be immersed into Him as the Spirit. When a person is immersed into Christ, he automatically puts on Christ as his clothing. This means that the baptized one has become one with Christ, having been immersed into Him and having become clothed with Him.

If Christ were not the life-giving Spirit, there would be no way for us to be baptized into Christ. How could we be baptized into Christ if, according to the traditional teaching of the Trinity, He were only sitting in the heavens? For us to be baptized into Christ, Christ must be the *pneuma*, the air, the Spirit all around us. If we consider Christ simply as One in the heavens far away, we can practice baptism as a ritual. People can be baptized without any realization of the significance of baptism. However, we cannot be baptized into a Christ who is only in the heavens. But we can be baptized into the Christ who is the *pneuma*, the Spirit. This is proved by 1 Corinthians 12:13, where we are told that in one Spirit we were baptized into one Body. The Spirit here is the all-inclusive, processed Triune God. In the Spirit, the processed Triune God, we have been baptized into one Body. Therefore, for us to be baptized into such a divine reality, Christ must be the life-giving Spirit. Whenever we baptize others, we should tell them that the Triune God as the processed life-giving Spirit is all around them, and that they need to be baptized, immersed, into the reality of this divine Person.

It is significant that at the end of chapter three of Galatians Paul concludes with a word about being baptized into Christ and putting on Christ. The fact that Paul concludes with a word about baptism indicates that what he has covered in this chapter can be experienced only if we have been baptized into Christ and have put on Christ. We should not be concerned with whether or not we have spoken in tongues, but with whether or not we have been baptized into Christ and have put on Christ. Our concern should be that we have become one with Christ. I can testify strongly that I have been baptized into Christ and that I am wearing Him as my clothing, my covering. I have the full assurance that I am one with Him

and that He is one with me. I have the divine life, I am in the divine Person, and the divine Person is one with me.

III. ALL ONE IN CHRIST

In verse 28 Paul says that in Christ there "cannot be Jew nor Greek, there cannot be slave nor free man, there cannot be male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This indicates that in Christ there is no place for the natural man. Because we have been baptized, the natural man has been terminated, buried, and is now in the tomb. All the differences among races and nationalities, in social rank, and between the sexes have been abolished, and we are all one in Christ Jesus.

The word "one" in 3:28 is of great significance. However, for the most part, today's Christians in their experience are not one. The reason for this lack of oneness is that so many have not experienced the proper and genuine baptism in which they are immersed into the Person of the Triune God, into Christ as the life-giving Spirit, into the death of Christ, and into the Body of Christ. Through baptism, we, the baptized ones, are one in Christ. If we take in such a word about baptism with the hearing of faith, we shall have the assurance to say that we are in the Triune God, in Christ, and in the Body of Christ. Furthermore, we shall know that we are one with all those who have been baptized into Christ.

By faith we reflect the divine scenery of grace. Our living has become a photograph in which others can see the heavenly things. Through us and in us, they can behold the heavenly reality. What we are reflecting today is not the law; it is Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit, the blessing of God's promise to Abraham. We are a reflection of the fact that we, the believers in Christ, are all one in Him.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWENTY-TWO

THE SPIRIT OF SONSHIP REPLACING THE CUSTODY OF THE LAW

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:27-29; 4:1-7; Rom. 8:14-16

In the foregoing message we pointed out that Paul concludes Galatians 3 with three important matters: baptized into Christ, putting on Christ, and the oneness of all the believers in Christ. To be baptized into Christ is to enter into an organic union with the Triune God. God's intention in His economy is to put us into Him and to come into us and live in us. This is what we mean by the organic union, an organic oneness in life.

BELIEVING INTO CHRIST AND BEING BAPTIZED INTO HIM

In order to experience this organic union with the Triune God, we need to believe into Christ and be baptized into Him. Believing and being baptized are two parts of one step. First we believe into Christ, then we are baptized into Him. The Greek preposition, *eis*, used in John 3:16, 18, and 36, means into. These verses indicate that we need to believe into the Son. By believing in Christ we enter into Christ. We believe ourselves *into* Him. We have seen that M. R. Vincent says that this Greek preposition, as used in Matthew 28:19, implies a mystical, spiritual union with the Triune God. Chinese people may believe Confucius, but they would never say that they believe into Confucius. Neither would Greeks claim to believe into Plato. Chinese do not become one with Confucius, and Greeks do not enter into a spiritual union with Plato. But when we believe into

the Lord Jesus, we experience an organic union with Him. When we believe in Him, we believe into Him and thereby become one spirit with Him. This is what we mean by the expression *organic union*.

In addition to believing into Christ, which is inward and subjective, we also need to be baptized into Him, an act which is outward and objective. We need both the inward action of believing and the outward action of being baptized. In this way we make one complete step to enter into the Triune God. In Galatians 3 Paul speaks often about faith and believing. But at the end of the chapter, he speaks of being baptized into Christ. The step which begins with believing into Christ is completed by being baptized into Him. In this way there takes place in full an organic union between the believers and the Triune God.

PUTTING ON CHRIST AND ONE IN CHRIST

Having been baptized into Christ, we must now put on Christ. To put on Christ is to live Christ. It is vital for Christians to realize that we need to put on Christ and live Him. According to Romans 13:14, we live Christ by putting on Christ.

To put on Christ is to clothe ourselves with Christ. Whenever we clothe ourselves in a certain way, we indicate that we intend to live in that way. In like manner, to put on Christ means that we live by Christ, in Christ, and with Christ. In particular, it means that we live out Christ. Christ becomes the expression of our living. Immediately after we have been put into Christ and have entered into an organic union with Him, we need to live Christ, to put Christ on in our living. Day by day, we need to be clothed with Christ and express Him as we live in Him, by Him, and with Him.

In 3:28 Paul says that we "are all one in Christ Jesus." This refers to the church life, the one Body, the one new man.

In 3:27 and 28 there are three crucial points. The first is that we enter into Christ; the second is that we put on Christ and express Christ by living Him; and the third is

that we have the church life, where, in the one new man, the one Body, we are all one in Christ. If we have these three matters, God's eternal purpose will be fulfilled, and the desire of God's heart will be satisfied.

The book of Galatians shows that Paul was an excellent writer. After so much argument and debate in chapter three, Paul concludes by saying that we have been baptized into Christ, that we have put on Christ, and that we are all one in Christ. We who have the hearing of faith have been put into Christ. Now we need to live Christ and express Christ. This will cause us to be one in Christ in the church life.

The Galatian believers were foolish in going back to the law. Paul seemed to be telling them, "You have all been baptized into Christ and into the one Body. Now you should take Christ as your clothing, your expression, and live Him. Don't go back to the law to try to fulfill its requirements. Stay with Christ and live out Christ. Remember, you are members of the one Body, of the one new man. Stay with all those who are in Christ, and practice the church life so that God's purpose can be fulfilled. If you go back to the law, you will be in slavery again. The desire of God's heart cannot be satisfied by your efforts to keep the law. It can be satisfied only if you remain with Christ and live Him out." Praise the Lord that we have entered into an organic union with Him and that now we are living Christ in the church, the one Body. Surely this satisfies God.

SOME CRUCIAL POINTS

In this message we shall consider 4:1-7, where we see that the Spirit of sonship replaces the custody of the law. The introduction and conclusion of the book of Galatians are found, respectively, in 1:1-5 and in 6:18. In 1:6--4:31 we see the revelation of the Apostle's gospel. Then in 5:1--6:17 we see the walk of God's children. In 1:6--4:31 there are a number of crucial points. Here we see that God's Son is versus man's religion (1:6--2:10), that Christ replaces law

(2:11-21), and that the Spirit by faith is versus the flesh by law (3:1--4:31). In 3:1-14 we see that the Spirit is the blessing of the promise by faith in Christ; in 3:15-29, that the law is the custodian of the heirs of the promise; in 4:1-7 that the Spirit of sonship replaces the custody of the law; in 4:8-20, the necessity that Christ be formed in the heirs of promise; and in 4:21-31, that the children according to Spirit are versus the children according to flesh.

Chapter three of Galatians covers two main points. The first is that the Spirit is the blessing of the gospel. The second is that the law is the custodian which keeps God's children. We need to ask ourselves whether we prefer the blessing or the custodian. If we have been properly enlightened by this book, we shall certainly choose the Spirit, who is the processed Triune God. In 4:1-7 Paul continues the thought of chapter three. Here he seeks to make clear that the Spirit of sonship replaces the custody of the law.

THE TIME APPOINTED OF THE FATHER

Galatians 4:1 says, "But I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave, though he is lord of all." The Greek word for child here means infant, minor. In verse 2 Paul continues, "But he is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed of the father." The guardians are the wardens, and the stewards are the administrators. This describes the functions of the law in God's economy. The time the Father appointed is the time of the New Testament, beginning with the first coming of Christ.

In verse 3 Paul says, "So also we, when we were children, were kept in slavery under the elements of the world." The "elements of the world" refer to the elementary principles, the rudimentary teachings of the law. The same expression is used in Colossians 2:8, where it refers to the rudimentary teachings of both Jews and Gentiles, consisting of ritualistic observances in meats, drinks, washings, and asceticism.

In verses 4 and 5 Paul goes on to say, "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, come of a woman, come under law, that He might redeem those under law, that we might receive the sonship." The fullness of time in verse 4 denotes the completion of the Old Testament time, which occurred at the time appointed of the Father (v. 2). In this verse Paul describes the Son as "come of a woman, come under law." The woman is, of course, the virgin Mary (Luke 1:27-35). The Son of God came of her to be the seed of woman, as promised in Genesis 3:15. Furthermore, Christ was born under law, as revealed in Luke 2:21-24, 27, and He kept the law, as the four Gospels reveal.

God's chosen people were shut up by law under its custody (3:23). Christ was born under law in order to redeem them from its custody that they might receive the sonship and become the sons of God. Hence, they should not return to the custody of law to be under its slavery as the Galatians had been seduced to do, but should remain in the sonship of God to enjoy the life supply of the Spirit in Christ. According to the entire revelation of the New Testament, God's economy is to produce sons. Sonship is the focal point of God's economy, God's dispensation. God's economy is the dispensation of Himself into His chosen people to make them His sons. Christ's redemption is to bring us into the sonship of God that we may enjoy the divine life. It is not God's economy to make us keepers of law, obeying the commandments and ordinances of the law, which was given only for a temporary purpose. God's economy is to make us sons of God, inheriting the blessing of God's promise, which was given for His eternal purpose. His eternal purpose is to have many sons for His corporate expression (Heb. 2:10; Rom. 8:29). Hence, He predestinated us unto sonship (Eph. 1:5) and regenerated us to be His sons (John 1:12-13). We should remain in His sonship that we may become His heirs to inherit all He has planned for

His eternal expression, and should not be distracted to Judaism by the appreciation of law.

It is difficult to give an adequate definition of sonship. Sonship involves life, maturity, position, and privilege. To be a son of the Father, we need to have the Father's life. However, we must go on to mature in this life. Life and maturity give us the right, the privilege, the position, to inherit the things of the Father. According to the New Testament, sonship includes life, maturity, position, and right.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SON

In 4:6 Paul declares, "And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!" God's Son is the embodiment of the divine life (1 John 5:12). Hence, the Spirit of God's Son is the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2). God gives us His Spirit of life, not because we are law-keepers, but because we are His sons. As law-keepers, we have no right to enjoy God's Spirit of life. As the sons of God, we have the position with the full right to participate in the Spirit of God, who has the bountiful supply of life. Such a Spirit, the Spirit of the Son of God, is the focus of the blessing of God's promise to Abraham (3:14).

In verses 4 through 6 the Triune God is producing many sons for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose. God the Father sent forth God the Son to redeem us from the law that we might receive sonship. He also sent forth God the Spirit to impart His life into us that we might become His sons in reality.

Basically sonship is a matter of life. The position and the right depend on the life. In order for us to enjoy God's sonship, we need the Spirit. Apart from the Spirit, we cannot be born of God to have the divine life. Once we have been born of the Spirit, we need the Spirit in order to grow in life. Without the Spirit, we cannot have the position, right, or privilege of sonship. All the crucial points regarding sonship depend on the Spirit. By the Spirit, we have the divine birth and the divine life. Through the

Spirit we grow unto maturity. Because of the Spirit we have the position, right, and privilege of sonship. Thus, without the Spirit sonship is vain, an empty term. But when the Spirit comes, the sonship is made real. We fully realize God's sonship in life, maturity, position, and right. The Spirit of sonship cannot be replaced by anything. On the contrary, everything, the law in particular, must be replaced by the Spirit of sonship.

Paul's concept is that the law was a custodian, a warden. Although the law could keep us in ward, it could not give us the life, maturity, position, and right of sonship. The law cannot bestow a position upon a child. It can only serve as a child conductor. The Spirit, in contrast, gives life, maturity, position, and right. Therefore, the law should not replace the Spirit; the Spirit must replace the law.

Since the law could not produce the reality of sonship, you may be wondering why the Spirit was not sent forth earlier. Why did the Spirit not come before the law? The answer is that the promise given to Abraham needed a period of time in order to be fulfilled. Although God is not slow, He waited two thousand years before sending His Son to fulfill the promise. Actually, God did not act quickly even in giving the promise. He did not come in immediately after Adam's fall to give to Adam the promise He eventually gave to Abraham. Yes, the promise was given in Genesis 3 that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. However, God waited until man's cursed and fallen situation had been fully exposed at Babel before He intervened, called out Abraham, and made a promise to him. At Babel, mankind became confounded, confused, and divided, fully exposed as being under the curse. With such a background, no doubt Abraham deeply appreciated God's promise. Abraham appreciated this promise more than Adam would have appreciated it, had the promise been given to him immediately after the fall. Therefore, the reason for the delay is found on man's side, not on God's side.

The principle is the same with respect to the fulfillment of the promise in the coming of Christ. Suppose Christ had come immediately after the promise was given to Abraham. If such had been the case, the fulfillment of the promise would not have been nearly as meaningful. Consider all that happened between the time of Abraham and the birth of the Lord Jesus. During the course of this period of two thousand years, God's chosen people were fully exposed. On the one hand, the law exposed their corruption and helplessness; on the other hand, the law kept them until the coming of Christ. The law fulfilled a necessary and useful function in keeping the children of Israel for God. The law preserved God's chosen people even while it was exposing them.

THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME

In 4:4 we see that God sent forth His Son when the fullness of the time had come. Christ came at exactly the right time. Earlier would have been too soon, and later would have been too late. Christ came when the time was right. This is illustrated by the picking of ripened fruit from a tree. If the fruit is picked too soon, it will be unripe. But if it is picked too late, it will be overripe. Christ came at the appointed time, at the fullness of time. For this reason, His coming was full of meaning.

TWO SENDINGS

In verses 4 and 6 we read of two kinds of sendings. In verse 4 Paul says that God sent forth His Son, and in verse 6, that God sent forth the Spirit of His Son. According to the promise in Genesis 3:15, Christ came under law as the seed of the woman in order to redeem those who were under law, that they might receive the sonship. The goal of Christ's redemption is not heaven, as many Christians believe; it is sonship. Christ redeemed us so that we may have God's sonship. Through His redemption, He has opened the way for us to possess the sonship. However, if the Spirit had not come, our sonship would be empty. It

would be a sonship in position or form, not a sonship with reality. The reality of sonship, which depends on life and maturity, comes only by the Spirit. Therefore, verse 6 declares that God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts.

We should not believe that the Spirit of the Son is a person separate from the Son. Actually, the Spirit of the Son is another form of the Son. We have pointed out that the One who was crucified on the cross was Christ, but the One who enters into the believers is the Spirit. In crucifixion for our redemption, this One was Christ, but in the indwelling to be our life, He is the Spirit. When the Son died on the cross, He was Christ, but when He enters into us, He is the Spirit. First He came as the Son under the law to qualify us for sonship and to open the way for us to share in the sonship. But after He had finished this work, He became, in resurrection, the life-giving Spirit and comes to us as the Spirit of the Son. Thus, first God the Father sent the Son to accomplish redemption and to qualify us for sonship. Then He sent the Spirit to vitalize the sonship and to make it real in our experience. Today sonship actually depends upon the Spirit of God's Son.

THE SPIRIT IN OUR HEARTS

In verse 6 Paul says that God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. Actually the Spirit of God came into our spirit at our regeneration (John 3:6; Rom. 8:16). Because our spirit is hidden in our heart (1 Pet. 3:4), and because the word here refers to a matter that is related to our feeling and understanding, both of which belong to our heart, it says that the Spirit of God's Son was sent into our heart.

Romans 8:15 is a verse that is parallel to Galatians 4:6. Romans 8:15 says that we who have received a spirit of son-ship cry, in this spirit, Abba, Father, whereas Galatians 4:6 says that the Spirit of God's Son is crying in our heart, Abba, Father. This indicates that our regenerated spirit and the Spirit of God are mingled as

one, and that our spirit is in our heart. This also indicates that with us the sonship of God is realized by our subjective experience in the depths of our being. In this verse Paul appeals to such an experience of the Galatian believers for his revelation. This appeal is quite convincing and subduing, not merely because of the objective doctrines, but because of the experiential facts.

Abba is an Aramaic word, thus a Hebrew word, and Father is the translation of the Greek word *pater*. Such a term was first used by the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane while praying to the Father (Mark 14:36). The combination of the Hebrew title with the Greek expresses a stronger affection in crying to the Father. Such an affectionate cry implies an intimate relationship in life between a genuine son and a begetting father.

As humans we have not only a spirit, but we also have our person, our being. The center of our person is our heart. For us to become sons of God not only involves our spirit, but also involves our heart as the center of our personality. The New Testament clearly reveals that the spirit is in the heart (1 Pet. 3:4). Therefore, it is not possible for the Spirit to be sent into our spirit without also being sent into our heart. It is important for us to realize that our spirit is the kernel, the central part, of our heart. When God's Spirit was sent into our spirit, the Spirit was sent into the kernel of our heart. When the Spirit cries within us, He cries from our spirit and through our heart. Hence, concerning sonship, our heart must be involved.

The inner sense we have as we call on the Lord from our spirit through our heart is mainly in the heart, not in the spirit. This implies that to be genuinely spiritual we need to be emotional in a proper way. Brother Nee once said that a person who cannot laugh or cry cannot be truly spiritual. We are not senseless statues; we are human beings with feelings. Therefore, the more we cry, Abba, Father, in the spirit, the deeper will be the sweet and intimate sense in our heart.

The sense we have when calling in this way is sweet

and intimate. Although the Spirit of sonship has come into our spirit, the Spirit cries in our hearts, Abba, Father. This indicates that our relationship with our Father in the son-ship is sweet and very intimate. For example, when a son calls his father "Daddy," there may be a sweet and intimate sense deep within. However, the sense is not the same if he tries to say the same thing to his father-in-law. The reason is that with the father-in-law there is no relation-ship in life. But how sweet it is when little children, enjoying a relationship in life with their fathers, say tenderly, "Daddy." In like manner, how tender and sweet it is to call God, Abba, Father! Such an intimate calling involves our emotion as well as our spirit. The Spirit of sonship in our spirit cries, Abba, Father, from our heart. This proves that we have a genuine, bona fide relationship in life with our Father. We are His real sons.

NO LONGER SLAVES, BUT SONS

Since we have the Spirit of sonship, we no longer need to be held under the custody of the law. We do not need the law to be our guardian, steward, or child-conductor. In 4:7 Paul says, "So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, an heir also through God." The New Testament believer is no longer a slave to works under law, but a son in life under grace. Instead of the law to keep us in custody, we have the all-inclusive Spirit. This Spirit is everything to us. Whereas the law could not give life, the Spirit gives life and brings us into maturity that we may have the full position and right of sons. The custody of the law has been replaced by the Spirit of sonship.

HEIRS THROUGH GOD

As sons, we are also heirs through God. An heir is one who is of full age according to the law (the Roman law is used for illustration) and who is qualified to inherit the Father's estate. The New Testament believers become heirs of God not through the law or through their fleshly father, but through God, even the Triune God--the Father

who sent forth the Son and the Spirit (vv. 4, 6), the Son who accomplished redemption for sonship (v. 5), and the Spirit who carries out the sonship within us (v. 6).

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWENTY-THREE

THE NEED FOR CHRIST TO BE FORMED IN THE HEIRS OF PROMISE

Scripture Reading: Gal. 4:8-20

In this message we shall consider 4:8-20. These verses indicate that the Apostle Paul was in a difficult situation with respect to the believers in Galatia. They had been brought to the Lord through Paul's preaching of the gospel, and he had a heart to care for them. Paul's burden was not to carry on a Christian work, but was to minister Christ to the believers, to labor that Christ might be formed in them (v. 19). It is possible to work for the Lord and to help the saints, without having the burden to minister Christ to them. We may earnestly work for Christ without having any burden to see Christ formed in the saints. Hence, it is important for us to see that Paul's burden as expressed in these verses was altogether different from that of most Christian workers. We may be burdened for the raising up of local churches and for the strengthening of the churches. However, we may not have the burden to minister Christ into the saints. To preach the gospel and raise up churches is one thing; to bear the burden to minister Christ into the saints is another. Paul's burden was not for a work; it was for ministering Christ into the believers. This is the reason that in 4:8-20 Paul uses certain intimate expressions, expressions which show the closeness of his relationship to the Galatian believers and his affection for them. Let us now consider 4:8-20 verse by verse.

ENSLAVED AND DECEIVED

Verse 8 says, "But then indeed, not knowing God, you were slaves to the gods which by nature do not exist." The gods, or the idols, do not have the divine nature. They were considered gods by their superstitious worshippers, but by nature they do not exist as gods.

In verse 9 Paul says, "But now, knowing God, but rather being known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and poor elements, to which you desire to be again enslaved?" The "elements" here are not substances. They are the elementary principles of the law, its rudimentary teachings. Here Paul points out that by turning again to the weak and poor elements of the law, the Galatian believers would once again become enslaved. Paul's use of the word enslaved indicates how serious the Judaizers were in working on the Galatian believers. The Judaizers bewitched them, deceived them, to such a degree that they were brought into slavery. To the Judaizers, the law was a matter of life and death. Therefore, they were desperate in their attempt to mislead the Galatians. Paul realized that once the Galatian believers had been deceived, they would be enslaved. To say that the Galatians were enslaved means that they had been deceived to the uttermost.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

In verse 10 Paul continues, "You observe days and months and seasons and years." The observances here were Jewish religious observances. The days mentioned were the Sabbaths and new moons (Isa. 66:23). The months were the sacred months like the first, Abib, the ear-month (Exo. 13:4); the second, Zif, the flower-month (1 Kings 6:1, 37); the seventh, Ethanim, the month of streaming rivers (1 Kings 8:2); and the eighth, Bul, the month of rain (1 Kings 6:38). The seasons were festal seasons such as the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles (2 Chron. 8:13). The years perhaps denoted sabbatical years (Lev. 25:4).

In verse 11 Paul tells the Galatians, "I fear for you, lest I have labored upon you in vain." Paul labored upon the

Galatians to bring them into Christ under grace. Their

turning to the Jewish religious observances might cause Paul's labor upon them to be in vain. It seems Paul was telling the believers in Galatia, "I labored on you and ministered Christ into you. Why, after receiving what I ministered to you, would you go back to the ordinances of the law?" Paul was puzzled. He simply could not believe that those who had received his preaching could be bewitched to such a degree that they would return to the observances of the law and become enslaved to them.

BECOMING AS PAUL WAS

Verse 12 says, "Become as I am, because I also am as you, brothers, I beseech you. You did not injure me at all." Paul was free from the bondage of Jewish observances. He besought the Galatians to become as he was, even as he had become as a Gentile for the truth of the gospel. Having done his best to become the same as the Galatians, he now besought them to become as he is. He seemed to be saying, "I love you and became like you. Now I ask you to become as I am. I am not for days, months, seasons, and years. I am for Christ. I beg you, become as I am."

In verse 12 Paul tells the Galatians that they did not injure him at all. The Galatians had not injured Paul in the past. Paul expects that neither would they injure him now.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO MINISTER CHRIST

Verse 13 continues, "And you know that on account of weakness of the flesh I preached the gospel to you formerly." In his first journey, Paul was detained in Galatia because of physical weakness. While there, he preached the gospel to the Galatians. His illness afforded him a good opportunity to minister Christ to them.

Verse 14 says, "And that which was a trial to you in my flesh you did not despise nor loathe, but you received me as a messenger of God, as Christ Jesus." Here Paul appeals to their love by reminding them that they had received him as a messenger of God, an angel, and had not despised his sickness.

THEIR BLESSEDNESS

In verse 15 Paul goes on to say, "Where then is your blessedness? For I testify to you that if possible you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me." The Greek words rendered "your blessedness" also mean your felicitation, your happiness. The Galatians formerly considered Paul's being retained in their place and preaching the gospel to them a blessing. They were happy about it and boasted of it. That became their felicitation. However, now that they had departed from Paul's preaching of the gospel, the apostle questions them, "Where then is your blessedness, your happiness, your felicitation?"

When Paul was among them, the Galatians celebrated their happiness with one another and congratulated one another for the opportunity to have such a minister of Christ with them. When Paul was in Galatia preaching the gospel, ministering Christ to the people, they were happy and regarded Paul's presence as a great blessing. This happiness, blessedness, felicitation, is what is implied by the Greek term used here.

The Galatians appreciated Paul's preaching and loved him to such an extent that, as he says, if possible, they would have torn out their eyes and given them to him. This may indicate that Paul's physical weakness (v. 13) was in his eyes. This may be confirmed by the large letters he used in writing to them (6:11). It may also be the thorn in his flesh, some physical weakness, which he prayed might be removed from him (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

AN APPEAL TO THE BELIEVERS' AFFECTION

In verse 16 Paul asks, "So have I become your enemy in speaking the truth to you?" This word indicates that certain of the deceived ones had come to regard Paul as an enemy. Suppose some brothers visit the saints in a certain region, and the saints there receive them gladly. However, later the saints are distracted by some teaching or practice and turn against the very brothers whom they once gladly received and appreciated highly. In such a case, these brothers may be tempted to give up on the saints in that

region. But this definitely was not Paul's attitude. On the contrary, he was burdened to write them and to appeal to them in a loving manner. We should learn of Paul to take up the burden for those believers who have turned away from us. Perhaps we should write them and say, "Do you not remember how you served us in love? Where is your love today? It seems that now you consider us your enemies. To be sure, this is not reasonable. Are we enemies simply because we speak the truth to you?"

In writing Galatians 3, Paul spoke like an attorney. But in composing chapter four, he wrote like a loving father. Chapter four was written according to Paul's personal and intimate love for the Galatians. Instead of arguing in a legal way like a lawyer, Paul appealed to the believers' affection. If we would be those who minister Christ to others, we must learn to speak to them in such a way. We should not simply speak according to doctrinal truth, but should appeal to others in a personal, loving manner.

THE AIM OF THE JUDAIZERS

Verse 17 says, "They are zealous of you, not rightly, but they desire to shut you out, that you may be zealous of them." The Greek word rendered zealous in this verse means to be jealously courting someone. The Judaizers were jealously courting the Galatians so that the Galatians might jealously court them in return. To court a person is to pursue that person in love with the aim of gaining his love. The Judaizers pursued the Galatian believers in this way, actually courting them. This indicates how serious, how zealous, the Judaizers were. However, as Paul says, the Judaizers jealously courted them, not rightly, but with the desire to shut them out. They did not pursue them in an honorable, commendable way. Their aim was to exclude them from the proper preaching of the gospel of grace. They wanted to exclude them from God's New Testament economy, from the enjoyment of Christ, and from the all-

inclusive life-giving Spirit. The principle is the same with dissenting ones today. Their goal is to shut out the church people from the enjoyment of Christ and to cause the ones they have deceived to zealously follow them.

In verse 18 Paul continues, "But it is good always to be zealous in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you." It is good to jealously court someone in a good thing, in the proper preaching of the gospel. This should be the case not only when Paul is present. By this word Paul indicates that he is not narrow, keeping other preachers of the gospel away from the Galatians. Rather, he rejoices in the preaching of others (Phil. 1:18). Paul was in favor of the proper preaching of others, but he was not in favor of that kind of jealous courting of the believers.

PAUL'S TRAVAIL

Verse 19 says, "My children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ is formed in you." Here Paul considers himself the begetting father, and the Galatian believers his children begotten of him in Christ (see 1 Cor. 4:15; Philem. 10). This also was an appeal to their affection.

Paul told the Galatian believers that he was again travailing on their behalf. Travail refers to painful labor in childbirth. In this metaphor Paul likens himself to a mother who gives birth to a child. He labored in this way for the regeneration of the Galatians when he first preached the gospel to them. Because they had deviated from the gospel he preached to them, he labors again in travail until Christ is formed in them. In this verse Paul likens himself both to a begetting father and a travailing mother. Was he, then, a father or a mother? He was both, depending on the situation. On one occasion he was a begetting father; on another, a travailing mother.

Paul was in travail that Christ might be formed in the Galatians. Christ, a living Person, is the focus of Paul's gospel. His preaching is to bring forth Christ, the Son of the living God, in the believers. This differs greatly from

the teaching of the law in letters. Hence, the book of Galatians is emphatically Christ-centered. Christ was crucified (3:1) to redeem us out of the curse of the law (3:13) and rescue us out of the evil religious course of the world (1:4); and He was resurrected from among the dead (1:1) that He might live in us (2:20). We were baptized into Him, identified with Him, and have put on Him, have clothed ourselves with Him (3:27). Thus, we are in Him (3:28) and have become His (3:29; 5:24). On the other hand, He has been revealed in us (1:16), He is now living in us (2:20), and He will be formed in us (4:19). It is to Him the law has conducted us (3:24), and in Him we are all sons of God (3:26). It is in Him that we inherit God's promised blessing and enjoy the all-inclusive Spirit (3:14). It is also in Him that we are all one (3:28). We should not be deprived of all profit from Him and so be severed from Him (5:4). We need Him to supply us with His grace in our spirit (6:18) that we may live Him.

Christ was born into the Galatian believers, but not formed in them, when they were regenerated through Paul's preaching the gospel to them the first time. Now the apostle travails again that Christ might be formed in them. To have Christ formed in us is to have Christ grown in us in full. First Christ was born into us at our conversion, then He lives in us in our Christian life (2:20), and He will be formed in us at our maturity. This is needed that we may be sons of full age, heirs to inherit God's promised blessing, and mature in the divine sonship.

MINISTERING CHRIST

As we have indicated, verse 19 points out that Paul's burden was not to carry on a Christian work, but was to have Christ formed in the believers. Through Paul's preaching, Christ had entered into the Galatians. But because they had been deceived, Christ had not yet grown in them and had not been formed in them. Therefore, Paul labored again, like a mother laboring in giving birth, that Christ would be formed in the believers. Paul wrote out of

the burden to minister Christ into the saints. He was burdened that Christ would be established, built up, in them. Galatians tells us that Christ is revealed in us and that He lives in us. Now we see that Christ must also be formed in us.

Ministering Christ to others is not accomplished easily. It often requires suffering and struggle. Ministering Christ is much more difficult than carrying on an ordinary Christian work. If you would bear the burden, with a sincere heart, to minister Christ to others, you will discover what labor and suffering it requires. You will need to labor like a mother giving birth to a child.

The goal of our service in the church or in the ministry must be to minister Christ into others. It is not adequate simply to say that we preach the gospel, for it is possible to preach the gospel without ministering Christ to others. Our burden must be the ministering of Christ. Once again I say that this requires labor and suffering. It demands prayer, patience, and love. According to our experience, such a ministry is a battle, a wrestling. The subtle one, the enemy of God, is active to bring in frustration or distraction. We do not know from what direction he will attack next. Hence, we must learn from Paul to be burdened to minister Christ and also to appeal to the saints' affection that their hearts may be touched.

PAUL'S PERPLEXITY

In verse 20 Paul says, "And I wished to be present with you now and to change my tone, because I am perplexed about you." The apostle wanted to change his tone from severity to affection, as a mother speaking lovingly to her children. Paul was puzzled in dealing with the Galatians. He was searching for the best way to recover them from their deviation from Christ.

Verse 20 indicates that Paul felt that what he had written to the Galatian believers was not adequate. He wanted to visit them and stay with them because he knew that his presence would accomplish more than his writing.

Paul was perplexed about the Galatians; he did not know how to deal with them, how to handle their case. On the one hand, he addressed them as "foolish Galatians"; on the other hand, he appealed to them as "beloved brothers." This indicates that Paul was perplexed.

THE NEED TO BE PURE IN MOTIVE

In writing chapter four Paul was very affectionate and appealed to the affection of the Galatian believers. It is very difficult to appeal to others' personal affection in a proper way. To do this requires that our motive be pure. If we are not pure in our motive, we should be careful of our affection for the saints. There is a great need of affectionate contact with the saints; there is also the need to appeal to the affection of others. However, we must recognize that such an appeal is difficult, for it is easy for the natural love, the "honey," to be present. It is not easy to be pure as Paul was in Galatians 4. Paul was a person who had been "salted." This was the reason that he could appeal to the Galatians' personal affection in such a pure way. He could even rebuke them and condemn the Judaizers with a pure intent. If we try to practice this, we shall discover how difficult it is. In rebuking others we need a pure motive. In appealing to others' personal affection, we need to be even more pure in our motive. In many situations we shall not be able to minister Christ to others, to travail to have Christ formed in them, if we are not able to appeal to their affection.

As we consider all these points, we see that chapter four is as important as chapter three. I thank the Lord that Paul wrote this chapter. Otherwise, we might have the impression that in writing to the Galatians he was legal, but not personal or affectionate. In chapter four Paul could be affectionate and appeal to the love of the saints for the purpose of ministering Christ to them.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWENTY-FOUR

TWO COVENANTS AND TWO KINDS OF CHILDREN

Scripture Reading: Gal. 4:21-31; 2:20a; 6:12-13, 15

In the previous message we pointed out that in 4:19 Paul says, "My children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ is formed in you." If we consider this verse in its context, we see that it is necessary for the heirs of the promise to have Christ formed in them. Those who are sons of Abraham through faith are the heirs of the promise, those who inherit the blessing. These heirs need to be filled, occupied, and saturated with Christ. They need to have Christ formed in them.

PERMEATED AND SATURATED WITH CHRIST

If we would know what it means for Christ to be formed in us, we need to consider not only the entire book of Galatians, but also the books of Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. The book of Galatians indicates that God's intention is for Christ to be wrought into His chosen people that they may become sons of God. In order to be God's sons, we need to be permeated and saturated with Christ. Christ must occupy our entire being. The Galatians, however, were distracted from Christ to the law. Hence, Paul told them repeatedly that it was altogether wrong to leave Christ and return to the law. The believers should come back to Christ, who is both the seed who fulfills God's promise to Abraham and also the good land, the all-inclusive Spirit to be our enjoyment. As believers, we need the full enjoyment of this blessing, the full enjoyment of the life-giving Spirit. We need to be permeated, saturated, possessed, and fully taken over by

this Spirit and with this

Spirit. According to the context of the book of Galatians, to have Christ formed in us is to allow Him to permeate our being and to saturate our inward parts. When Christ occupies our inner being in this way, He is formed in us.

OCCUPIED BY THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT

In order to have Christ formed in us, we need to drop everything other than Christ Himself, no matter how good these things may be. Even things which come from God and are scriptural may not be Christ Himself. Although the law was given by God, it must be set aside so that all the ground in our being may be given over to Christ. We need to allow Him to saturate every part of our inner being. He must occupy us and saturate our mind, emotion, and will. To have Christ possess our entire being is to have Him formed in us.

In Ephesians 3:17 we see that Paul prayed that "Christ may make His home in your hearts." We know that the heart includes the mind, the will, the emotion, and the conscience. To let Christ make His home in our hearts means that He makes His home in all these parts of our inner being. If Christ is to make home in our hearts, He needs to be able to settle down within us. Once again, this is to have Christ formed in us.

To have Christ formed in us is to allow the all-inclusive Spirit to occupy every part of our inner being. The law should not have any room in our mind, emotion, or will. All the ground within us must be for Christ. We need to allow Christ to occupy us fully. He should not only spread into our mind, emotion, and will; He should actually become our mind, emotion, and will. Let Christ be your thought, decision, and love. Let Him be everything to you. This is to have Christ formed in you. Everything other than Christ must diminish, and Christ must become everything to us in our experience.

THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF THE BLESSING OF THE GOSPEL

Christ today is the life-giving Spirit as the blessing of the gospel, the blessing promised by God. To have the full enjoyment of this blessing is to let Christ be formed in us. This means that if we would have the full enjoyment of the blessing of the gospel, we need to have Christ formed in us. If Christ is not yet fully formed in us, then our enjoyment of the blessing of the New Testament is not yet full. Although we have enjoyed the blessing in part, we need to go on to allow Christ to occupy us wholly, to take us over and saturate every part of our being with Himself. To do this is to enjoy the blessing of the gospel to the uttermost. This was Paul's goal in writing to the Galatian believers. As He appealed to their personal affection in 4:8-20, Paul had this goal clearly in mind. He appealed to the believers' affection so that Christ might be formed in them for the fulfillment of God's goal.

Galatians 4:21 says, "Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?" The book of Galatians deals strongly with deviation from Christ by coming back under the law. Such deviation shuts the believers out from the enjoyment of Christ as their life and their everything.

TWO SONS

We have seen that in 4:8-20 Paul spoke in an affectionate manner and appealed to the personal feeling of the Galatians. He did this for the purpose of ministering Christ to them. But in verse 21 Paul goes back to the tone he used in chapter three. In fact, he speaks to them in an even stronger way. In verses 22 and 23 Paul continues, "For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one of the maidservant and one of the free woman. But the one of the maidservant was born according to flesh, and the one of the free woman through the promise." To be born according to flesh is to be born by man's fleshly effort, whereas to be born through the promise is to be born through God's

power in grace, which is implied in His promise. Ishmael was born in the former way, but Isaac in the latter. According to the context, the law goes with the flesh, and grace goes with the promise. The child born of the maidservant was born according to the flesh, whereas the one born of the free woman was born according to grace. Because grace goes with the promise, to be born through promise is to be born through grace.

TWO WOMEN

Speaking of the two women in verse 22, Paul says in verse 24, "Which things are an allegory; for these are two covenants, one from Mount Sinai, bringing forth children unto slavery, which is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the Jerusalem which now is, for she is in slavery with her children." Of the two covenants mentioned in verse 24, one is the covenant of promise to Abraham, which is related to the New Testament, the covenant of grace, and the other is the covenant of law related to Moses, which has nothing to do with the New Testament. Sarah, the free woman, represents the covenant of promise, and Hagar, the maidservant, the covenant of law.

Mount Sinai was the place where the law was given (Exo. 19:20). The slavery spoken of in verse 24 is the slavery under the law. Hagar, the concubine of Abraham, signifies the law. Hence, the position of the law is like that of a concubine. Sarah, the wife of Abraham, symbolizes the grace of God (John 1:17), which has the right position in God's economy. The law, like Hagar, brought forth children unto slavery like the Judaizers. Grace, like Sarah, brings forth children unto sonship. These are the New Testament believers. They are no longer under law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14). They should stand in this grace (Rom. 5:2) and not fall from it (Gal. 5:4).

In verse 25 Paul mentions "the Jerusalem which now is." Jerusalem, as the choice of God (1 Kings 14:21; Psa.

48:2, 8), should belong to the covenant of promise represented by Sarah. However, because it brings God's chosen people into the bondage of law, it corresponds to Mount Sinai, which belongs to the covenant of law represented by Hagar. Jerusalem and her children were slaves under the law at Paul's time.

Paul's word in verses 24 and 25 was clear and strong. No doubt, the Judaizers must have been offended by it.

Verse 26 says, "But the Jerusalem above is free, who is our mother." The mother of the Judaizers is the earthly Jerusalem, but the mother of believers is the heavenly Jerusalem. This will eventually be the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1-2), which is related to the covenant of promise. She is the mother of the New Testament believers, who are not slaves under law, but sons under grace. We, the New Testament believers, are all born of her from above.

ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS

Verse 27 goes on to say, "For it is written, Rejoice, barren one who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not travailing, because many are the children of the desolate rather than of her who has a husband." This indicates that Abraham's spiritual descendants, who belong to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the covenant of promise under the freedom of grace, are many more than his natural descendants, who belong to the earthly Jerusalem, to the covenant of law under the slavery of law.

According to Genesis 22:17, God promised that Abraham's descendants would be like the sand of the seashore and like the stars of heaven. Here we see two kinds of descendants, the heavenly and the earthly, the spiritual and the natural. The Jews are Abraham's descendants according to the flesh, whereas the believers in Christ are his descendants according to the Spirit. The natural descendants, the Jews, are like the sand of the seashore, but the spiritual descendants, the Christians, who outnumber the natural descendants, are like the stars.

Verse 28 continues, "But you, brothers, according to Isaac, are children of promise." The children of promise are those born of the heavenly Jerusalem through grace under the covenant of promise.

ISHMAEL'S PERSECUTION OF ISAAC

Verse 29 says, "But as then he that was born according to flesh persecuted him that was born according to Spirit, so also it is now." The two kinds of children brought forth by the two covenants are different in their natures. Those brought forth by the covenant of law are born according to flesh; those brought forth by the covenant of promise are born according to Spirit. The children born according to flesh have no right to participate in God's promised blessing, but the children born according to the Spirit have the full right. The Judaizers were the former kind of children; the believers in Christ are the latter. The children of promise (v. 28) are born according to Spirit, God's Spirit of life, who is the very blessing of God's promise to Abraham (3:14).

Paul says that the one born according to flesh persecuted the one born according to the Spirit. This indicates that Ishmael persecuted Isaac (Gen. 21:9). Furthermore, the Judaizers, the descendants of Abraham according to flesh, also persecuted the believers, the descendants of Abraham according to the Spirit, as Ishmael did Isaac. The same is true today. Today's Ishmaels, those according to flesh, are persecuting the real Isaacs, the children according to the Spirit.

SONS OF ABRAHAM AND CHILDREN OF THE FREE WOMAN

In verses 30 and 31 Paul concludes, "But what does the Scripture say? Cast out the maidservant and her son; for the son of the maidservant shall by no means inherit with the son of the free woman. Wherefore, brothers, we are not

children of a maidservant, but of the free woman." The Judaizers under the slavery of law are the sons of the maid-servant, who shall by no means inherit God's promised blessing--the all-inclusive Spirit. The believers of the New Testament under the freedom of grace are the sons of the free woman, who shall inherit the promised blessing of the Spirit. We, the believers in Christ, are not children of law under its slavery, but children of grace under its freedom to enjoy the all-inclusive Spirit with all the riches of Christ. It is important to remember that the free woman represents grace and the promise, whereas the maid-servant, Hagar, represents the law and also the efforts of the flesh. Thus, the law brought forth children according to the flesh, but the promise and grace brought forth children according to the Spirit.

The conclusion of chapter four is very similar to that of chapter three. Paul ends chapter three by saying that we "are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." Then he closes chapter four with these words: "Wherefore, brothers, we are not children of a maidservant, but of the free woman." At the end of chapter three, we see that we are sons of Abraham, but at the end of chapter four, that we are children of the free woman, those who inherit the promise. Actually, these two chapters speak of the same thing viewed from different angles.

FIVE POSITIVE MATTERS

As we consider the matter of two covenants and two kinds of children, we need to be impressed with God's promise, grace, Christ, the Spirit, and the children according to Spirit. In contrast to these, we have the law, flesh, slavery, and the children according to the flesh. The children according to the flesh are those held in slavery. In this message I am burdened that we all be impressed with the five positive matters of promise, grace, Christ, the Spirit, and the children according to the Spirit.

THE UNVEILING OF GOD'S DESIRE

The promise given to Abraham was the unveiling of God's desire. When God made the promise to Abraham, He opened His heart and unveiled the desire of His heart. Although man had fallen and was under the curse, God's desire was to bless all nations. His desire was to give Himself as a blessing to the nations. God had told Abraham that in Him all nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). This promise was given over against a certain background. At the time the promise was given, all the nations were under the curse. No doubt, Abraham realized this. Then, suddenly, the God of glory appeared to him and promised that in him all the nations would be blessed. What a tremendous word this was! When the God of glory appeared to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham was attracted. He was charmed. Because he was attracted by God, Abraham could follow Him out of Chaldea. Then, when Abraham was sojourning in the land of Canaan, God promised to give the land to Abraham's seed. Therefore, with God's promise to Abraham there are two main aspects: the aspect of the nations being blessed and the aspect of the good land. On the one hand, the nations would be blessed through Christ's redemption. On the other hand, Christ, typified by the good land, is the embodiment of the Triune God as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit as our enjoyment and bountiful supply. God's promise to Abraham with these two aspects was the unveiling of the desire of God's heart.

God's promise to Abraham involves much more than justification by faith. Yes, we are told that Abraham believed God and that it was reckoned to him as righteousness (3:6). However, we need to see that God's dealing with Abraham involved much more. The gospel preached to Abraham was actually the unveiling of God's heart.

THE COMING OF CHRIST AND OF GRACE

Two thousand years after the desire of God's heart was unveiled to Abraham, Christ came. When Christ came,

grace came. Grace is the Triune God processed to become our enjoyment. Such a grace is the fulfillment of God's promise, the fulfillment of God's desire.

Before the coming of Christ, we are not told in the Scriptures that God was happy or pleased. But when Christ was baptized, the Father declared, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I delight" (Matt. 3:17). When the Lord was with three of the disciples on the mount of transfiguration, the Father spoke the same words (Matt. 17:5). God was happy to see the fulfillment of His desire by grace, which is actually a living Person, Christ, the Son of God, the embodiment of the Triune God. This living Person is the fulfillment of the desire of God's heart. It is correct to say that the fulfillment of God's promise is both by grace and by the living Person of Christ, for this living Person is Himself the grace.

THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

Today we are enjoying this grace, this living Person, who is now the life-giving Spirit within us. If Christ were not the life-giving Spirit dwelling in us, we could not be one with Him, and it would not be possible for Him to work all the riches of the Godhead into our being. How could Christ live in us and be formed in us if He were only an objective One sitting in the heavens at the right hand of the Father, as One separate from the Father and the Spirit? It would be impossible! Such a Christ could not be revealed into us, live in us, or be formed in us. In order for all this to become our experience, Christ must be the life-giving Spirit. Praise the Lord that the grace we enjoy is Christ, and Christ is the life-giving Spirit!

CHILDREN ACCORDING TO SPIRIT

Because we have grace, Christ, and the life-giving Spirit, we are children according to Spirit. How blessed we are to have the hearing of faith and by it to receive grace! We have seen that the desire of God's heart, the promise given to Abraham, is fulfilled by grace and that grace is

Christ as the life-giving Spirit. This Spirit is now in our spirit and makes us children according to Spirit. This is the revelation in Galatians 3 and 4.

As those who are children according to Spirit, we should lay aside the law, the flesh, slavery, and the children according to flesh. We need to bid farewell to these things and refuse from now on to be entangled by them. Instead, we should remain in the fulfillment of God's desire, enjoying grace, Christ, and the all-inclusive Spirit as the blessing of the gospel.

OUR CHOICE

In 4:21-31 we see two women, two covenants, and two Jerusalems. We can choose between Hagar and Sarah, between the earthly Jerusalem and the Jerusalem above, and between the covenant of law and the covenant of promise, which is the testament of grace. Furthermore, we may choose to be children according to flesh or children according to Spirit. Praise the Lord for showing us the two covenants and the two kinds of children! Chapters three and four of Galatians are crystal clear to us, fully transparent. We praise the Lord that we are of the Jerusalem above, children of the free woman! Praise Him that we are children according to the Spirit enjoying the all-inclusive Spirit as the blessing of the gospel!

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWENTY-FIVE

NOT BROUGHT TO NOUGHT FROM CHRIST

Scripture Reading: Gal. 5:1-6

The first four chapters of Galatians present a revelation of the gospel preached by the Apostle Paul. If you compare the revelation in these chapters with that conveyed in the four Gospels, you will see that, in a certain sense, the revelation in these chapters is richer, deeper, and more profound than that in the Gospels. For example, in the four Gospels we do not have a clear view of the desire of God's heart. But the first four chapters of Galatians do present such a clear view of this. As we have pointed out, God's promise to Abraham was the unveiling of the desire of God's heart. Because many Christians concentrate on the Gospels alone, they do not know the desire of God's heart. Furthermore, although John 1 speaks of grace, in Galatians we see that grace is the fulfillment of God's promise according to the desire of His heart. The Gospels also present the living Person of Christ as viewed from four angles. But without the first four chapters of Galatians, we would not understand Christ in such a deep way. The same is true concerning the Spirit. Chapters fourteen through sixteen of the Gospel of John reveal much concerning the Spirit. But if we did not have the book of Galatians, we would not know that the Spirit is Christ as the seed of Abraham to fulfill the promise. In fulfilling the promise, Christ is the seed; but for our enjoyment, He is the land, which typifies the all-inclusive Spirit. Hence, the seed is for fulfillment, whereas the land is for enjoyment.

In this message we come to 5:1-6, which begins another major section of Galatians, concerned with the walk of

God's children (5:1--6:17). After presenting the profound revelation found in chapters one through four, Paul turns to the walk of God's children according to the Spirit.

I. NOT ENTANGLED WITH A YOKE OF SLAVERY

In 5:1 Paul says, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore and do not be again entangled with a yoke of slavery." The first charge Paul gives us concerning our walk is not to be entangled with a yoke of slavery. This charge is based upon the revelation presented in chapters one through four, where he spoke of slavery under the law and of how Christ has delivered us from that slavery. The freedom in 5:1 denotes freedom from the slavery of law. Christ has set us free through His redeeming death and life-imparting resurrection that we may enjoy this freedom and grace. To stand fast is to stand fast in the freedom from the slavery of law, not deviating from Christ, not falling from grace.

The Greek word rendered entangled may also be translated held ensnared. To deviate from Christ to law is to be entangled or held ensnared. The yoke of slavery is the bondage of law, which makes the law-keepers slaves under a binding yoke.

In 5:1 Paul uses an unusual expression, "For freedom Christ has set us free." Paul's composition here is somewhat awkward, even redundant. He could have said simply, "Christ has set us free." The Bible is often redundant and repetitious. Consider how often Paul speaks of faith in the book of Galatians, or how many times the New Testament refers to justification by faith. In 5:1 Paul writes in a redundant manner in order to impress us with the preciousness of our freedom in Christ. It seems Paul was saying to the Galatians, "I want you to remember that it was for freedom that Christ has set us free. Since Christ has set us free for freedom, we should stand fast and not be entangled again with the yoke of slavery." Paul used strong terms in order to impress the distracted Galatians that they must set aside the yoke of slavery and come back to their freedom in Christ.

II. NOT BROUGHT TO NOUGHT FROM CHRIST

In 5:4 Paul goes on to use an unusual expression, saying, "You have been brought to nought from Christ, you who are justified by law; you have fallen from grace." Different translations render the first part of 5:4 in different ways: "Christ is become of no effect unto you" (KJV); "Ye are severed from Christ" (ASV); "Ye are deprived of all profit from the Christ" (Darby's *New Translation*). To be brought to nought from Christ is to be reduced to nothing from Christ, deprived of all profit from Christ and so separated from Him (Darby), so that He is made void of effect. To go back to law is to become severed from Christ, to be brought to nought from Christ.

The different renderings of 5:4 are all implied in the one Greek expression. Literally, this expression means to be brought to nothing from Christ. Dean Alford says that an exact, accurate, and literal translation of the Greek term would be annihilated, which in its original meaning means to bring something to nothing. Hence, in this verse Paul is talking about being brought to nothing, to nought, from Christ. He was telling the Galatians, "Dear saints, you who seek to be justified by law have been brought to nothing from Christ. You were grafted into Christ, and you were enjoying the riches of Christ. But by going back to the law and to circumcision, you are brought to nought, you are annihilated, from Christ."

If a branch from an inferior tree is grafted into a superior tree, it will enjoy all the benefits of being part of that superior tree. But suppose the grafted branch is later detached from the superior tree. In such a case we may say that it is brought to nothing from the superior tree, for by being separated from that tree, it relinquishes all the benefits of being joined to it. Thus, it reduces itself to nothing from the superior tree, in particular from the enjoyment of the riches of that tree. This illustrates Paul's meaning in 5:4. By believing into Christ and being baptized into Him, we have been grafted into Him as the rich tree. As branches grafted into Him, we may enjoy His

unsearchable riches. As long as we remain grafted into Him, we may enjoy all His riches. But if we relinquish Christ, let Him go in a practical way in our experience, we shall be brought to nothing from the unsearchably rich Christ.

The Galatians had been distracted to the law and to circumcision. In turning to the law in this way, they were brought to nothing from Christ. Darby says that they were deprived of all profit from Christ and so separated from Him.

It is difficult to find Christians today who, in some way or other, have not been brought to nought from Christ. What Christians remain grafted to Christ in a practical way to enjoy all His riches? We admit that there are a good number of Christians in Catholicism. But Catholicism has brought them to nothing from Christ. The same is true of the vast majority of Christians in the denominations. The rituals, forms, and practices have caused them to be brought to nothing from Christ. All these things deprive believers of their profit in Christ. This is even true among those in the Brethren assemblies, where strong emphasis is placed on right doctrine. Many of the Brethren care more for doctrine than for the abiding in Christ and the enjoyment of Christ. In fact, it is not likely that they would even use the expression "the enjoyment of Christ." They are preoccupied with doctrine; they do not care for how to con-tact the Lord, to remain in the spirit, to abide in the Lord, and to enjoy the riches of Christ. This may be like a foreign language to them. Although they regard themselves as the most biblical of Christians, to some extent they also have been brought to nought from Christ. Those in today's Pentecostalism and charismatic movement have also been brought to nothing from Christ in certain ways. Some care for such things as the lengthening of legs and for speaking in tongues, but not for remaining grafted into Christ to enjoy His riches.

All kinds of Christians have been brought to nought from Christ in one way or other. Again I ask, where are the

Christians who abide in Christ all the time to enjoy His riches? Where are the believers who have not been brought to nothing from Christ, who have not been deprived of their profit in Christ? The deplorable fact is that believers everywhere have been brought to nought from Christ. We need to pray, "Lord, have mercy on us and grant us grace that we would not be brought to nothing from You. We want to abide in You as the all-inclusive One to enjoy Your riches." We thank the Lord that by His mercy and grace He has preserved us in Himself to enjoy His riches.

How pitiful is the situation among Christians today! Many care for practices and doctrines, for a certain mode of baptism, or for spiritual gifts. But hardly any believers care for the enjoyment of Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit in our spirit. What a blessing it is to be able to testify that we daily enjoy the riches of the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit! By the Lord's mercy I can testify that I enjoy Him day by day.

In the same verse where Paul speaks of being brought to nought from Christ, he also speaks of having "fallen from grace." To be brought to nought from Christ is to fall from grace. This implies that Christ Himself is the grace in which we the believers are.

In 5:2 Paul says, "Behold, I Paul say to you that if you are circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." The Judaizers made circumcision a condition of salvation (2:3-5; Acts 15:1). If the Galatian believers had received circumcision, making it a condition of salvation, Christ would have profited them nothing. By going back to the law, they automatically would have had to relinquish Christ. In order to understand Paul's thought in 5:2-4, we need to know the background against which these verses were written. The background concerns God's promise made to Abraham about blessing all the nations. About two thousand years after this promise was given, Christ came as the fulfillment. As the seed, He fulfilled the promise that it might become grace for our enjoyment. After fulfilling the promise, Christ became the all-inclusive life-

giving Spirit, who is the very blessing of the promise. As 3:14 indicates, we received the promise of the Spirit as the blessing of the gospel. By enjoying this life-giving Spirit, we become children according to the Spirit, heirs of the promised blessing. This is our status, our standing, and our enjoyment. For this reason, in 5:1 Paul exhorts us to stand fast in the freedom and enjoyment we have in Christ. But if we go back to the law and circumcision, we shall be brought to nought from Christ, reduced to nothing from Christ. Then Christ will not be of any profit to us in our experience. To be brought to nothing from Christ in this way is to fall from grace.

The experience Paul presents in chapters three and four is actually related to our being grafted into Christ. We have been grafted into the One who, on the one hand, is the seed to fulfill the promise and, on the other hand, is the life-giving Spirit as the blessing of the good land. Since our position is that of branches grafted into Christ, we may enjoy all His riches. But if we go back to the law, we shall detach ourselves from Christ as the superior tree and be brought to nothing from Him. We shall be reduced to nothing from the enjoyment of Christ. Then Christ will not profit us anything, for we shall have fallen from grace. As we consider today's situation, we see that few Christians stand in freedom and remain in their status as grafted branches to enjoy the riches of Christ. On the contrary, almost all Christians have been detached from Christ. Have you been detached from Christ? Have you been brought to nought from Him, deprived of all the profit there is for you in Christ? I hope that all of us in the Lord's recovery can strongly declare, "No, we have not been brought to nothing from Christ! We abide in Him to enjoy all He is to us."

III. EXPECTING THE HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY THE SPIRIT BY FAITH

In 5:5 Paul says, "For we by the Spirit by faith eagerly expect the hope of righteousness." By the Spirit, the Holy

Spirit, here is in contrast with by the flesh (3:3). Furthermore, by faith is in contrast with by works of law (3:2). The hope of righteousness means the righteousness we hope for, which is Christ Himself (1 Cor. 1:30). It is not by works of law in the flesh but by faith in the Spirit. Christ is our hope of righteousness. He is our righteousness today, and He is our hope to come. We are not looking for earthly success. By the Spirit and by faith we expect Christ as the hope of righteousness.

In 5:5 Paul puts the Spirit together with faith. We have pointed out that the Spirit is typified by the land. We have also seen that faith is the camera which photographs the scenery of grace. In order to have the proper enjoyment, we need to have the Spirit as the all-inclusive land and faith as the means to enjoy this land. As we enjoy the Spirit by faith, we eagerly expect the coming hope of righteousness.

In 5:6 Paul goes on to say, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith operating through love." Apart from the Spirit and faith, nothing else avails. In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything. What avails is the Spirit on God's side and faith on our side. The Spirit is the all-inclusive land for our enjoyment, and faith is the organ by which we participate in this rich land and enjoy it. Because the Spirit and faith avail, we should treasure them.

In 5:6 Paul also says that faith operates through love. Living faith is active. It operates to work out the fulfillment of the law through love (5:14). Circumcision is simply an outward ordinance having no power of life. Hence, it avails nothing. It has no force or practical power. Faith receives the Spirit of life (3:2), which is full of power. It operates through love to fulfill not only the law, but also God's purpose, that is, to complete the sonship of God for His corporate expression.

Love is related to our appreciation of Christ. Without such an appreciation, faith cannot operate. When we have the hearing of faith, this hearing awakens our loving

appreciation, and this appreciation causes faith to operate. Faith operates because it participates in the riches of the life-giving Spirit. The more we have the hearing of faith, the more appreciation and love we have. The more love we have for the Lord, the more faith operates. The more faith operates, the more it brings us into the riches, the profit, of the all-inclusive Spirit. Instead of being deprived of profit in Christ, we are thus abundantly enriched. Instead of being brought to nought from Christ, we are strengthened with the bountiful supply of the all-inclusive Spirit.

Faith receives the Spirit of life (3:2) and operates through love to fulfill the law (5:13). Faith operating through love thus completes the sonship of God for His corporate expression. This faith is the camera which photo-graphs the scenery of grace, the very grace that is the all-inclusive Christ as the life-giving Spirit for our enjoyment.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWENTY-SIX

GETTING RID OF THE LEAVEN AND NOT TURNING FREEDOM INTO AN OCCASION FOR THE FLESH

Scripture Reading: Gal. 5:7-15

In the foregoing message we saw that Paul spoke to the Galatian believers about not being brought to nothing from Christ (5:4). That was Paul's first charge related to the daily walk of the heirs of promise. In this message we shall consider the second and third charges respectively: the charge to get rid of the leaven and not to turn freedom into an occasion, an opportunity, for the flesh.

I. GETTING RID OF THE LEAVEN

A. Not Dissuaded from Obeying the Truth

In 5:7 and 8 Paul says, "You were running well; who hindered you that you should not obey the truth? This persuasion is not of Him Who calls you." In 4:20 Paul told the Galatians that he was perplexed about them. Here in 5:7 and 8 Paul assumes a rather mild tone. He praises them by saying that they were running well. Then he asks them who hindered them that they should not obey the truth. Truth here does not refer to doctrine, but refers to the reality in Christ, as preached to the Galatians by Paul. In these verses it is difficult to tell whether Paul is mild or bold. On the one hand, he praises them, but, on the other hand, he seems to rebuke them. In talking to the Galatian believers Paul was very careful.

In 5:8 Paul says, "This persuasion is not of Him Who calls you." The persuasion Paul mentions here is that of the Judaizers' teaching, which was distracting the Galatians from Christ to the observances of the law. This

was not of God, the One who had called them. Thus, it must have been from another source, from Satan. Paul's word here is a strong indication that the Judaizers were one with Satan in acting against God's economy.

We may apply this principle to our situation today. The persuasive talk of the opposers and the dissenting ones is not of the One who has called us. Therefore, its source must be Satan. This is a very serious matter. Be careful when listening to the persuasive speech of dissenting ones. Do not just listen to their words, but check whether or not their speech is of the One who has called us. Discern whether or not their persuasive talk is of God. Do not be misled by pleasant words. Deceivers are often sweet talkers. They use soothing, comforting, enticing words in their attempt to persuade you. But concealed within these words there is poison. Speaking with sugar-coated words, the dissenting ones may try to entice the weak ones away from the enjoyment of Christ and from the proper church life. Such talk is not of the One who called us. It issues from another source, from Satan, God's enemy. The goal of this persuasion is to bring us to nothing from the enjoyment of Christ. Beware of the subtlety of the enemy behind this kind of persuasion.

B. Not Allowing a Little Leaven to Leaven the Whole Lump

In verse 9 Paul goes on to say, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." Leaven here refers to the false teachings of the Judaizers (see Matt. 16:12), and the lump, to all the believers collectively. The whole lump is the church. Actually, Paul did not regard the false teachings of the Judaizers merely as a small amount of leaven, a little leaven. Certain of the Galatian believers, however, may have considered the persuasive speech of the Judaizers as something rather small. For this reason, Paul pointed out that even a little leaven leavens the whole lump.

In his subtle strategy, Satan uses the opposing ones and the dissenting ones to inject a little leaven through

their persuasive speech. This leaven works as an appetizer that stirs up our desire in a negative way. The negative points covered in the first four chapters of Galatians were not merely a little leaven, but a large amount of leaven. But in dealing with those believers who had been distracted by the teaching of the Judaizers, Paul speaks in a careful way and refers to a little leaven. Whether the amount is large or small, leaven is leaven. Leaven is like germs in that it multiplies; it causes the whole lump to be leavened. We need to learn from the experience of the Galatians not to open ourselves to even a little leaven, for a little leaven is capable of leavening the whole church.

C. In Nothing Otherwise Minded

In verse 10 Paul says, "I have confidence as to you in the Lord that in nothing you will be otherwise minded." This word indicates that Paul had great faith. Notice, however, that Paul's confidence was not in the Galatians, but in the Lord. Paul did not say, "I have confidence in you"; rather, he said, "I have confidence as to you in the Lord." Because Paul had been praying for the Galatians, he could have confidence in the Lord concerning them and not be disappointed. In particular, Paul was confident that the Galatians would not be otherwise minded.

In referring to the matter of being otherwise minded, Paul touches the most important source of problems in the church life--that of having a different mind, of being otherwise minded. As long as there is no idolatry, immorality, or divisiveness in the church, we should not be otherwise minded concerning anything. Instead, we should be one with the church and go along with the church, no matter what direction the church may pursue. Regarding doctrines and practices, do not be otherwise minded. For example, do not say that you agree with arranging the chairs in a particular way, but not with arranging them in some other way. Also, we should not say that we prefer to meet in homes instead of in the meeting hall. It is absolutely not of God to be otherwise minded in this way.

The source of this is the enemy, Satan. None of us should give ground for a different kind of mind to enter into the church life. We need to close ourselves to such an invasion of the enemy. We all must take the responsibility not to be otherwise minded. If the church practices idolatry, we should stand against it. But even in this we must have a proper spirit in order to be helpful to others.

To repeat, we should not agree with anything idolatrous, immoral, or divisive. However, we should not be dissenting about other things. Suppose we come to a meeting and find the chairs arranged in a very unusual way. If none of the saints speak critically of this arrangement, this will be a sign that the church life is very strong. It will be a clear indication that we care for Christ and not for a particular way of arranging the chairs.

If we have truly seen the enjoyment of Christ and the oneness of the church, we shall not be otherwise minded. We shall not care for any particular opinion, way, or practice. Instead, we shall care only for the enjoyment of Christ and for the oneness of the Body.

In the church life, we should not exercise our mind to gather unnecessary information. We should not be spies trying to gather information. The weaker we are in life, the greater will be our tendency to act like a spy. Should such a weak one visit a church in another locality, he may want to spy out things there. This kind of practice is devilish. Whenever we visit another church, we should be content to be blind, not knowing anything about the situation of the saints there.

When Paul uttered the words that he was confident in the Lord concerning the Galatian believers that they would not be otherwise minded, the situation among the saints was much different than it is today. When Paul wrote the book of Galatians, there was still the proper emphasis on the oneness of the church in each locality and on the enjoyment of Christ. Paul's confidence was based upon the fact that there was just one church in each locality and that in his ministry there was a strong and clear emphasis

on Christ as everything to the saints. This was the basis for Paul's confidence in the Lord that in nothing the believers in Galatia would be otherwise minded. Paul prayed much for the believers and was confident that in everything they would not be otherwise minded. He had a solid ground for this confidence. But because of the pervasive influence of poisonous leaven, our situation is very different. The matter of being otherwise minded is found virtually among all Christians. But at Paul's time the church was one, and Paul had reason for confidence in the Lord concerning the saints.

D. Not Letting the Stumbling Block of the Cross Be Done Away

In 5:11 Paul says, "But I, brothers, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? Then has the stumbling block of the cross been done away." Circumcision foreshadowed the dealing with man's flesh; the cross is the reality of this dealing (Col. 2:11-12). The Judaizers endeavored to bring the Galatians back to the shadow; the Apostle Paul struggled to keep them in the reality.

Circumcision is a type of the cross of Christ. In typology, circumcision typifies the cutting off of the flesh. The true cutting off of the flesh is accomplished by the cross. Therefore, the cross is the fulfillment and the reality of the type of circumcision. Nevertheless, the Judaizers insisted on continuing the practice of circumcision, even though Christ had been crucified on the cross. Because the Judaizers insisted on circumcision and opposed the cross, they persecuted those, like Paul, who preached the cross of Christ. Paul taught that circumcision was a type, a shadow, fulfilled in the cross of Christ. Since Christ has been crucified, there is no longer any need for the practice of circumcision.

According to 5:11, Paul would not preach circumcision and thereby allow the stumbling block of the cross to be done away. Even by the time the book of Galatians was written, between A.D. 55 and 58, the cross of Christ had

already become a stumbling block. Some did not dare to believe in the cross or to talk about it. This was due to the influence of Judaism, where circumcision was of great importance. The Judaizers belittled the cross and exalted circumcision. To them, the cross of Christ was a stumbling block, and those who preached the word of the cross deserved to be persecuted. Thus, verse 11 helps us to realize the situation when Paul wrote to the Galatians.

E. Letting the Troubling and Upsetting Ones Bear the Judgment and Cut Themselves Off

In verses 10 and 12 Paul has some strong words concerning those who were troubling the Galatian believers. In verse 10 he says that "he who troubles you shall bear the judgment, whoever he may be." This word is virtually the equivalent of a curse. Paul was saying that those who troubled the saints in Galatia would be cursed. Paul used the word "cursed" in chapter one, where he says that anyone who preaches a gospel besides that which the Galatians received should be accursed (1:9). Here Paul says that the one who troubles the Galatians will be judged, condemned, whoever he may be.

In 5:12 Paul utters a very strong word: "I would that those who upset you would even cut themselves off." The Apostle Paul wished that the Judaizers who upset the Galatians by insisting on circumcision would cut off not only their foreskin but even themselves. Their upsetting, disturbing self needed to be amputated.

The fact that Paul wanted those who upset the Galatian believers to "cut themselves off" indicates that he regarded them as flesh that needed to be cut. Paul was saying, "Those who are disturbing you should not simply cut off a piece of flesh from their bodies--they should cut themselves off." In the eyes of God, the whole being of such ones is under condemnation and worthy to be cut off. The Judaizers must have been angered by such a word, angered enough to put Paul to death. How bold Paul was to utter such a word concerning them, treating them as flesh! When

Paul was bold, he was really bold. Here we see his boldness in speaking of the Judaizers as flesh needing to be cut off.

II. NOT TURNING FREEDOM INTO AN OCCASION FOR THE FLESH

In 5:13 Paul says, "For you were called to freedom, brothers; only do not turn the freedom into an occasion for the flesh, but through love serve one another as slaves." Paul's writing is not like an unturned cake (Hosea 7:8). Rather, he is balanced and even, first considering one side of a matter, then the other side. Our tendency, however, is to be an unturned cake, with one side raw and the other side overdone. In giving messages we may easily produce unturned cakes. But as Paul wrote the book of Galatians, he turned the cake again and again. He could be strong, then affectionate; rebuking, then mild.

We see Paul's balance in the matter of freedom. On the one hand, Paul tells us that we were called to freedom; on the other hand, he warns us not to use this freedom for an occasion for the flesh. While Paul encouraged the believers to enjoy their freedom in Christ, he was also concerned that they might misuse or abuse this freedom. If we over-indulge ourselves in our freedom, then we turn it into an occasion for the flesh. Although we are free, we still need to be limited in the exercise of our freedom. Freedom without limitation always results in the indulgence of the flesh. Therefore, we need to be balanced, to be free, yet restricted. If we are limited in the use of our freedom, we shall love others and through love serve them as slaves.

When Paul wrote the book of Galatians, he had a number of thoughts within him. He realized that the Galatian believers who had been distracted might return to their freedom and then begin to misuse it. They might have the attitude that since they are no longer under any kind of yoke, they are free to do what they please. Such an attitude damages the church life. Therefore, Paul charged the Galatians not to misuse their freedom. Yes, they had been

called to freedom, but they should not turn it into an indulgence. On the one hand, they were free from the yoke of slavery, from the law, but, on the other hand, they should still care for others and serve them in love. When some saints, especially young believers, hear a message on freedom, they have the tendency to cast off restraint. They may have the attitude that, since they are free, no longer do they need to regard the word of the elders. This is to turn freedom into an occasion for the flesh. Instead of doing this, we should be limited in the use of freedom and be willing to serve one another as slaves. As Paul says in 5:14, "The whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

In the verses we have covered in this message, Paul admonishes us to have a proper walk in the church life. He indicates that we need to be balanced and not be unturned cakes. In giving messages, we should cover both sides of a matter. We need to care for ourselves and also for others. We may enjoy the freedom we have and yet still be restricted in love for the sake of others that the church life may go on in a good way. Furthermore, we must learn not to be otherwise minded. Then we shall have a proper walk in the church life.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWENTY-SEVEN

WALK BY THE SPIRIT, NOT BY THE FLESH

Scripture Reading: Gal. 5:16-23

In 5:16 Paul tells us to walk by the Spirit. The Christian walk is absolutely by the Spirit, not by the flesh. According to the context of chapter five, the Spirit in 5:16 must be the Holy Spirit, who dwells in our regenerated spirit and mingles with it. To walk by the Spirit is to have our walk regulated by the Holy Spirit within our spirit. This is contrasted with our walk being regulated by the law in our flesh.

The word walk in 5:16 means to move, act, and have our being. It includes everything we do and say. Hence, it covers our whole daily life. In this verse Paul is charging us to have our daily life--to live, walk, and have our being--by the Spirit.

In composing verse 16, Paul did not use the term Holy Spirit. In fact, he did not even use the definite article before the word Spirit. Literally, he simply said, "Walk by Spirit." We have indicated that in chapter five the Spirit refers to the Spirit indwelling our spirit and mingled with it. Therefore, the Spirit here is the mingled spirit. The emphasis, however, is on the indwelling Spirit. When the New Testament refers to the indwelling Spirit, it implies that our spirit is indwelt by the Spirit. The two spirits are one. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:17, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." The Spirit in 5:16 thus denotes the Holy Spirit mingled with the human spirit. Every saved person has such a spirit within him. To be regenerated is to have the mingled spirit, the Holy Spirit mingled with our spirit.

In 3:2 Paul asked the Galatians a question: "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" Paul was trying to impress the distracted Galatian believers with the fact that they had received the Spirit, who was now mingled with their spirit. In 3:3 he went on to ask them, "Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" They began their Christian life by the Spirit. However, they were being distracted from the Spirit to the law, circumcision, and the ordinances of Judaism. Now after covering a number of important matters in chapters three and four, Paul charges them in 5:16 to walk by the Spirit. There was no need for the Galatians to walk by the law, circumcision, or ordinances. It was sufficient for them to walk by the Spirit. If they would walk by the Spirit, they would by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh.

In chapter five Paul indicates that our only choice is to walk either by the Spirit or by the flesh. We have seen that the flesh is the uttermost expression of the fallen tripartite man, whereas the Spirit is the ultimate realization of the processed Triune God. To walk by the Spirit, therefore, is to walk by the processed Triune God. Because of Christ's redemption and the Spirit's work of regeneration, we, who have received God's dispensation, can walk by the Spirit instead of by the flesh. This means that instead of walking by our fallen being, we can walk by the processed Triune God. We have the processed Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit in our spirit. We cannot deny that we possess such a marvelous reality through Christ's redemption, the Spirit's regeneration, and God's dispensation. Of course, we also have to contend with our fallen tripartite being. Concerning our walk, we thus have the possibility of walking either by the fallen being or by the wonderful Person in our spirit.

We should not go back to the law. If we try to keep the law, attempting to do good in order to please God, we shall be in the flesh, for the law is related to the flesh. Whenever we try to fulfill the requirements of the law, we exercise

our flesh. This means that the flesh is active not only when we do evil, but even when we try to fulfill the law. Whenever we in ourselves try to do good, the flesh is active. Instead of trying to fulfill the law, we may walk by the processed Triune God who is the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit dwelling in our spirit. Paul wrote the book of Galatians not only to rescue the distracted Galatian believers from the law on the negative side, but also on the positive side to bring them into the realization that the believers have the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit in their spirit and that they should live, walk, and have their being by this Spirit. It is possible for us to live, walk, and have our being by this Spirit. We should not believe in our weaknesses, failures, or shortcomings. We should forget all such things and realize that the processed Triune God is in us right now, not only as our Redeemer and Savior, but as the all-inclusive Spirit.

I love Paul's expression, "Walk by the Spirit." In his Epistles, Paul does not charge us mainly to walk according to doctrine, nor even to walk according to certain Bible verses. This does not mean, however, that our walk should not be according to the Bible. The point here is that Paul charges us to walk by the Spirit in a living way. A crucial lesson for us to learn is to have our being in our spirit. This is basic.

When I was young, I read books on how to be victorious, how to be holy, and how to pray. Eventually I came to realize that the way to be victorious and holy and to have a proper prayer life is to be in spirit. The proper way to talk to your husband or wife is to speak in spirit. There is no need for us to seek methods. We have the unique method--to be in our spirit. The proper way to read the Bible is to read it in spirit. The way to overcome sin, to deal with our temper, and to defeat Satan is to be in spirit. To walk by the Spirit is to have our daily life in our spirit.

It is not possible to separate our spirit from the Spirit, for the two spirits have been mingled and have become one spirit. We have already referred to Paul's word in 1

Corinthians 6:17, where he says that he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Since our spirit is mingled with the Spirit, we need to learn to have our daily life in the Spirit. We can never overemphasize the importance of having our daily walk in our spirit.

Often during the day, we may want to take a leave of absence from our spirit. Throughout the course of the day, we may leave our spirit many times and live in the flesh. For example, if your wife speaks to you in a certain way, you may immediately forsake your spirit and talk to her according to the flesh. Even if your attitude toward your wife is good, as long as you are absent from the spirit, you are in the flesh. We do not get into the spirit once for all. On the contrary, we need to exercise continually to be in the spirit in order to walk by the Spirit.

When I was young, I did not appreciate the Lord's word about watching and praying (Matt. 26:41). But the more I practice to have my daily walk in my spirit, the more I recognize the need to watch and pray. We need to watch lest we be away from the spirit. We also need to pray in order to get back to the spirit and stay there. The Christian life is a life of abiding in our spirit. Since we are so easily drawn away from our spirit, we need to watch and pray. In Paul's word to the Colossians, he says that we need to "persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving" (4:2). In Ephesians 6:18 Paul also speaks of "praying at every time in spirit, and watching unto this in all perseverance." To repeat, we need to watch to see whether or not we are in the spirit and pray in order to be kept in the spirit.

If we remain in our spirit, the problems will be solved, and we shall enjoy the all-inclusive Spirit who dwells in our spirit. In spirit we feast on the Lord and participate in the blessing of the gospel. It is crucial to realize that the Christian walk is simply a life in our spirit. This is the reason that, in his writings, Paul speaks of the Spirit and our spirit again and again. Apart from the spirit, there can be no Christian walk. When we are in our spirit, we are

simultaneously in the Spirit, because the Spirit is one with our spirit. When we first began to appreciate the preciousness of the Lord Jesus and to call on His name, an organic union took place between the Spirit and our regenerated spirit. This organic union is described by the word mingling.

In 5:16 Paul had the confidence to say that if we walk by the Spirit, we shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh. The way to be holy, to overcome sin, to be spiritual, and to have a life of prayer is simply to walk by the Spirit.

I. WALKING BY THE SPIRIT

We have already pointed out that if we walk by the Spirit, we shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh. Furthermore, if we walk by the Spirit, we shall be led by the Spirit. Whenever we walk by the Spirit, we have the Lord's leading, even in such ordinary matters as the way we converse with others.

Paul says in 5:18, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law." The law is related to our flesh (Rom. 7:5), and our flesh is against the Spirit (Gal. 5:17). Hence, the Spirit is in contrast to the law. When we walk by the Spirit in our regenerated spirit, we shall not fulfill the lust of our flesh. When we are led by the Spirit, we are not under law. The Spirit of life, not the law of letters, is our guiding principle, regulating our Christian walk in our regenerated spirit. If we walk by the Spirit, automatically we shall be no longer under the law, for the Spirit will lead us away from the law in letters.

II. THE WAR BETWEEN THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

In 5:17 Paul says, "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these oppose each other, that you should not do those things which you desire." This verse indicates that there is war between the flesh and the Spirit. The flesh and the Spirit oppose each other. The flesh lusts against the Spirit for its own desire, and the Spirit fights against the flesh for God's purpose.

III. THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

In 5:19 Paul speaks of "the works of the flesh." The flesh is the expression of the old Adam. The fallen life of the old Adam is expressed practically in the flesh, and the works of the flesh, as listed in verses 19 through 21, are different aspects of such a fleshly expression. Fornication, uncleanness, sensuality, drunkenness, and carousings are related to the lust of the corrupted body. Enmities, strife, jealousy, angers, faction, divisions, parties, and envyings are related to the fallen soul, which is very close to the corrupted body. Idolatry and sorcery are related to the deadened spirit. This proves that the three parts of our fallen being--body, soul, and spirit--are all involved with the evil flesh.

The works of the flesh are arranged in different groups. Fornication, uncleanness, and sensuality are of one group, concerning evil passions. Idolatry and sorcery are a group, concerning demonic worship. Enmities, strife, jealousy, and angers are a group, concerning evil moods. Faction, divisions, parties, and envyings are a group, concerning sects. The Greek word rendered parties in verse 20 means heresies, which refer to schools of opinion, sects (Darby's *New Translation*). Drunkenness and carousings are the last group, concerning dissipation.

In 5:21 Paul says that "those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The inheritance of the kingdom of God refers to the enjoyment of the coming kingdom as a reward to the overcoming believers. It is not related to a believer's salvation. Those believers who practice the works of the flesh listed in these verses will not inherit the coming kingdom as a reward.

IV. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

What the flesh does is "works" without life; what the Spirit brings forth is "fruit," full of life (v. 22). The fruit of the Spirit, as different expressions of the Spirit who is life within us, is listed here with only nine items as illustrations. It has more items, including lowliness (Eph.

4:2; Phil. 2:3), compassion (Phil. 2:1), godliness (2 Pet. 1:6), righteousness (Rom. 14:17; Eph. 5:9), holiness (Eph. 4:24; Luke 1:75), purity (Matt. 5:8), and other virtues. Both in Ephesians 4:2 and Colossians 3:12 lowliness is mentioned as a virtue other than meekness, which is listed here. In Romans 14:17 righteousness, peace, and joy are all aspects of the kingdom of God today. But only peace and joy, not righteousness, are listed here. In 2 Peter 1:5-7 godliness and endurance are counted with self-control and love as characteristics of spiritual growth, but they are not listed here. In Matthew 5:5-9 righteousness, mercy, and purity are reckoned with meekness and peace as the condition of the reality of the kingdom today. However, these three virtues are not named here.

As the flesh is the expression of the old Adam, so the Spirit is the realization of Christ. Christ is actually lived out in the Spirit. The nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit listed here are the very characteristics of Christ.

We have indicated that the fruit of the Spirit is full of life in contrast to the works of the flesh, which are without life. Furthermore, the fruit is singular, the unique fruit of life, whereas the works are plural. There are many works, but there is just one fruit.

The fruit of the Spirit includes the different expressions of the indwelling Spirit. After listing nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit, Paul declares that "against such things there is no law" (v. 23). Notice that Paul says "such things," not "these things." Had he said "these things," the fruit of the Spirit might be limited to the nine items listed in these verses. But the fact that Paul spoke of "such things" indicates that there are many more aspects than the nine he uses as illustrations.

Paul says that against such things there is no law. The reason for this is that the law condemns what is evil. Since none of the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit is evil, there is no law against this fruit of life.

It is necessary to differentiate between our natural virtues and those virtues which are the fruit of the Spirit.

One aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is love. Before we received the divine life and were saved, we had the capacity to love. We also knew a certain amount of joy, peace, longsuffering, and kindness, as well as the other virtues listed here. When we came into the church life, we brought our natural virtues with us. This means that we brought our natural love, kindness, faithfulness, and meekness into the church life. Suppose a certain believer exercises his natural self-control to deal with a situation. Yes, he manages to control himself, but this requires a great deal of effort. His self-control is with the gnashing of teeth. There is a great difference between this kind of self-control and that which is the fruit of the Spirit.

Natural attributes do not contain anything of God, whereas the fruit of the Spirit is filled with a spiritual substance which is divine. We should remember that it is the fruit of the Spirit. The substance, the element, of the fruit is the *Spirit*. What we need in the church life is a love full of the substance of the Spirit. The element of the Spirit must also be found in our joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control. All these virtues should be the expression of the Spirit.

Since the Spirit is the realization of Christ, these virtues as various aspects of the fruit of the Spirit are actually Christ's characteristics and expression. This means that to live out these virtues is to live out Christ.

The difference between natural attributes and the fruit of the Spirit is that the natural attributes do not have anything of the Spirit, whereas the fruit of the Spirit is full of the substance and element of the Spirit. When a person lives according to his natural attributes or virtues, there is no need for him to turn to the spirit. He may love others or exhibit self-control by the self and in the self. However, if we would have the various aspects of the fruit of the Spirit, we must be in our spirit. For this, our natural being avails nothing. When we walk in the mingled Spirit, we live out Christ in different aspects, in all manner of spiritual attributes and virtues. I expect that the churches will be

enriched in such a life and be uplifted through our living in the mingled spirit. Then in the church life there will be the different expressions of Christ. This was Paul's expectation in charging us to walk by the Spirit.

If we walk by the Spirit, we shall automatically defeat the flesh and the Devil lurking behind the flesh. As we win the war against the flesh in this way, God's purpose to express Christ will be accomplished. God's intention is that we live by the Spirit to express Christ. What we need in the Lord's recovery today is a walk by the Spirit to express Christ in many different virtues.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWENTY-EIGHT

CRUCIFYING THE FLESH TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Gal. 5:24-26

In this message we shall consider 5:24-26. Verse 24 says, "But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts." The word "but" in verse 22 contrasts the fruit of the Spirit in that verse with the works of the flesh in verse 19. In this verse, the word "but" contrasts the crucifixion of the flesh with the works of the flesh in verse 19.

In verse 24 Paul speaks of "they who are of Christ Jesus." This refers to those who have believed into Christ and have been baptized into Him. Therefore, they belong to Christ and are of Christ. As saved ones, we are now of Christ.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CROSS

According to Paul's word here, they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh. The crucifixion of the old man in Romans 6:6 and the crucifixion of "I" in Galatians 2:20 were not accomplished by us. But here it says that we have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. The old man and "I" are our being; the flesh is the expression of our being in our practical living. The crucifixion of our old man and "I" is a fact accomplished by Christ on the cross, whereas the crucifixion of our flesh with its passions and lusts is our practical experience of that fact. For this practical experience, it is necessary that we through the Spirit execute the crucifixion which Christ has accomplished. In this way we carry out what He has accomplished. This is to put to death by the Spirit the practices of our lustful body with its evil members (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5).

There are three aspects concerning the experience of the cross: the fact accomplished by Christ (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20); our application of the accomplished fact (5:24); and our experience of what we have applied, bearing the cross daily (Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23).

Notice that in speaking of the crucifixion of the flesh, Paul uses the perfect tense. Paul says not that we are crucifying the flesh, nor that we shall crucify it, but that we have crucified it. He speaks of this as if it were an accomplished fact. Concerning the crucifixion, there are two aspects. The first is that when Christ was crucified, He crucified our old man and the "I." The other aspect is that we have crucified our flesh. Based upon the fact that Christ has crucified the old man and the "I," we have crucified the flesh. Hence, the second fact, our crucifixion of the flesh, is the application of the first fact, Christ's crucifixion of the old man and the "I." In our experience we need to apply Christ's crucifixion to our flesh. Paul's use of the perfect tense to describe this indicates that such should be the normal experience of the believers. All believers should be those who have applied Christ's crucifixion to their flesh. As those who belong to Christ, who have been put into Christ, we have done this. Here Paul is speaking according to the principle. If we have never crucified our flesh, our experience is abnormal. If our experience is normal, then we who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh.

The book of Galatians unveils both that the law misused is versus Christ (2:16) and that the flesh lusts against the Spirit (5:17). The cross has nullified the "I" which is trying to keep the law (2:20) and the flesh which lusts against the Spirit, that Christ may replace the law, and the Spirit may replace the flesh. God does not want us to keep the law by the flesh; He wants us to live Christ by the Spirit.

LIVING AND WALKING BY THE SPIRIT

In 5:25 Paul goes on to say, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." To live by the Spirit is to have

our life dependent upon the Spirit and regulated by the Spirit, not by the law. To walk by the Spirit is to have our practical living and acts in our daily life guided and ruled by the Spirit, not by the law. Concerning our Christian walk, Paul's concept is that since our life is not by the law of letters, but by the Spirit of life, so our walk also should be not by the law of ordinances, but by the Spirit of Christ.

The Greek word rendered "we live" implies both to have life and to live. Initially we have life, but continually we live. If we have life by the Spirit, we should continue to live by the Spirit. A fuller rendering of the Greek here would be, "If we have life and live by the Spirit." Paul uses a similar expression in Romans 1:17 and Hebrews 10:38. In Hebrews 10:38 it is not a matter of having life, but of continuing to live by the life we have received. In Romans 1:17 and Galatians 5:25 it is a matter of both having life initially and then living continually.

In 5:26 Paul says, "Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another." To be without vainglory is the result of the walk by the Spirit in verse 25.

A PRACTICAL TEST

A number of expositors have been troubled by the fact that verse 26 comes immediately after verse 25, where Paul speaks of walking by the Spirit. Some prefer to make verse 26 the opening verse of chapter six. In verse 26 Paul deals with vainglory, provoking, and envying. The reason Paul mentions these matters is that they test whether or not we are walking by the Spirit. Only when we walk by the Spirit can we overcome vainglory, provoking, and envying. In a sisters' or a brothers' house it is easy for there to be vainglory. Certain brothers or sisters may think that they should be the leading ones. This attitude gives rise to provoking and to envying. Perhaps a certain sister gives a rich and releasing testimony in a meeting. Out of envy, another sister may determine to give an even better testimony in the next meeting.

Vainglory may be found even between a husband and wife. Because of the desire for vainglory, a brother may become envious if his wife receives praise that he does not receive.

Vainglory, provoking, and envying are all of the flesh. We can check whether or not we are walking by the Spirit by asking whether we have any vainglory, provoking, or envying. This is a very practical way of testing our daily walk. By putting forth such a test, Paul showed how practical he was and how experienced. From his experience he knew what it meant to suffer from the same diseases that afflict us in our spiritual life today.

For quite a long time, I was bothered by the inclusion of verse 26. Eventually I came to realize that without this verse it is purely theoretical to talk about living by the Spirit. But when we test our living by the matters of vainglory, provoking, and envying, living by the Spirit becomes extremely practical. In relation to others, it is easy for us to be subject to vainglory, provoking, and envying.

In Romans 8:14 Paul says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." Paul's thought is somewhat different here from his thought in Galatians 3:26, where he says, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." Yes, through faith we have become sons of God. But now we need a walk which proves that we are God's sons. In such a walk we are led by the Spirit.

GOD'S PURPOSE

Under the influence of our religious background, many of us have held the concept that God's goal in sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us is that we should believe in Him, have our sins forgiven, and be qualified to go to heaven, where we shall enjoy eternal blessings. According to the Bible, however, God's goal is to have many sons. The Bible certainly teaches that we are sinners, that God loves us, and that Christ came to save us. But the Bible also says very clearly that in eternity past, before the universe came

into existence, God made a plan, a purpose, according to His good pleasure. This purpose is to have many sons. In simple words, God's purpose is sonship. In eternity past God's desire was to have many sons for His expression. In the Bible the proper meaning of sonship is expression, for a son expresses the father. John 1:18 indicates this: "No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." God's purpose is to have many sons as His corporate expression. Thus, Ephesians 1:5 says that God has predestinated us unto sonship.

Many expositions of the book of Romans emphasize justification by faith. Some also speak of sanctification by faith. But according to the book of Romans, it is not God's goal merely to have many people who have been justified and sanctified by faith. Romans reveals that God's goal is to transform sinners into sons of God. Romans 8:14 does not say that as many as are led by the Spirit are sanctified, spiritual, victorious, or will live in heavenly mansions. On the contrary, this verse says that those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God. Furthermore, in verses 29 and 30 we see that those who are predestinated, called, justified, and glorified will be conformed to the image of God's Son. In these verses Paul indicates that we have been predestinated not simply to be sanctified, spiritual, and victorious. God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that His Son "should be the Firstborn among many brothers." Once again we see that God's intention is to have sons, many sons.

The first chapter of the Gospel of John says that the Word, who was in the beginning with God, became flesh and tabernacled among us (vv. 1, 14). As many as received Him have authority to become children of God (v. 12). According to John 20:17, the Lord told Mary the Magdalene on the morning of His resurrection, "Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." Notice the Lord's

use of the word brothers. The Lord did not instruct Mary to go to His saints, believers, disciples, or apostles. He told her to go to His brothers. This is yet another indication that God's intention, the desire of His heart, is to have many sons.

Hebrews 2 also speaks of sons. According to verse 10, God is "leading many sons into glory." After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus came to His disciples to declare to them the name of the Father.

In the book of Galatians, Paul emphasizes again and again that we are not law-keepers or slaves under the law, but we are sons of God in Christ. God had to do many things to make us His sons. He first had to send His Son to redeem us from under the law that we might receive the sonship (4:4-5). God has also sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts to make our sonship real and practical.

It is not God's intention simply to rescue many sinners and make them holy, spiritual, and victorious. According to His good pleasure, His purpose is to produce many sons. Ultimately, we, the redeemed and sanctified ones, will be God's sons in eternity. All those in the New Jerusalem will be called sons of God, not simply the people of God (Rev. 21:7). Even today we are more than just the people of God--we are the sons of God. For us to be sons of God in a way that is real and practical, we urgently need the Spirit.

SONSHIP MADE REAL AND PRACTICAL

The Bible teaches that the tripartite man created by God fell and sank lower and lower until he became flesh (Gen. 6:3). All fallen human beings are sinners in the flesh. This is just as true of those who are ethical and moral as it is of those who are evil and immoral. Before we were saved, we were all sinners in the flesh. Praise the Lord that Christ came and accomplished redemption by dying on the cross that we may have the sonship! Through death and resurrection Christ has become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit and, as such, has entered into our spirit to regenerate us and to make our sonship real and practical. The Spirit has come into our spirit to make us sons of God.

Now if we walk by the Spirit, we are truly led by the Spirit. According to Paul's word in Romans 8:14, as many as are led by the Spirit are sons of God.

As we consider 5:24 and 25 once again, we need to realize that through Christ's redemption and the Spirit's regeneration, we are now sons of God in position. However, in our daily walk we may not be sons in reality. Instead of walking by the Spirit, we may walk by the flesh. Whenever we walk by the flesh, we in a very practical way are sons of Adam. Only when we walk by the Spirit are we sons of God in reality and in practicality. Thus, whether we are sons of God or sons of Adam in our daily living depends on the kind of walk we have. In life, in right, and in position we no doubt are sons of God, for we have been regenerated by the Spirit. But in our practical daily walk we may be something altogether different from sons of God. This means that in our walk we may be either sons of God or sons of Adam. To repeat, if we walk by the flesh, we are sons of Adam, but if we walk by the Spirit, we are sons of God. The crucial matter here concerns the flesh. We need to deal with the flesh.

APPLYING CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION TO EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT

The cross of Christ gives us the standing, or the basis, to deal with the flesh. Our whole being--the entire fallen tripartite man--was crucified with Christ on the cross. Now not only do we have this base objectively, but we have the divine life and the Spirit subjectively to enable us to execute the cross of Christ upon our flesh. In order to walk by the Spirit, we must apply Christ's crucifixion to our flesh. This is the reason Paul says that all who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh. If we apply the cross to our flesh by the indwelling Spirit, our flesh will be nailed to the cross. This is to crucify the flesh. Now that the flesh is on the cross, only the Spirit remains. It is crucial that we realize that within us we have the divine life and the all-inclusive Spirit. Now we need to exercise the spirit by the

divine life to apply the cross to our flesh. In so doing, we apply what Christ has accomplished by crucifying our old man with Him on the cross. This application must be made to every aspect of our flesh, no matter whether our flesh is evil or seems to be good. Both the flesh that loves and the flesh that hates need to be crucified.

In the eyes of God, all those who believe in Christ have already crucified their flesh. But when in our actual experience we execute the crucifixion of Christ by applying the cross to our flesh, we are immediately uplifted to the heavens and experience the Spirit as everything to us. The Spirit may even become the Spirit of our mind, emotion, and will. Experiencing the Spirit in this way, we walk by the Spirit and are led by the Spirit. Therefore, we are in reality sons of God. The more we experience the Spirit in this way, the more we are not only transformed, but also conformed to the image of His Son.

VAINGLORY, PROVOKING, AND ENVYING

In this light, let us look again at verse 26. We have seen that in this verse Paul mentions vainglory, provoking, and envying. Whether or not we walk by the Spirit can be tested by these three matters. In our practical daily situation very often we have vainglory, provoking, and envy. Both in the church life and in our family life we need to test our walk by the Spirit by asking if we have any vainglory, provoking, or envying. If Paul had stopped with verses 24 and 25, the matter of living by the Spirit and walking by the Spirit might have been very theoretical. But verse 26 makes it extremely practical. Paul says, "Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another." If we would be sons of God in reality, we must walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh. But whether we are walking by the Spirit or by the flesh can be tested by the existence of vainglory, provoking, and envy. We may think that we are walking by the Spirit; however, feelings of vainglory and of envy prove that we are not. For example, a brother may become envious when he learns

that another brother, who has been in the recovery a shorter time than he, has been made an elder. This feeling of envy is an indication that this brother is not walking by the Spirit at that particular time. Vainglory gives rise to provoking and envying. If we slay vainglory, provoking and envying will be killed automatically. This means that if our vainglory is terminated, there will be no problem in the church life. Instead, there will be peace.

According to the grammatical construction of verse 26, the main item is vainglory. Provoking and envying are sub-ordinate. This tells us that we must concentrate on dealing with vainglory, not with provoking or envying. If we try to deal with provoking and envying without putting to death our vainglory, our efforts will be in vain. I repeat, if we slay vainglory, we shall simultaneously terminate provoking and envying. Thus, the presence or absence of vainglory is a true test of whether we are walking by the Spirit or by the flesh.

Whether we are young or old, vainglory may be present among us. I have observed vainglory accompanied by provoking and envying even in my small grandchildren. It is found also in the relationship between husband and wife. The husbands and wives may give in to one another, but if this giving in does not touch their vainglory, it is not genuine. A man may lord it over his wife, boasting that he is the head and that she should be subject to him. This is nothing other than vainglory, which leads to provoking and envying. Such vainglory is a clear indication that we are not walking by the Spirit.

It is not adequate simply to read messages about living by the Spirit and walking by the Spirit. In our daily living, in our church life and family life, we need to test our walk by the matter of vainglory. If we have vainglory, we are not walking by the Spirit. Our need today is to walk by the Spirit that we may be sons of God in a practical way.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE TWENTY-NINE

HOW TO RESTORE THE FALLEN ONE, HOW TO FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST, AND HOW TO SOW

Scripture Reading: Gal. 6:1-10

Galatians 6:1-10 is a continuation of Paul's word at the end of chapter five. In 5:25 Paul charges us to walk by the Spirit. In 6:1-10 Paul develops this matter of walking by the Spirit. In these verses he covers three things: how to restore one who has fallen, how to fulfill the law of Christ, and how to sow unto the Spirit. For all three, we need to turn to our spirit and walk by the Spirit.

I. HOW TO RESTORE THE FALLEN ONE

Galatians 6:1 says, "Brothers, if ever a man is overtaken in some offense, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also are tempted." Those who are spiritual are those who live and walk by the Spirit. This is the only way to be genuinely spiritual. Those who are spiritual should restore one who has fallen in a spirit of meekness. This is our regenerated spirit, indwelt by and mingled with the Holy Spirit. Such a spirit is the issue of living and walking by the Spirit. Notice that Paul speaks of a *spirit* of meekness. The meekness we need must be in our spirit. The source of what we do should be our spirit, not simply our kind heart. Therefore, this verse indicates that everything we do in our daily walk should be done in our spirit and from our spirit.

II. HOW TO FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST

In 6:2 Paul continues, "Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ." Some expositors say

that the law of Christ here refers to the Lord's commandment that we love one another. According to them, the law of Christ is the law of love. This is correct. However, we must go on to see that the law of Christ is the higher and better law of life which works through love (Rom. 8:2; John 13:34). The law of love, which is the law of Christ, is the law of life. Love is the expression, but life is the substance. Real love is that which issues from the divine life. The love described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 is the expression of the divine life. Furthermore, the fact that love is a fruit of the Spirit indicates that the substance of love must be the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). In fact, all spiritual virtues must have the Spirit with the divine life as their substance. The law of Christ, which is the law of love, must be substantiated by the divine life. This is the reason we say that the law of Christ in 6:2 denotes the law of life. Expressed by the law of love, the law of life will cause us to bear one another's burdens. In this way we fulfill the law of Christ.

In verse 3 Paul says, "For if anyone thinks he is something, being nothing, he deceives himself." Apparently there is no connection between verse 3 and verse 2; actually there is a very real and significant connection. Those who think of themselves as something will not bear the burdens of others. Only those who do not regard themselves as anything will bear others' burdens. Perhaps you would say that certain ones who consider themselves to be something seem to bear the burdens of others. However, this is merely an outward show, the exhibition of the self, not the genuine bearing of someone else's burden. In the eyes of the Lord, such a person does not actually bear anyone's burden. Instead, thinking himself to be somebody, he takes advantage of an opportunity to display himself.

No doubt, Paul wrote these verses according to his experience. From experience he realized that it is when we consider ourselves as nothing that we spontaneously, even unconsciously, bear the burdens of others. We do not place

a high estimate on what we do. We simply do it because we are walking in the Spirit and by the Spirit. Walking by the Spirit, we are led of the Spirit to do certain things. The result is that we bear someone's burden without even realizing it. Paul's word is simple and brief, but it is full of experience.

In 6:6 Paul says, "But let him who is instructed in the word share with him who instructs in all good things." The good things in this verse refer to things which are good for this life, the necessities of daily living. Even in the matter of sharing such things, we may fulfill the law of Christ, fulfilling the law of love according to the law of life.

III. HOW TO SOW

In 6:7-10 Paul covers the matter of how to sow. In verse 7 he warns, "Do not be led astray, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he shall also reap." The admonition not to be led astray was spoken in reference to the false teachings of the Judaizers. These teachings led the Galatians astray from the Spirit in their spirit to the law by their flesh.

The matter of sowing is quite mysterious. What is it that we sow, and for what purpose do we sow? Some may understand Paul's word about sowing to refer to what he has previously spoken about bearing the burdens of others and about sharing the necessities of life with those who have need. According to this understanding, if one contributes to the daily need of a person serving the Lord in the Word, he is then sowing to the Spirit. I would agree that this is a proper application of Paul's word about sowing. However, our understanding of sowing should not be limited to this matter. As we shall seek to point out, sowing covers the totality of our Christian life.

Verse 8 says, "Because he who sows unto his own flesh, shall reap corruption of the flesh, but he who sows unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life." To sow unto the flesh is to sow with a view to the flesh, or for the flesh, with the purpose of the flesh in view, fulfilling what the flesh covets. To sow unto the Spirit is to sow for the Spirit, with the aim of the Spirit, accomplishing what the Spirit

desires. To sow for the fulfilling of the purpose of the flesh issues in corruption; to sow for the accomplishing of the aim of the Spirit issues in life, even eternal life. Corruption is of the flesh, indicating that the flesh is corrupted; eternal life is of the Spirit and is the Spirit Himself.

Everything we do is some kind of sowing, either to the flesh or to the Spirit. Wherever we may be and whatever we are doing, we are sowing seeds. You sow at work and also at school. The elders sow while they are caring for the church, and those who minister the Word sow as they minister. Husbands and wives are constantly sowing in their married life, and parents are sowing in their family life. Everything parents say to their children and do with them is a seed sown into them. Day by day we all are sowing. The Christian life is a life of sowing. Furthermore, the place where we live and work is our farm. You are sowing even by the way you dress or style your hair. Virtually everything you do is an act of sowing. It is crucial for us to realize that the Christian walk must be a walk by the Spirit and a life of sowing to the Spirit.

Paul showed marvelous wisdom in his writing of 6:1-10, covering a number of crucial points. As we have seen, he speaks of things such as restoring a fallen one in a spirit of meekness and of fulfilling the law of Christ by giving something to meet the need of another. Then he tells us not to be led astray, since God is not mocked. There is no need for us to go far off to be led astray. We may be led astray even in our thinking. But God is not mocked, and we cannot deceive Him. He knows what we are and what we are doing. Thus, Paul admonishes us to take care of our sowing. Instead of sowing to the flesh, we should sow to the Spirit, realizing that everything we say or do is part of our daily sowing.

In our experience, the flesh should be crucified. As Paul says in 5:24, "They who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts." We should not

continue to walk according to the flesh. We should not be in the flesh in expressing our attitudes. In speaking to their children, parents need to be in the Spirit and according to the Spirit. Otherwise, what they say will be a sowing unto the flesh. We should also be careful of the way we express our attitude. Even the expression of an attitude may be sowing according to the flesh. On the other hand, we may express our attitude by sowing unto the Spirit. We should also be cautious in expressing opinions. Do you have the assurance that the utterance of your opinion is according to the Spirit? If not, be careful, lest you sow unto the flesh. If we all sow unto the Spirit day by day, many problems will be eliminated. The troubles in the church life and in the family life will diminish. Most problems and troubles come from sowing unto the flesh.

Seeds are small. Have you ever seen a farmer sow seed which is a foot in diameter? No, the seeds a farmer sows are tiny. The same is true of our sowing. We may regard certain things as tiny--a little gossiping or a little criticizing--but they are seeds sown into others. Have you ever asked yourself how many seeds you have sown into others, seeds that are not according to the Spirit but according to the flesh? In the church life we are constantly sowing tiny seeds. Even the way one brother looks at another is a seed. We certainly sow to the flesh when we criticize, argue, or condemn. In principle, all that we say or do is a seed sown either to the flesh or to the Spirit.

We shall always reap what we sow. If we sow unto the flesh, we shall reap corruption of the flesh. If we sow unto the Spirit, we shall reap eternal life of the Spirit. I know cases where co-workers and elders have reaped corruption because they sowed unto the flesh. The longer they stayed in a certain place, the more difficult it was to remain there. This difficulty was the result of sowing to the flesh. Eventually, after sowing to the flesh week by week, month by month, and year by year, these co-workers and elders had to leave and go elsewhere.

Difficulties in married life are also caused by sowing to

the flesh. At first, the husband and wife may have loved each other very much. But after years of sowing unto the flesh, they may want a separation or even a divorce. They reap corruption because of sowing according to the flesh. As the years have gone by, they have sowed tiny seeds of words, attitudes, and feelings. Eventually, the issue is reaping corruption of the flesh.

According to God's ordination, both married life and the church life are to be permanent. If a brother cannot remain an elder permanently in a certain locality, he cannot be a proper elder, just as a man cannot be a proper husband if his marriage is only temporary. How dreadful to have only a temporary married life or family life! Our relationship with our spouse and children must be permanent. In the same principle, our commitment to the church life should also be permanent. However, many of those who sow to the flesh participate in the church life only temporarily.

Let us honestly, faithfully, and sincerely consider ourselves. Are we sowing unto the flesh or unto the Spirit? If we sow to the flesh by playing politics, we shall eventually reap corruption. But if we sow unto the Spirit, we shall reap life eternal. If an elder sows according to the Spirit, the longer he remains in a certain locality, the more he will reap of eternal life. There will be no need for him to leave that place. On the contrary, it will be very profitable for him to remain.

If those who minister the Word to the Lord's people minister according to the flesh, sowing seeds of the flesh, they will eventually reap corruption of the flesh. This will make it impossible for them to remain in a certain place. But if they minister according to the Spirit, sowing seeds of the Spirit, they will reap eternal life year after year.

What is true of the elders and of the co-workers is also true of every member of the church. Even in our fellowship we should be on the alert to sow unto the Spirit and not unto the flesh. We should not love others in the flesh, but love them in the Spirit. If we love others according to the

flesh, we shall reap corruption, the issue of our fleshly love. But if we love others in the Spirit, we shall reap eternal life.

In 5:25 Paul speaks of walking by the Spirit, and in 6:8, of sowing unto the Spirit. Actually, to walk by the Spirit is to sow unto the Spirit. Whenever we walk by the Spirit, we sow unto the Spirit. Sowing unto the Spirit, we eventually reap life eternal.

In the church life there are a number of elderly brothers and sisters who have been sowing unto the Spirit throughout the years. Now they are reaping eternal life. Others, however, have brought corruption to themselves and to others by sowing unto the flesh. When they were participating in the church life, they sowed to the flesh. That kind of sowing damaged their church life. As a result, some have turned away from enjoying the Lord in the church and turned to the world. They claim to be liberated. Yes, they have been liberated from the restriction of the Spirit to the indulgence of the flesh. This is the reaping of corruption.

The fact that we may sow either to the flesh or to the Spirit and thereby reap either corruption or eternal life should encourage us to be careful in what we say and do. Let us realize that everything in our daily living is a sowing either to the flesh or to the Spirit.

In 6:9 Paul goes on to say, "And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not faint." According to the context, "doing good" in verse 9 is sowing to the Spirit. Paul's use of the word reap in this verse connects it with the foregoing verse about sowing. We should not lose heart in doing good, in sowing unto the Spirit. Sowing to the flesh usually produces a quicker result than sowing to the Spirit. A higher form of life often grows more slowly than a lower form. In the same principle, what we sow unto the Spirit will usually grow more slowly than what we sow unto the flesh. This is the reason that Paul encourages us not to lose heart in sowing unto the Spirit. A brother who is an elder should not say, "I have been in this city for years sowing unto the Spirit.

What do I have to show for my labor? I don't see any result." Remember Paul's word that in due time we shall reap, if we do not faint. In working for the Lord, in ministering the Word to the children of God, and in caring for the churches, we should not expect that what we sow unto the Spirit will grow quickly. Like farmers, we need to be patient. Eventually, in due time, we shall reap. The more precious are the things sown, the longer it will take for them to grow. While they are growing, let us be patient and not lose heart.

In 6:10 Paul says, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good toward all men, and especially toward those of the household of the faith." Doing good in this verse refers mainly to ministering material things to the needy (2 Cor. 9:6-9). The household of the faith refers to the children of promise (4:28), all the sons of God through faith in Christ (3:26). All believers in Christ are a universal household, the great family of God through faith in Christ, not through works of law. This household, as the new man (Col. 3:10-11), is composed of all the members of Christ with Christ as their constituent. Hence, we should do good, especially toward those of this household, regardless of their race or social rank (3:28).

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THIRTY

CRUCIFIED TO THE RELIGIOUS WORLD TO LIVE A NEW CREATION

Scripture Reading: Gal. 6:11-16

In this message we come to 6:11-16. In these verses the main point is that we have been crucified to the religious world in order to live a new creation.

I. PAUL'S LARGE LETTERS IN WRITING

In 6:11 Paul says, "See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand." There may be two reasons Paul speaks of "large letters." The first is that large letters indicate the importance of what Paul was writing. Through using large letters, Paul may have wanted to impress his readers with the importance of this Epistle. Second, the use of large letters may have been due to the weakness of Paul's eyes (4:13-15). The weakness to which Paul refers in 4:13 may have been in his eyes. This would have caused him to write in large letters. This physical weakness may also have been the thorn in the flesh, the thorn which Paul prayed might be removed from him (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

II. THE BOAST OF THE JUDAIZERS

In verses 12 and 13 we see the boast of the Judaizers: "As many as desire to make a good show in the flesh, these compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For neither do they that are circumcised themselves keep the law, but they desire you to be circumcised that they may boast in your flesh." The Greek expression rendered "good show" in verse 12 means a good countenance, hence a good appearance for

making a good show, a good display. It is used here in a negative sense. Circumcision, like the cross, is not a good show, but an abasement. However, the Judaizers made it a good show as a boast in the flesh.

The expression "in the flesh" means outwardly in the sphere of the flesh, which is condemned and repudiated by God. Their circumcision was in man's natural and external being, without the inward reality and spiritual value which are in our regenerated spirit.

According to verse 13, not even those who compelled the Galatians to be circumcised kept the law. They wanted the Galatians to be circumcised so that they could boast in their flesh. On the one hand, they wanted to make a display in their own flesh; on the other hand, they wanted to boast in the flesh of the Galatians.

III. THE BOAST OF THE APOSTLE

A. Only in the Cross of Christ

In verses 14 through 16 we have the boast of the Apostle Paul. "But far be it from me to boast," Paul says in verse 14, "except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world." The cross is truly an abasement, but Paul made it his boast. The world has been crucified to us, and we to the world. This has taken place not directly, but through Christ, the One who was crucified. The explanation in verse 15 proves that the world here refers mainly to the religious world. The word "for" at the beginning of verse 15 indicates that this verse is an explanation of the foregoing verse. Furthermore, circumcision, being a religious matter, indicates that the world in verse 14 must be mainly the religious world.

In verse 15 Paul says, "For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." When this verse is considered along with verses 11 through 14, we see that Paul's concern here is mainly with the religious world, not the secular world. Those who were seeking to compel the Galatian believers to be circumcised were not

trying to lure them into the secular world; they were wanting to bring them into the religious world to make a display in the flesh and to avoid persecution. The various matters Paul covers in these verses are thus related to religion, not to the secular world. Therefore, we see clearly from the context that the world in verse 14 is the religious world.

On the one hand, the religious world was crucified to Paul; on the other hand, he was crucified to the religious world. Because of the cross of Christ, the religious world would not have anything to do with Paul, nor would Paul have anything to do with the religious world. The same is true of us today.

In verse 15 Paul says that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation. The old creation is our old man in Adam (Eph. 4:22), our natural being by birth, without God's life and the divine nature. The new creation is the new man in Christ (Eph. 4:24), our being regenerated by the Spirit (John 3:6), having God's life and the divine nature wrought into us (John 3:36; 2 Pet. 1:4), with Christ as its constituent (Col. 3:10-11). It is this new creation that fulfills God's eternal purpose by expressing God in His sonship.

B. Neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision but a New Creation

Circumcision is an ordinance of law; the new creation is the masterpiece of life with the divine nature. The former is of dead letters; the latter is of the living Spirit. Hence, it counts, it avails. This book exposes the inability both of the law and of circumcision. Law cannot impart life (3:21) to regenerate us, and circumcision cannot energize us (5:6) to live a new creation. But the Son of God who has been revealed in us (1:16) can enliven us and make us a new creation, and Christ who lives in us (2:20) can afford us the riches of His life to live the new creation. Law is replaced by Christ (2:19-20), and circumcision is fulfilled by Christ's

crucifixion (6:14). Hence, neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation with Christ as its life.

The new creation spoken of in 6:15 is the old creation transformed by the divine life, by the processed Triune God. The old creation was old because God was not part of it; the new creation is new because God is in it. We who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God are still God's creation, but we are now His new creation. However, this is real only when we live and walk by the Spirit. Whenever we live and walk by the flesh, we are in the old creation, not in the new creation. Anything in our daily life that does not have God in it is the old creation, but what has God in it is part of the new creation.

God's intention is that we become a new creation. This new creation is composed of sons. In a very practical sense, the corporate sonship is God's new creation. Those in the old creation are sons of Adam in the fall. But through God's redemption and regeneration and through the dispensation of Himself into us, we who once were sons of Adam have now become sons of God. Here in this divine sonship we are the new creation.

If we would be in the new creation, we must enter into an organic union with the Triune God. Apart from such a union, we shall remain in the old creation. But now by the organic union with the Triune God we are in the new creation. Here in the new creation neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything or avails anything.

Apparently Paul wrote the book of Galatians to deal with the law. Actually this book deals with the old creation. Although Paul tells us that we are justified by faith, the main point is not justification, but the new creation. When we were in the flesh, we were very much involved with the law and we were, of course, in the old creation. But when we are in the Spirit, we are not under the law and we are in the new creation. Thus, Paul's concern in Galatians is not merely with the doctrine concerning the law and justification by faith; it is with the revelation that we are

God's new creation. Here we are no longer involved with law-keeping, circumcision, and religious practices. In the new creation only one thing is vital and crucial to us--the Triune God who has been processed to become the life-giving Spirit so that He may be our life, our nature, and our everything through the organic union between us and Him. How wonderful it is that in this organic union we are a new creation!

Many readers of Galatians have missed this crucial point. They have seen that in this Epistle the law is set aside and that justification by faith is emphasized. But Paul's burden in this book is not merely justification by faith; it is to unveil to his readers the matter of sonship by the divine life, by the Triune God becoming everything to us in our experience. When considered corporately, the sons of God are the new creation. The main issue in Galatians is not circumcision or uncircumcision, religion or no religion. It is an issue of whether or not we are the new creation through an organic union with the Triune God.

If we would live the new creation, we need to experience the cross. According to 6:14 and 15, the cross deals with the religious world. It is unfortunate that many Christians regard the world in 6:14 as only the secular world. But as we have already indicated, the context makes it clear that the world in this verse is primarily the religious world. This understanding fits the basic concept of the whole book of Galatians. This book was written not to deal with the secular world; it was written to deal with religion, with Judaism. In this book Paul deals with religious people, with those who are concerned for the things of God, but who express their concern in a wrong way. To them, religion has become a world. Hence, we have both the secular world and the religious world.

Today millions of Christians are occupied even more by the religious world than by the secular world. Take Christmas as an example. The celebration of Christmas is certainly related to the religious world. If you still observe Christmas, it is doubtful that you are living a new creation.

The celebration of Christmas has nothing to do with God's new creation.

By the cross we are separated from the religious world. If we are still involved with the religious world, we shall not be able to live a new creation. We should be able to say that the religious world has been crucified to us and that we have been crucified to the religious world. We should be able to testify that even if we tried to go back to that world, we would be rejected by it, for we have been crucified to it. Even if Paul had desired to return to Judaism, the religionists would not have accepted him. Rather, they would have commanded him to leave, for he was in another world. To Judaism Paul had been crucified, and Judaism had been crucified to him. Between him and the religious world there was the separation of the cross. It is this separation which qualifies us to live a new creation. Everything practiced in the religious world is part of the old creation. But through the cross of Christ, we are finished with religion and are in another world, another realm. In this realm we live a new creation by the Spirit, not the old creation by the flesh.

C. Walking by This Rule

In 6:16 Paul goes on to say, "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God." The rule Paul speaks of here is that of being a new creation, living by the Spirit through faith, not that of keeping the law through the observance of ordinances. This rule, the rule of the new creation, is the processed Triune God being our life and our living. On the one hand, we say that in the church life we do not have regulations and rules. Although this is true, it is not true in every sense, for we do have the rule mentioned in 6:16. We need to walk by the rule which is the Triune God processed to be our life and living. To live in this way by the new creation is our rule.

In 5:25 Paul charges us to walk by the Spirit, and in 6:16 he charges us to walk by "this rule." This indicates

that to walk by this rule is to walk by the Spirit. In other words, the rule is equal to the Spirit. When we live by the Spirit, we live by the processed Triune God as our life and our living. Therefore, to live by the Spirit is to live by this rule.

1. Peace and Mercy

Paul says concerning those who walk by this rule, "peace be upon them and mercy." Paul opens his Epistles with a word about grace and peace. This is true of Galatians (1:3). But at the end of Galatians, Paul mentions peace (v. 16) before grace (v. 18). Grace is the Triune God becoming our enjoyment, and peace is the issue, the result, of this enjoyment. Whenever we enjoy the Triune God as grace, we have peace. Peace is thus the condition that results from grace. However, even though we have peace, we still have need for more grace. First we receive grace, and grace brings in the condition of peace. Then as we abide in this peaceful condition, we need to receive further grace. In addition to grace, we also need mercy. Therefore, Paul says that upon those who walk by this rule, who walk by the Spirit, there should be peace and mercy.

2. The Israel of God

Paul concludes verse 16 with the words, "even upon the Israel of God." The Greek word rendered even (*kai*) here is not connective but explicative, indicating that the apostle considers the many individual believers in Christ collectively the Israel of God. The Israel of God is the real Israel (Rom. 9:6; 2:28-29; Phil. 3:3), including all the Gentile and Jewish believers in Christ. These are the true sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:7, 29), the household of the faith (6:10).

Those who walk by "this rule" are the true Israel, the Israel of God. In a way there is no difference between the nation of Israel and the secular world or the religious world. In the eyes of God, the nation of Israel is not the real Israel. We, the sons of God, are the true Israel, for we are God's household, His chosen people today. We may not

be Israel outwardly, but we are Israel inwardly. This is why we say that we, the believers in Christ, are the true Israel. The outward nation of Israel has little concern for God. However, we have a genuine concern for God and speak of Him continually. We are indeed the Israel of God.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THIRTY-ONE

THE BRANDS OF JESUS AND THE GRACE OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: Gal. 6:17-18

In the foregoing message we considered Paul's word in 6:15: "For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." The new creation is altogether different from any kind of religion. Religion is part of the old creation. All the practices of today's religion are, therefore, of the old creation. Only that kind of living and walk which is by the Spirit is part of the new creation. In order to be the new creation, we must enter into an organic union with the Triune God. Everything outside this union, whether religious or nonreligious, is part of the old creation.

In this message we shall consider the brands of Jesus (6:17) and the grace of Christ (v. 18). It is rather strange that, at the end of this Epistle, Paul inserts a word about the brands of Jesus between the mention of peace and grace. In verse 16 he says, "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God." But instead of following this immediately with a word about grace, Paul refers to bearing in his body the brands of Jesus. Then he says, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers" (v. 18).

It is important to know the reason Paul inserted a word about the brands of Jesus between his mention of peace and grace. When we write a letter, we express the concept, feeling, or sense we have within us. Likewise, when Paul wrote to the Galatians, he was expressing the concept and feeling within him. As he was writing about peace and grace, he had the realization within him that he enjoyed peace because he was bearing the brands of Jesus. The brands of Jesus kept him in a peaceful condition. Through

the enjoyment of grace, Paul was brought into a peaceful state. He was maintained in this peace by bearing the brands of Jesus.

In order to understand Paul's concluding word, we need a certain amount of spiritual experience. As he was drawing this Epistle to a close, he greeted his readers with peace and grace. As he was extending this greeting to them, he spontaneously had the realization that he could enjoy peace because he was bearing the brands of Jesus. It seems as if Paul were saying, "Brothers, I am at peace. I am maintained in this peaceful condition because I am bearing the brands of Jesus. Let no one trouble me." Not to trouble a person means not to disturb him, not to deprive him of peace. The word trouble in verse 17 stands in contrast to peace in verse 16. After saying that peace should be on all those who walk by this rule, Paul asked that no one trouble him, for he bore the brands of Jesus. This indicates that Paul's peace was maintained by the brands of Jesus he was bearing in his body. Therefore, Paul could say, "Since I am bearing the brands of Jesus, I am at peace. Let no one bother me." Paul knew that the Judaizers and the persecutors could not take away his peace. Not even the whole system of Satan could trouble him, for he was bearing the brands of Jesus. However, if he cast away these brands, refusing to bear them any longer, he would have immediately lost his peace. Then he could have been troubled by anything or anyone. But because he was enjoying peace through bearing the brands of Jesus, he could say, "Let no one trouble me."

In principle, our situation is the same as Paul's. Bearing the brands of Jesus will also keep us at peace. But if we refuse to bear these brands, we shall be troubled, and our peace will disappear. Then, having lost our peace, it will be difficult for us to continue in the enjoyment of grace.

I. THE BRANDS OF JESUS

The word brands in verse 17 refers to the marks branded on slaves to indicate their owners. With Paul, a

slave of Christ (Rom. 1:1), physically the brands were the scars of his wounds received in his faithful service to his Master (2 Cor. 11:23-27). Spiritually, they signify the characteristics of the life he lived, a life like that lived by the Lord Jesus when He was on this earth. Such a life is continually crucified (John 12:24), doing the will of God (John 6:38), seeking not its own glory but the glory of God (John 7:18), and submissive and obedient to God, even unto the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8). Paul followed the pattern of the Lord Jesus, bearing the brands, the characteristics of His life. In this he was absolutely different from the Judaizers.

Paul considered himself a slave of Christ. Just as a slave might bear a brand mark testifying that he belonged to a certain owner, Paul bore in his body the brands of Jesus. It was as if the name of Christ had been branded upon him again and again as a testimony and declaration that Paul belonged to the Lord.

Paul had been wounded many times because of his faithfulness in service to Christ. In 2 Corinthians 11:24 and 25 he tells us that five times he received "forty stripes save one," that three times he was beaten with rods, and that once he was stoned. Therefore, there were many scars on his body testifying of his years of service to Christ. These scars may also be considered the brands of Jesus.

As we have already indicated, the spiritual significance of the expression "the brands of Jesus" is that Paul lived a crucified life. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He took the lead to live such a crucified life. As we read the four Gospels, we see the portrait of a Man constantly living a crucified life. This kind of life is a brand. Thus, when the Lord Jesus was on earth, He bore such a brand. He was persecuted, ridiculed, despised, and rejected. However, He did not say anything to defend Himself. Instead, living a crucified life, He bore a brand to show that He belonged to God the Father. Paul followed the Lord Jesus to live this kind of life. In Philippians 3:10 he refers to "the fellowship of His sufferings." As one who lived in the fellowship of

Jesus' sufferings, Paul bore the brands of Jesus as the sign that he lived a crucified life. When Paul was greeting the Galatians with a word of peace, he was reminded of the fact that it was the brands of Jesus that kept him in this peace. Because he was persecuted, despised, ridiculed, rejected, and condemned, he could truly say that he bore the brands of Jesus.

Although we do not presume to classify ourselves with Paul, we can say truly that, at least to some extent, we also are bearing the brands of Jesus, for we are ridiculed, mocked, despised, criticized, and condemned. Many evil things are written about us and spoken concerning us. As long as we continue to take the way of the cross, we shall be opposed in this way. If we are faithful to live a crucified life, opposition will rise up again and again. In Galatians 4:29 Paul said, "But as then he that was born according to flesh persecuted him that was born according to Spirit, so also it is now." This word indicates clearly that those who are according to the flesh will persecute those who are according to the Spirit. Just as the Lord Jesus and Paul were persecuted because they lived a crucified life, the same will happen to us if, by the Lord's mercy and grace, we follow their footsteps to live such a life. When we are despised, rejected, condemned, ridiculed, and mocked, we bear the brands of Jesus. However, because we bear these brands, we enjoy peace, and we are not troubled by any situation or circumstances.

I believe that as Paul was writing about peace, he had the sense deep within that he was maintained in peace because he bore the brands of Jesus. In principle, our experience today is the same. I do not think that those who criticize, persecute, and ridicule us have peace deep within. But the Lord can testify for us that, in spite of opposition and ridicule, we enjoy a deep inward peace, the peace which comes with the assurance that we are taking the way of the cross. This kind of persecution is an indication that we are those born according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh. Those who persecute others and

mock them surely are children according to the flesh. We should have a positive outlook concerning the persecution which comes because we take the way of the cross. When we are persecuted, we should praise the Lord and thank Him. We are not Ishmael mocking Isaac; we are Isaac being mocked by Ishmael. We are accused of being a cult and of propagating heresy. Many false accusations have been made against us in print. However, I can testify that in the midst of all this, I am at peace and sleep well every night. Bearing the brands of Jesus keeps us in a peaceful condition. Furthermore, this opposition and persecution indicate that we are on the right track with the Lord.

If you check with your experience, you will see that the more you are persecuted for following the Lord Jesus, the happier you are inwardly. According to Acts 5:40 and 41, the disciples rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. Persecution gives us the assurance that we are taking the right way. Therefore, as Paul says in Galatians 6:16, there should be peace on all those who walk by this rule. How do we know we are walking by this rule? We know it by the fact that we are persecuted. If we were not walking by this rule, there would be no reason for persecution to come. Even though Paul did not offend anybody, he was persecuted. Persecution came simply because of Christ and the cross. The persecution Paul faced was a sign that he was in the center of God's economy and that he was one with the Lord Jesus, the persecuted One. Therefore, he could have assurance and enjoy peace.

II. THE GRACE OF CHRIST

After referring to the brands of Jesus, Paul says, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen." The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is actually the bountiful supply, the all-inclusive enjoyment, of the life-giving Spirit. On the one hand, we bear the brands of Jesus, are persecuted, and live a crucified life; on the other hand, we enjoy the grace of Christ and experience

the bountiful supply of the Spirit. Oh, the rich and bountiful supply of the all-inclusive Spirit is with our spirit!

As God's chosen people, we are sons of God, and the processed Triune God has been wrought into our being. Because we are sons of God with the Triune God wrought into us, we are despised and persecuted. Some even regard us as a cult. Paul endured a similar kind of attack. Acts 24:5 says, "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews through-out the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." To this charge Paul replied, "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call a sect, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (Acts 24:14, Gk.). Paul was accused of being the ringleader of a sect, a cult, but he knew that he was living a new creation and was enjoying the bountiful supply of the all-inclusive Spirit in his spirit. As the book of Galatians indicates, if we bear the brands of Jesus and live a crucified life, we shall enjoy the supply of the life-giving Spirit in our spirit.

The spirit in 6:18 is our regenerated spirit indwelt by the Spirit, who is the focus of God's promised blessing stressed so much throughout the book of Galatians. It is in this spirit of ours that we experience and enjoy the Spirit as the focal blessing of the New Testament. Hence, we need the grace of the Lord, which is the bountiful supply of the all-inclusive Spirit, to be with our spirit.

Christ, the Spirit, the new creation, and our spirit are the four basic things revealed in this book as the underlying thought of God's economy. Christ is the center of God's economy, and the Spirit is the reality of Christ. When Christ is realized through the Spirit in our spirit, we become the new creation. Thus, our spirit is vital for us to live the life of the new creation for the fulfilling of God's purpose.

The book of Galatians places a strong emphasis on the cross and on the experience of crucifixion. Then, on the positive side, this book reveals Christ, the Spirit, the sons

of God, the heirs of promise, the household of faith, the new creation, and the Israel of God. As we have seen, in 6:18 Paul refers to our spirit. On the negative side, the book of Galatians speaks of the law, the flesh, the "I," the religious world, slavery, and the curse. However, the three main items of the negative things dealt with in Galatians are the law, the flesh, and religion. These three things go together. When we are under the law, we are involved with both the flesh and religion. The religion in Galatians is the highest religion, the Hebrew religion formed according to God's oracle. Nevertheless, even this religion is related to the law and the flesh. By the cross we are set free from the law, the flesh, and religion, and we have Christ, the Spirit, the new creation, and our regenerated spirit. If we see this vision, we shall praise the Lord for the cross. Because of the cross of Christ, the law, the flesh, and religion have all been terminated. But through the cross of Christ we have the Spirit, the new creation, and our spirit. Now, by the Spirit, who is the realization of Christ in our spirit, we may live the new creation. Living the new creation, we bear the brands of Jesus and enjoy the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in our spirit. With Paul we can say, "Let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the brands of Jesus." Then we shall know that the grace of Christ is with our spirit. This is the way Paul concludes the book of Galatians.

At the end of verse 18 Paul uses the term brothers. Although Paul had rebuked the Galatians and called them foolish (3:1), he had already used this intimate term to address them a number of times (1:11; 3:15; 4:12, 28, 31; 5:11, 13; 6:1). At the close of such a severe, rebuking, and warning Epistle, the Apostle Paul used this loving term again, especially placing it at the end of the sentence, to express his unchanging love toward them and to assure them that they were still his brothers in the household of the faith (6:10).

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THIRTY-TWO

BORN OF THE SPIRIT TO RECEIVE THE SPIRIT

(1)

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:2-3, 5, 14; 4:4-6, 29

As believers in Christ, we all have been born of the Spirit to receive the Spirit. Having been regenerated, born of the Spirit, we should daily receive the Spirit.

THE MIRACLE OF REGENERATION

Although these terms may be rather common, they are of great significance. To be born of the Spirit is a tremendous matter, for it means to be actually born of God. Because we have been created by God, we are God's creatures, and because we are fallen, we are sinners. Nevertheless, we, creatures and sinners, have been born of God. How marvelous!

Suppose a dog could be born of its master and receive its master's life and nature. Such an event would surely catch the attention of the news media. Would it not be a great miracle for the life and nature of a human being to be imparted to a dog and to make that dog a man-dog? Such a dog would not simply be washed, decorated, and beautified. It would actually have the life and nature of a human being. As astounding as it may seem, through regeneration we have received the life and nature of God.

This understanding of regeneration shatters the natural concept. Using the illustration of a dog receiving a human life, we see that the natural concept is merely that a dog can be cleansed and beautified. In principle, many Christians are occupied with cleansing people and beautifying them, instead of helping them receive the divine life and nature through regeneration. God's way is

not merely to wash us, beautify us, and decorate us outwardly. His intention in His economy is to regenerate us, to cause us to be sons of God born of Him. This matter is unspeakably great.

There is no doubt that God's salvation includes cleansing by the redeeming blood of Christ. In a very real sense, we, the saved ones, have been cleansed by God. Being cleansed, however, is not the highlight of God's salvation. The highlight is that God has regenerated us, that He has actually imparted His life and nature into us to make us His sons. Now we are not God's sons-in-law--we are the sons of God in life. Certainly there is no greater wonder in the whole universe than that sinful men by being regenerated can become sons of God. Many today are seeking wonders and miracles. But they do not realize that there is no greater miracle than regeneration. By regeneration fallen people become sons of God. In His salvation God has made us, fallen sinners, His divine sons.

THE MEANING OF REGENERATION

Among fundamental Christians today, there is little talk about God as the generating Spirit. When I was regenerated more than fifty years ago, I realized that regeneration was wonderful, and I tried to find a book that could give me an adequate definition of regeneration. Eventually I purchased a book entitled *The Genuine Definition of Regeneration*, expecting that this book would give me the definition I wanted. But much to my disappointment, that book said nothing about God as the Spirit coming into us to regenerate us. Rather, it merely said that regeneration means that we have a new beginning and that all the old things have passed away. But after years of experience and of studying the Bible and the writings of others, we have come to see that to be regenerated is simply to be born of God. In regeneration, God as the life-giving Spirit comes into our spirit to regenerate us with His life and nature. This is the reason the Lord Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). That which is born of the Spirit of God is our

regenerated spirit. At the time of our regeneration, God's Spirit came into our deadened spirit to enliven it with the divine life and nature and thereby to make us sons of God. What a marvelous fact it is that we are sons of God! We have the assurance that we are truly God's sons because in our spirit we can sweetly cry, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6).

RECEIVING THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT

Although regeneration is a marvelous reality, my burden in this message is not on regeneration itself. My burden is on the Spirit. Only by being the Spirit is God able to regenerate us. If you ask people who God is, some will say that He is the Creator. Others may say that He is also our Redeemer and Savior. Not many will say that God is the Spirit.

As the Spirit, God is not simple, for the Spirit is the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. This Spirit includes divinity, humanity, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Christians commonly take spiritual matters for granted. Some talk about Christ's incarnation and human living with little realization of the significance of these things. The One who was born in a manger in Bethlehem and who was raised in a carpenter's home in Nazareth was the very God Himself in human form. Imagine that the almighty God, the Creator, became a man and was restricted to the home of a carpenter and even worked for years as a carpenter! Jesus was called Emmanuel, God with us. This means that when Jesus lived on earth, God lived on earth. Furthermore, in His living He was patient and hidden. He did not make a display of Himself. For years, He was limited there in Nazareth. When He came forth to carry out His ministry, He did not do so on a large scale, but on a small scale and even in a lowly way. People wondered about Him, asking who He was, for they knew His mother, brothers, and sisters. They knew Him merely as Jesus of Nazareth.

When some Christians say that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, they consider that as the Son of God He is different from God. They do not realize that the Son of God

is God Himself. John 1:1 does not say, "In the beginning was the Word...and the Word was the Son of God." Rather this verse tells us that the Word in the beginning was God. This Word became flesh (John 1:14). For the Word to become flesh means that God Himself became flesh. It was God in the flesh who worked on earth, who washed the feet of the disciples, who was arrested in the garden, who was tried before the high priest and before Pilate and Herod, and who was sentenced to death and crucified. Yes, the One who was crucified was the very God. Some may ask: Is it possible for God to be crucified? The answer is that God was crucified in the humanity of Jesus. Recognizing this, Charles Wesley says in one of his hymns, "Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?" (*Hymns*, #296). The second stanza of the same hymn opens with the line: "'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!" The One who died for us was not only Jesus of Nazareth, but God, the very One who created us. Yet, as God was dying on the cross, He cried out to God, saying, "My God, My God..." (Matt. 27:46). Those with a doctrinal mentality may be at a loss to explain this. How can God say to God, "Why have You forsaken Me?" The answer is that God was dying on the cross in the form of a man. Therefore, as a man He could cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" After His crucifixion, He was buried. Then, on the third day, He was resurrected. First Corinthians 15:45 says that as the last Adam He became a life-giving Spirit. Therefore, in 2 Corinthians 3:17 Paul goes on to say, "Now the Lord is the Spirit" (Gk.).

God today is the Spirit including the elements of incarnation, humanity, crucifixion, and resurrection. The effectiveness of Christ's wonderful death, the power of His resurrection, and the reality of His resurrection life are all in the Spirit. This Spirit is no longer merely the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Jehovah, but the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

As the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Spirit includes the elements of incarnation, humanity, crucifixion, and resurrection. When we called on the name of the Lord

Jesus and were saved, such a Spirit entered into our being to regenerate our deadened spirit and to make us sons of God. The Spirit who came into us at the time of our regeneration is the ultimate consummation of the Triune God, the realization and expression of the Father, Son, and Spirit. This Spirit has come into us to impart into our being the life and nature of God. Because we have been regenerated by this Spirit in our spirit, we have become sons of God.

Not many Christians realize that they are sons of God and that God wants them to live the life of a son of God. After they are saved, most Christians try to improve themselves or to do something to please God. In their efforts to improve the natural man or to do something to please God, the vast majority of the Lord's people are missing the mark of God's economy. God's salvation is for His economy, and His economy is not a matter of ethics. Rather, by His salvation according to His economy, God has regenerated us by the divine life that we may be His sons and live as sons of God. God's goal is not simply that we improve our behavior and thereby do good instead of evil. It is not God's purpose merely to have a number of good people. God's desire is that we live as sons of God. God wants us not simply to be cleansed. He wants us to live as sons of God. If we would do this, we need to receive the Spirit of God. We have been born of the Spirit to receive the Spirit.

THE CONSTANT RECEIVING OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 3:5 says, "He therefore Who is supplying to you the Spirit and doing works of power among you, is it by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" This verse indicates that God continues to supply us the Spirit. We may use electricity as an illustration. After electricity has been installed in a building, electricity is supplied continually to the building. Likewise, after God regenerated us by His Spirit to make us His sons, He has been continually supplying to us the Spirit. Nothing is more crucial than the constant receiving of the Spirit. The Galatians had been saved and had received the Spirit by

the hearing of faith. However, they had been misled and distracted and had turned back to the law. Instead of taking the Spirit as their source, they took the law as their source. Many Christians today have also been distracted from the Spirit. We all need to be brought back to the Spirit as our source. We must come back to God Himself as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. Sisters should not be occupied with trying to be a good wife or mother. Instead, they should open themselves to the Spirit as their heavenly source and receive the transmission of the Triune God, the heavenly electrical current, into their being. If they receive such a transmission, they will automatically be good wives and mothers. I encourage you to pray, "Lord Jesus, I open myself to You. I thank You that I have been born of God, born of the all-inclusive Spirit. Lord, this Spirit is still transmitting something of You into my being. I thank You, Lord, for this marvelous transmission."

There is no need to pray about your weaknesses or your temper. There is no need to ask the Lord to make you patient, or to cause you to be a good wife and mother or husband and father. That kind of prayer is not effective. The Lord is waiting for you to open to Him and to allow Him to permeate, saturate, and possess you. He is waiting for the opportunity to occupy all the ground in your inner being. If you give the Lord this opportunity, receiving the transmission of the Spirit, you will automatically be a good wife or husband. You have been born of the Spirit. Now you need to stay open to the Spirit and receive Him continually. Do not close your being to the Spirit. If you stay open to the Spirit and receive the Spirit constantly, you will be surprised how this will affect your daily living. What you for years have prayed for without receiving will now become your experience.

When you need light at home, you do not pray for light--you simply go to the switch and turn it on. Likewise, if we would receive the supply of heavenly electricity, all we need to do is go to the "switch," our regenerated spirit, and "switch on." However, very few of today's Christians practice this. Instead, many pray to be gentle, patient, humble, or loving. From years of experience I can testify

that this kind of prayer does not work. You may pray again and again for the Lord to make you patient or loving, but you may not receive anything of the Spirit. Christians may pray for many things, but they do not "switch on" to receive the divine transmission. Sometimes even after I had learned the secret of switching on, I still prayed in a way that was not effective. I am sure that many of you have had the same kind of experience. Our need is to turn to the Lord, open to Him, and receive His supply of the Spirit.

I repeat, it is not God's intention to make you a good person. It is to make you His son. Ephesians 1:5 says that God has predestinated us to sonship. God's intention is to make us sons. In Galatians 4:5 Paul says clearly that Christ has redeemed us that we might receive the sonship. Verse 6 says, "And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!" The Spirit of God's Son is the reality of sonship. First, God sent His Son to be our Redeemer. Then God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. Now God's desire is to supply us continually with the Spirit.

TWO EXTREMES

According to 3:13 and 14, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law so that "the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations in Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." We have received the Spirit as the blessing of Abraham. God's unique blessing to us is this all-inclusive Spirit. However, many fundamental Christians are reluctant to even talk about the Spirit. Some are afraid of any mention of the Spirit. This is one extreme. At the other extreme are certain Pentecostal people who emphasize the Spirit, but in a way that is not proper or in line with God's economy. The Spirit in the book of Galatians is the ultimate expression of the Triune God, that is, the Triune God after He has been processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. In Galatians, the Spirit is not associated with strange or unusual things. On the contrary, the Spirit is related to Christ living in us. Hence,

the Spirit is full of

divine, heavenly reality. What is needed in the Lord's recovery today is that a number of saints become enlightened and open themselves for the heavenly supply to be transmitted into them.

PRACTICE AND ENJOYMENT

We all need to realize that we have been born of the Spirit. Because we have been born of the Spirit, we are different from what we were before. Having been born of the Spirit, we need to practice opening to the Lord and receiving His supply. We should pray, "Lord, supply me with Yourself as the life-giving Spirit. I praise You, Lord, that You are real. You are on the throne in heaven, and You are also living in me. Lord, I ask that You keep me open to You all the time." In order to stay open to the Lord, it is helpful to call on His name, to pray-read, to praise the Lord, and to sing to the Lord. When we do these things, we receive of the Spirit. When we say, "Lord Jesus, I love You and I give myself wholly to You," we are supplied with the Spirit. Realizing that we have been born of the Spirit, we should now stay open to receive the Spirit moment by moment.

I can surely testify how enjoyable it is to receive the Spirit continually. No joy can surpass this joy. We may receive the Spirit wherever we may be, at home, at work, or at school. Because the Spirit is so available, we may receive Him at any time. How wonderful that we have been born of the Spirit to receive the Spirit! Let us go to the "switch" of our regenerated spirit and "switch on" to receive the heavenly electricity.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THIRTY-THREE

BORN OF THE SPIRIT TO RECEIVE THE SPIRIT

(2)

Scripture Reading: Gal. 4:29; 3:2, 5, 14; John 3:6b; 7:39; 14:17; 20:22; 6:63; Rom. 8:15b; Eph. 6:17-18; 1 Thes. 5:17-19; 1 Cor. 6:17; Matt. 10:19-20

GOD'S ULTIMATE INTENTION

The most crucial and mysterious matter revealed in the Bible is that God's ultimate intention is to work Himself into His chosen people. God's desire to work Himself into our being is the focal point of the divine revelation in the Scriptures. Because this matter is so mysterious, it is hidden in the Scriptures, although it is not altogether hidden. On the one hand, it is indeed a mystery; on the other hand, it is a mystery that has been revealed in the Bible.

Throughout the centuries, Christians have not seen this matter clearly. Most readers of the Bible have paid their attention to many things other than this crucial and mysterious point in the divine revelation. We admit that it is not easy to see this crucial point in the Bible. Just as a person's physical life is mysterious and hidden within him, so it is with the matter of God's intention to work Himself into His chosen people. It is hidden in the Word. Life is the most vital element in a person's being. But who can analyze it or adequately explain it? With the Bible, as with a human being, there are many things that are outward and easily identified. But there is also a hidden element, which we may call the life factor in the Scriptures. We may say that this life factor is Christ or the Spirit. However, the

life factor in the Bible is actually God's intention to work Himself into us. This is the kernel of the Bible.

Many theologians and Bible teachers have not seen the kernel of the Bible. In their writings they speak of many other things, but they do not mention this basic life factor. They have not pointed out definitely and particularly that according to the divine revelation in the Bible, God's intention is to work Himself into us. This is the reason that in the Lord's recovery we have given message after message on this point. Even after hundreds of messages have been given on the subject of God's intention, I still do not have the confidence that all the saints have an adequate understanding of it or that they have all truly seen it. I can testify that the vision of God's eternal intention has never been more clear to me than it is now. Throughout the years, this vision has become crystal clear. God's intention truly is to work Himself into us.

TWO GIFTS AND TWO TRAGEDIES

God has given us two great gifts by which He works Himself into us--the Spirit and the Word. These gifts are actually God Himself. God is the Spirit, and God is also the Word. The Gospel of John is a book which clearly reveals God, the Spirit, and the Word. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." According to John 1:14, the Word, God Himself, became flesh. Eventually, this incarnate Word was crucified, and after His resurrection He, the last Adam, became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). The Gospel of John also links the Word to the Spirit. "It is the Spirit Who gives life," the Lord Jesus said in John 6:63, and, "the words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." God is life, the Spirit is life, and the Word is life. According to the Gospel of John, these three are one. God is the Word, the Word is the Spirit, and the Spirit is God.

If you consider church history, you will see that throughout the centuries two great tragedies have taken

place, one related to the Word and the other related to the Spirit. God's intention is that the Bible be used to impart Himself as life into His chosen people. But many Christian teachers have neglected this proper use of the Bible and have taken the Bible only as a book of knowledge, not as a book of life for the divine impartation. Different opinions and interpretations of the Bible have led to controversy and debate. Many of these debates have been centered on Christology, the theological study of Christ's Person. In their argument about the Person of Christ, some of the great teachers, including certain church fathers, neglected the living Person of Christ. They paid more attention to Christology than to Christ Himself. God's intention is that the Bible should be the tree of life, but in their use of the Bible, certain teachers turned it into the tree of knowledge. First they brought themselves into death, and then they spread death in the church.

Today there is still controversy among Christians about many matters in the Bible. Take baptism as an example. Who can count how many divisions have been caused by differing opinions about baptism? There has been argument about the kind of water used, about the way people are put into the water, and about the name in which people are baptized. What a tragedy that the Word has been used in such a way as to become a factor of division! It has been used to divide Christians into thousands of groups. However, the Bible itself is not to blame for this. The blame rests with those who pay attention to knowledge, but neglect the living Person.

The second tragedy to occur in the history of the church concerns the Spirit. Concerning the Bible and its interpretation, there has been division, whereas concerning the Spirit there has been confusion. Because of this confusion, many fundamental Christians do not even want to hear about the Spirit. Some are actually frightened by any mention of the Spirit, regarding the Spirit as something too mysterious to talk about. What a tragedy is this neglect of the Spirit!

AN INTIMATE, ORGANIC RELATIONSHIP

If we do not take the Word and receive the Spirit, what way is there for God to be wrought into us? If to us God is only on the throne in heaven as the object of our worship, how can He be our life and how can He be wrought into our being? It would not even be possible for us to be born of Him if He were only in heaven.

John 1:12 and 13 indicate that those who receive the Lord Jesus are born of God. Birth involves an intimate, organic relationship. Because we are born of our parents, we have an intimate, organic relationship with them. Because we have been born of God, God in a very real sense has been born into us. This is what makes us sons of God. If we were not born of God, how could we be sons of God? According to the Bible, we are not God's sons-in-law nor merely His adopted sons. As those born of God, we are sons of God in life. In John 3:6 the Lord Jesus declared, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Once again we say, we have been born of the Spirit to receive the Spirit.

RECEIVING THE PROCESSED TRIUNE GOD

In the foregoing message, the matter of being born of the Spirit was made clear. But I do not have the assurance that we are clear about how to receive the Spirit. The word receive is used in many places in the New Testament (John 7:39; 20:22; Rom. 8:15; Eph. 6:17). In Galatians Paul speaks definitely about receiving the Spirit (3:2, 14). The Spirit we have received and whom we continue to receive is the processed Triune God. Some may object to this statement and may claim that the Spirit refers only to the Holy Spirit, the third of the Godhead, not to the Triune God. But according to the New Testament, especially Paul's Epistles, the Spirit we are receiving is the processed Triune God.

Some find fault with the word "processed" and argue that it is impossible for God to be processed because He is eternal and unchanging. Although God is eternal and unchanging, He has nevertheless passed through a process.

Was not incarnation a process? From eternity past until the incarnation of Christ, God did not have a body of flesh. But when He was born in a manger, He was the mighty God incarnated as a baby. According to Isaiah 9:6, the child born to us is called the mighty God. As we pointed out in the foregoing message, this child, God incarnate, lived in a carpenter's home for years. Imagine that the Creator of the universe lived in the home of a carpenter in Nazareth! Was that not a process? Likewise, were not the crucifixion and resurrection a process? God certainly was processed through Christ's incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. Our God today is not a "raw" God, but a processed God. Today He is the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit.

Those who care only to debate about doctrinal concepts neglect the living Person of the Triune God. How sad! The Spirit we have received and are still receiving is the very Triune God who has been processed for us. The Spirit is the all-inclusive, compound Spirit. When we receive this Spirit, we receive the Triune God: the Father, the Son, and Spirit. The Father is embodied in the Son, and the Son is realized as the Spirit. We should not hold the concept that when we receive the Spirit, we receive only the Holy Spirit and not the Father and the Son, who supposedly remain far away in heaven. No, when we receive the Spirit, we receive the Triune God.

A certain preposition used in the Gospel of John indicates that the Son comes not only from the Father, but from with the Father (6:46; 7:29; 16:27). When the Son came, He did not leave the Father. On the contrary, He came with the Father. This was the reason the Lord Jesus said that He was not alone, for the Father was with Him (John 16:32). Just as the Father came with the Son when the Son came from with the Father, so the Spirit comes with the Father and the Son. It is not possible to separate the Father, the Son, and Spirit, for They are one. The Spirit is the realization of the Son, and the Son is the embodiment of the Father. To have any one of the Triune

God is to have all three. They are inseparable. Praise the Lord that when we receive the Spirit, we receive the Father and the Son also!

SPIRITUAL BREATHING

Now we come to the crucial matter of how to receive the Spirit. According to your experience, how do you receive the Spirit? The proper Christian life is the life of receiving the Spirit continually. Our physical life is an illustration of this. Physical life depends on breathing. Our life is a breathing life. As soon as a person stops breathing, he dies. Many Christians today have stopped their spiritual breathing; therefore, their spiritual life has come to a standstill. To breathe spiritually is to receive the Spirit continually.

The way to receive the Spirit without ceasing is mainly to pray. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul charges us to pray without ceasing. This does not mean, however, that we should exercise our mind to pray about material needs. Instead, we should exercise our spirit to call on the Lord. Our greatest need is the Triune God Himself. Moment by moment, we need the Spirit. Therefore, continually we need to exercise our spirit to call on the Lord. Many of us can testify that when we call on the Lord from the depths of our being, telling Him that we love Him, we breathe in fresh spiritual air. We breathe in the *pneuma*, the Spirit. As Christians we need to be pneumatic, full of *pneuma*, full of the Spirit. The Spirit is the heavenly air for us to breathe. By exercising our spirit to call on the Lord, we breathe in the Spirit and thereby receive the Spirit.

For years I was troubled by Paul's word in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 about praying without ceasing. I simply did not know how I could pray unceasingly. Eventually I came to realize that to pray is simply to breathe. Just as our physical breathing does not cease, neither should our spiritual breathing cease. This means that we must build up the habit of exercising our spirit to pray continually.

The basic element in receiving the Spirit moment by moment is that we use our spirit to call on the Lord.

THE PROPER USE OF THE BIBLE

As we have already indicated, we may receive the Spirit by using the Bible in a proper way. However, when most Christians come to the Bible, they exercise their mind much more than their spirit. This is a serious mistake. To read the Bible without praying is to make the Bible merely a book of knowledge in dead letters. Whenever we read the Scriptures, we need to pray. Ephesians 6:17 and 18 say, "And receive the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit." These verses indicate that we should take the Word of God by means of prayer. Let us use the reading of John 1:1 as an example. We may be tempted to exercise our natural mind to ask doctrinal questions concerning this verse. We may wonder what the beginning is, and ask about the distinction, if any, between the Word and God. We may go on to ask how the Word can be with God and also be God. If we do nothing except raise questions about this verse, we shall not receive the Spirit. But if we pray with the words of John 1:1, we shall receive the Spirit, for in our experience the Word will become spirit.

HEALED THROUGH THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT

I know of a recent situation where one brother suggested to another that he could overcome his feeling about being mistreated when he was an elder if he would recognize that this whole experience came to him according to the Lord's sovereignty. Apparently this is good advice, a sound teaching according to Romans 8:28. There seems to be nothing wrong with advising a brother to overcome his feelings about being mistreated by recognizing that everything is according to God's sovereignty. Such advice, however, may encourage others to be religious and may not

help them in life. If the brother who has been mis-treated takes this advice from one who seems so knowledgeable and who seems to know God's sovereignty, he may become a religious hero instead of one who receives the Spirit. He may be able to boast that even though he had been mistreated, he recognized that this mistreatment came to him under the Lord's sovereignty, and therefore he does not blame anyone. In such a case the brother is helped in a doctrinal way to become religious, but he is not helped to receive the Spirit. Actually, in applying the doctrine of God's sovereignty in such a way, this brother practices asceticism. The proper way to help one who has been suffering from mistreatment is to encourage him to open to the Lord and contact Him. He should not pay attention to the mistreatment, but should concentrate on the Lord Himself. Not even the teaching about the sovereignty of God should distract him from the Lord. As he opens to the Lord and contacts Him, he will receive more of the Spirit. As a result, his problem concerning any past mistreatment will be solved. We do not need doctrine to build us up as religious heroes. We need the life-giving Spirit to flow into us to kill the negative things, the "germs," and to supply us with life. Only the life-giving Spirit can kill the germs within us and make us healthy spiritually. Through the supply of the Spirit, our spiritual sicknesses are healed. Therefore, day by day we need to receive more of the Spirit.

NOT RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS, BUT RECEIVING THE SPIRIT

Another illustration of the proper way to receive the Spirit is related to married life. During a wedding ceremony, it is common for a pastor, according to Ephesians 5, to charge the bride to submit to her husband, and the groom to love his wife. Although both the bride and the groom may promise the pastor that they will carry out his words, they will find that they are not able to do so. However hard they may try, the wife will not be able to

submit, and the husband will not be able to love. This will always be the case when the teaching about submission of wives and love of husbands is isolated from the context of Ephesians 5, which speaks of being filled in spirit. Instead of trying to submit or to love, a husband and wife should simply contact the Lord directly, exercising their spirit to call on His name. If they do this, they will receive the Spirit, and the Spirit will become their supply. Then automatically the wife will submit to her husband, and the husband will love his wife. Instead of being sickened by religious teaching, they will be supplied with life by receiving the Spirit. This is another illustration of the fact that what we need is not doctrine to make us religious, but the receiving of the Spirit that we may have life.

PRAY-READING THE WORD IN SPIRIT

We all need to read the Bible, but we should exercise our spirit as we read it. This means that when we read the Bible, we must pray. If we read the Scriptures without praying, we shall misuse them. To read the Word with prayer is to pray-read it. This practice was not invented by us. Throughout the centuries, many godly people have practiced praying with the words of the Bible. According to Ephesians 6:17 and 18, we must take the Word by means of prayer.

Furthermore, we should pray at every time in spirit. If we take the Word in this way, we shall receive the Spirit, because the Word is spirit. We should not take the Bible merely as a book of doctrine and teaching. Our urgent need today is not to receive more doctrine; it is to have more direct contact with the Triune God. Do not separate the Bible from the Spirit. In your experience these two should be one. If you consider the Word and the Spirit as one and take the Word by means of prayer through exercising your spirit, you will receive the supply of the Spirit.

I wish to emphasize the fact that when we pray, we must exercise our spirit. If we want to walk, we use our feet, and if we want to see, we exercise our eyes. In the

same principle, if we wish to pray, we need to exercise our spirit. We should not pray simply according to our mind. If we pray by exercising our spirit as we read the Word, we shall receive the Spirit.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN REGENERATION

Before we were regenerated, our spirit was empty. But now that we have been born of the Spirit, we are able to receive the Spirit. God's purpose in regenerating us is that our spirit may function to receive the Spirit continually. The proper Christian walk is not a walk according to doctrines we have learned. It is a walk according to the Spirit and by the bountiful supply of the Spirit (Phil. 1:19). Day by day and even moment by moment, we should be open to the Spirit and exercise our spirit by calling on the Lord to receive the Spirit. I assure you that if you turn from the mere learning of doctrine to the receiving of the Spirit, you will see a change in your daily life. Many negative things will be swallowed up, and you will be healed and trans-formed.

TURNING FROM DOCTRINE TO THE SPIRIT

Those who have been in the Lord's recovery for a number of years have learned the doctrines and teachings of the recovery. They have gained much knowledge. What is needed is not more doctrine or more knowledge, but more receiving of the Spirit.

We praise the Lord that He is real, living, near, and available. How subjective the Triune God is to us! As the life-giving Spirit, He dwells in our spirit. To receive the Spirit continually means to give Him the freedom to spread within us. As we exercise our spirit to pray, calling on the name of the Lord and pray-reading the Word, we shall breathe spiritually and receive the Spirit. Then the essence, the heavenly element and divine substance, of the Triune God will be added into our being. As this element spreads within us, we shall grow and be transformed, and the negative things in us will be eliminated. The more we

grow by having the element of the Triune God added to us, the more we shall function in the church and be built up with others in our locality as the expression of the Body of Christ. May all the saints in the Lord's recovery turn from receiving mere doctrine and knowledge to receiving the Spirit.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THIRTY-FOUR

LIVE AND WALK BY THE SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Gal. 5:16-18, 22-25

In 4:5 Paul says that God has redeemed us so that we might receive the sonship. To receive the sonship means that we are born of God and thereby receive the divine life and nature. As sons of God, we have God's life and nature. Regeneration by which we are born of God to become His sons is accomplished by God Himself as the life-giving Spirit. There is no doubt that the Lord Jesus came to be our Savior and to die on the cross as our Redeemer. But the goal of God's salvation and redemption is to bring us into sonship. Not only have we been saved and redeemed; we are even one spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17) and, as a result, we have the divine life and nature. We are not simply one with God in a general way. We are actually one spirit with Him.

We who believe in the Lord Jesus should not have a low view of ourselves. We are not merely natural, physical, and material--we are now one spirit with God! If such a word were not written in the Scriptures, I would find it extremely difficult to believe that the very ones who were originally only God's creatures and who then fell to become sinners, have now become one spirit with God through regeneration. Can you testify with assurance that you truly believe that you are one spirit with God? Do you see this experientially as well as doctrinally? We all need to humble ourselves before the Lord and pray, "Lord, show us the vision that we are one spirit with You. I am not satisfied, Lord, with a mere doctrinal knowledge of this. Lord, open the heavens and cause me to see that I am now one spirit with You."

On the one hand, the Lord is in heaven; on the other hand, He is with our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). Although the Lord has come into our spirit and dwells in our spirit, much of the time we ourselves are not in the spirit. On many occasions we leave the Lord in our spirit and go off to spend time in the chambers of our mind or emotion. Perhaps we want to do a certain thing which does not make the Lord happy. At such times, our attitude toward the Lord may be that He should stay in our spirit and not come to trouble us as we live for a while in our mind or emotion. Certain sisters, for example, may want a leave of absence from the Lord for a few hours in order to indulge themselves in their desire to go shopping. However, the Lord is never willing to give us such a leave of absence, no matter how we may try to bargain with Him about it.

At the time we were saved and regenerated, our spirit was joined to the Lord, and we became one with Him. Now, no matter what we do, we cannot separate ourselves from being one with Him in spirit. Even if we would seek to break this union, the Lord would not agree.

Sometimes the younger saints may say that they need to practice the Lord's presence and not go to certain places or do certain things lest they lose His presence. They may think that the Lord will be with them if they go to the church meetings, but not if they go to a movie. According to their concept, they will lose the Lord's presence if they go to a movie. Doctrinally this sounds quite good, but actually it is not true in our experience. If you were to attend a movie, the Lord's presence is apt to be more obvious to you than when you are in a meeting. You may think that by going to the theater you will be able to run away from the Lord and be free. But, contrary to your expectation, you may discover that while you are there, the Lord manifests His presence to you more than ever. The more you beg Him to give you the liberty to do what you want, the more prevailing His presence becomes. Many of us can testify of having had this kind of experience.

To be saved is a serious matter, for it is to be brought

into oneness with the Lord. When a person is saved and re-generated, he enters into an organic union with the Triune God. This union is real and vital. As a result of salvation and redemption, the Lord dispenses Himself into our spirit and makes us one with Him.

Christians from a Pentecostal background often inquire of others if they have received the Spirit. We should never be troubled by such a question. As long as a person has been saved and regenerated, he has not only received the Holy Spirit, but he has even become one spirit with the Lord. Therefore, we have the ground to testify boldly that, as saved and regenerated ones, we are now one spirit with the Triune God. This is the divine revelation in the holy Word.

In 3:2 Paul asks the Galatian believers, "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" Then in 3:5 he inquires, "He therefore Who is supplying to you the Spirit and doing works of power among you, is it by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" Paul's questions indicate that the Galatians had received the Spirit and that God was continuing to supply the Spirit to them. God was supplying, and they were receiving. A marvelous, divine transmission was taking place.

If we would receive the Spirit continually, we need to exercise our spirit to pray. In our prayer we should not be occupied with trivial matters. Instead, we should open ourselves to the heavenly transmission and receive the supply of the Spirit. The Christian life is not a religious life or an ethical life, but it is a life of being one spirit with God. Whenever we exercise our spirit to call on the Lord, we experience the divine transmission, the flow of the heavenly current. Therefore, the Christian life is a life of supplying and receiving. God continually supplies, and we continually receive of Him.

Many of today's Christians neglect the crucial matter of receiving the Spirit. Instead, they concentrate on helping people to be religious and ethical. For this reason, there is the urgent need for the Lord to have a recovery. The Lord's

recovery is utterly different from religion. Concerning Christ, life, the Spirit, and the church, the Lord's recovery stands one with the Bible, but it stands apart from religion and tradition. Surely both we and the Lord Himself need the recovery.

The Spirit we have received of God is the total blessing of the gospel. In 3:13 and 14 Paul says that Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law so that "the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations in Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." In the gospel we have received not only the blessing of forgiveness, washing, and cleansing; we have received the blessing of the Triune God as the processed, all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit. This living, all-inclusive Person is the blessing. Day by day, God is supplying this blessing to us, and we are receiving this blessing of God. Oh, how blessed we are! What a marvelous blessing we are enjoying! This unique blessing is the all-inclusive Person of the Triune God--the Father, the Son, and the Spirit--processed to become the life-giving Spirit dwelling in us in a most subjective way for our enjoyment.

A well-known hymn tells us to count our blessings one by one. In a very real sense, we do not have that many blessings to count. We have one bountiful blessing--the Spirit. At the end of the year, some may take time to count all the material blessings they have received that year. But we may simply praise the Lord for the unique blessing of the immeasurable, bountiful, all-inclusive Triune God processed to be the life-giving Spirit dwelling in us.

I experienced this blessing of the Spirit when I was imprisoned by the Japanese invading army during World War II. Every day for thirty days I was subjected to trials, and I was beaten. But in the midst of my suffering, I had a sweet enjoyment of the Lord. How I enjoyed the blessing of the Spirit! The Lord was so real and near. It was almost as if I could touch Him. I remember one night in particular that the enjoyment of the Spirit was so real, intimate, and sweet that I wept and said, "Lord, I praise You that I am

here not only for You, but also with You." When I uttered these words, I had the definite sense that the Lord was in prison with me. Oh, that enjoyment of the Spirit was indescribable! Because the Lord was so near and so enjoyable, that prison became the Holy of Holies. Truly the Spirit, the processed Triune God, is our blessing.

After referring to the all-inclusive Spirit, Paul goes on to say, "But I say, walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh" (5:16). In 5:25 he continues, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." Many Christians do not have an experiential understanding of what it means to walk by the Spirit. To walk means to live and to have our being. But in verse 25 Paul seems to distinguish between living by the Spirit and walking by the Spirit. To live by the Spirit is one thing, and to walk by the Spirit is another. In verse 25 the Greek word translated "if" actually means "since." Paul's statement here is not a supposition; it is a fact. Since we live by the Spirit, we should go on to walk by the Spirit.

We need to see the difference between living by the Spirit and walking by the Spirit. The Greek term rendered live in 5:25 actually means both to have life and to live. Elsewhere Paul says that the just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:17). Paul's actual meaning is that the just shall have life and also live by faith.

Some may think that Paul's word about living by the Spirit refers only to our experience at regeneration. According to this understanding, when we were regenerated, we received life and began to live. However, nothing related to life can be once for all. You may learn a particular matter, for example, addition or subtraction, once for all, but you do not breathe, eat, or drink once for all. You may graduate from school, but you cannot graduate from breathing, drinking, and eating and still remain alive. You should not say that because you have eaten so many meals, it is no longer necessary for you to eat. In the matters of life there can be no graduation. Graduation from life means death. All the matters of life

must be continuous and experienced again and again. Therefore, Paul's word about living in 5:25 is not limited to our initial experience at regeneration, but applies to our daily living. Every day we should have life and live.

Experientially speaking, to live by the Spirit is to receive the Spirit by breathing the Spirit into us. Hence, the words "since we live by the Spirit" mean "since we receive the Spirit." In A. B. Simpson's hymn on breathing the Spirit one stanza says:

> I am breathing every moment,
> Drawing all my life from Thee;
> Breath by breath I live upon Thee,
> Lord, Thy Spirit breathe in me.
> *Hymns*, #255

A.B. Simpson realized the need to breathe the Spirit continually. To breathe in the Spirit is to receive the Spirit. This is to have life and live.

If we would receive the Spirit in this way, we need to open ourselves, exercise our spirit, and call on the Lord. This requires that we pray without ceasing. If we receive the Spirit, we shall have life and live. In our daily living we should continually receive the Spirit by breathing Him. However, not many Christians have this kind of daily life. Not many have life and live by receiving the Spirit continually. But we thank the Lord that in His recovery, we are learning to receive the Spirit. I encourage you all to contact the Lord moment by moment to receive the Spirit. The more we receive the Spirit, the more we shall have life and live. I can testify from personal experience that my enjoyment of the Spirit has been increasing and improving. Day after day, I receive the Spirit and have life and live.

A practical illustration of what it means to walk by the Spirit is found in married life. It is easy for a married couple, who know each other so well, to exchange words. The husband may point out the shortcomings of the wife, and the wife may respond by pointing out the shortcomings of her husband. When a husband and wife

exchange words in this way, they certainly are not walking by the Spirit. Earlier in the day, they may have exercised their spirit to contact the Lord and to receive the Spirit by breathing Him in. However, in talking to each other, they are no longer receiving the Spirit. Because they stop receiving life, they do not walk by the Spirit. Instead, they walk according to the flesh. The best way for a husband and wife to be rescued from arguing is to exercise the spirit. The husband should say, "Lord, I am exercising my spirit to ex-change words with my wife. Lord, I call on You and ask You to be one spirit with me so that I may argue with her." Do you think a brother would be able to argue with his wife if he prayed this way? Of course not. Instead of arguing, he would receive life, and his desire to exchange words with his wife would be put to death. Since we live by the Spirit, we should walk by the Spirit. Since a husband and wife exercise their spirit to receive the Spirit, they should also walk by the Spirit in their married life. Then, in place of argument, there will be praise.

For years I tried to understand Paul's word in 5:25 about living by the Spirit and walking by the Spirit. Gradually, considering my experience in the light of the Word, I came to realize that we need continually to exercise our spirit to receive the Spirit. Moment by moment, we need to call on the Lord and pray so that we may have life and live. The first thing necessary is to receive life and to live. As we have pointed out, we receive the Spirit by breathing. Once we have life by receiving the Spirit, we then may walk by the Spirit. We may do things and say things by the Spirit.

Walking by the Spirit will produce transformation, a metabolic change in our being. Such a change is not the product of outward correction or adjustment. If you deliberately try to behave as a child of God, you will act in a religious way. You may think to yourself, "I must maintain my status as a child of God. This means that I should not argue with my spouse." This is religious. Our need is to live by the Spirit and then walk by the Spirit.

This is not a matter of outward adjustment, but of inward, metabolic transformation. Furthermore, this has nothing to do with religion, for it is altogether a matter of an organic change in our being. When we live by the Spirit and walk by the Spirit, God is spontaneously lived out of us and is ex-pressed through us. Then, in reality and practicality, we are sons of God living by God's life and walking by this life.

Moment by moment, we need to breathe the divine life into us. Then, instead of acting in ourselves and walking by the flesh, we shall do everything by the Spirit whom we receive by breathing. Our need today is to practice receiving the Spirit and walking by the Spirit. This is not religion or ethics. This is the experience of the living Spirit.

If we walk by the Spirit by receiving the Spirit, the flesh will automatically be crucified (5:24). The flesh will have no ground in us, because we continually receive the Spirit. When we walk by the Spirit, Christ will be magnified in our daily life. Paul's burden in writing to the distracted Galatian believers was to bring them back to such a walk by the Spirit. This is not a matter of religion or ethics, but of living and walking by the Christ who, as the life-giving Spirit, dwells in our spirit. As we breathe Him in, we receive the Spirit. Then we may walk by this Spirit.

The result of walking by the Spirit will be the fruit of the Spirit. Paul lists nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit in verses 22 and 23, but his use of the expression "such things" indicates that there are more than these nine aspects. Paul lists nine as an illustration.

The fruit of the Spirit is the issue of walking by the Spirit. There is no need for us to strive to love, to keep the peace, or to be joyful. Actually, there is no need to strive to possess any of the Christian virtues. Rather, we need simply to live by the Spirit and walk by the Spirit. Then the fruit of the Spirit will be brought forth automatically. As we walk by the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit will come forth with many aspects: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

Husbands will have no lack of love for their wives, and the

wives will not be short of submission to their husbands. There will be no lack of any virtue.

The Christian virtues are not works; they are different aspects of the expression of the unique living fruit which is produced by walking by the Spirit. In His recovery the Lord wants to see the expression of such living fruit. This is the reason we have no confidence in outward regulations. If we try to regulate ourselves instead of walking by the Spirit, we shall make the church life a religion. The church, however, is not an organization; it is a living, growing organism. An organism has no need of outward regulations. Is it necessary for you to command your eyes to see or your ears to hear? Certainly not! Because the physical body is an organism, the eyes and the ears function automatically. Likewise, the church is an organism which functions spontaneously in life. If we need regulations, we must be short of life, short of the Spirit.

We thank the Lord that, by His mercy and grace, we are receiving the Spirit more and more. I have the assurance that a good number of the saints are learning to walk by the Spirit. In many cases, husbands and wives are turning to the spirit when they are tempted to argue. Instead of exchanging words, they exercise their spirit to praise the Lord. Others know what it means to be restricted by the Spirit in shopping. Sometimes, when they were on the way to a department store, they had the sense from the Spirit to go back home. What a mercy of the Lord to walk by the Spirit in this way! Others can testify that because they were walking by the Spirit, they could lay aside their choice in certain matters. Yes, they may have given up their preference, but in its place they have the joy of the Lord.

Many times I was ready to do a certain thing, only to be limited by the Spirit. When I obeyed and followed the Spirit, I was joyful. Furthermore, when I read the Bible, it was full of light. But I can also testify that when I have tried to read the Bible after disregarding the leading of the Spirit, the Bible became opaque. Since we receive the

Spirit and have life and are living, we should walk by the Spirit.

Walking by the Spirit is the way to grow, enjoy the Lord, and develop the proper functions for the building up of the Body. The Lord's recovery today should be characterized by this living and walking by the Spirit. This will distinguish the Lord's recovery from any kind of religion. The processed Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit now lives within us. Therefore, let us live by Him and walk by Him.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THIRTY-FIVE

SOW UNTO THE SPIRIT TO REAP ETERNAL LIFE

Scripture Reading: Gal. 6:7-10

THE FOCAL POINT OF GALATIANS

The book of Galatians is focused on Christ replacing the law. It is not God's intention to keep His people under the law. His intention is to dispense Christ into them. Thus, Christ as the center of God's economy must replace the law. Because the Judaizers were misusing the law, the Epistle to the Galatians was written to reveal Christ as the replacement of the law. Yes, the law was given for a specific purpose, but God did not intend for the law to be permanent. Christ has come to replace the law with Himself. This is the focal point of Galatians.

In chapter one Paul shows that God is pleased to reveal His Son, Jesus Christ, in us (1:15-16). In chapter two we see that we should live this Christ, not the law (2:19-21). God does not want us to be occupied with keeping the law and be distracted from living Christ. According to the pleasure of His heart, He has revealed His Son in us that we may live Him. The crucial points in chapters one and two are that the Son of God has been revealed into us and that we should live Him.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN FLESH AND SPIRIT

In chapters three and four Paul shows us how to experience this Christ and enjoy Him. The One revealed as the center of God's economy is Christ. But in our experience this One is the Spirit. This is the reason that, beginning in chapter three, Paul speaks of the Spirit again and again. In 3:2 he asks the Galatians if they received the

Spirit by the works of law or by the hearing of faith. Then, in a somewhat rebuking tone, he goes on to ask in the next verse, "Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" Here we see the contrast between the Spirit and the flesh. This is somewhat different from 2:20, where the contrast is between Christ and "I." The Spirit in chapter three is the very realization of the Christ in chapter two, and the flesh is the experiential aspect of the "I." Doctrinally we may say that our problem is with the "I," the self, but in experience our problem is with the flesh, which is the totality of our fallen being. It may be easy for us to testify in the church meetings that we are nothing but flesh. But in our daily life it is not so easy to admit that we are flesh. In the sight of God, fallen man is nothing but flesh. Beginning in chapter three and continuing into chapter six, Paul contrasts the Spirit with the flesh.

Galatians 4:29 says, "But as then he that was born according to flesh persecuted him that was born according to Spirit, so also it is now." In this verse we see two categories of people: those born according to flesh and those born according to Spirit. As saved ones, we are in both categories. On the one hand, we are children born according to flesh; on the other hand, we are also children born according to Spirit. Within us we have two elements, two natures--the Spirit and the flesh. These two elements make us two kinds of children.

The contrast between the Spirit and the flesh continues in chapter five with the contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit (5:19-23). In 5:17 we are told, "The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." The Spirit and the flesh can never work together or go along with each other.

TWO KINDS OF SOWING

Finally, in chapter six, we have the contrast between two different kinds of sowing: the sowing unto the flesh and the sowing unto the Spirit (6:7-8). On the one hand, we

may sow unto the flesh to accomplish the purpose of the flesh. On the other hand, we may sow unto the Spirit with the Spirit as our goal. In chapter three, the Spirit is mainly for us to have the divine life. In chapter four, the Spirit is for us to be born of God. In chapter five, the Spirit is for us to live and walk. Here in chapter six, the Spirit is for our aim, our goal. In the first two chapters of Galatians we have the revelation of Christ as the focal point of God's economy, but in the last four chapters we have the Spirit in our experience. We have somewhat covered the aspects of the Spirit for life, birth, and walk. In this message we need to consider the Spirit as our aim. This has much to do with sowing unto the Spirit.

In 6:8 Paul says, "He who sows unto his own flesh, shall reap corruption of the flesh, but he who sows unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life." It is very important to understand what Paul means by sowing. Because of his human experience and what he had learned and because of the revelation he received from God, Paul had a thorough understanding of human life. His use of the word sow in 6:8 points to the true meaning of human life. According to Paul's view, human life is a process of sowing. Day by day, we are sowing. We sow by what we say and do and by what we are.

To sow is to put forth something that will grow and eventually be reaped. In our daily living we are constantly putting forth things that will grow and bring forth a harvest. Even a word uttered by us contains seeds that will land in a particular soil, grow, and produce a harvest which we shall reap. We should not think that our words and actions are without result or issue. On the contrary, all that we say and do involves the sowing of seeds.

Do you realize that you are sowing all day long? You sow when you are happy and when you are sad, when you are calm and when you are angry, when you are praising the Lord and when you are complaining. Whenever you gossip or criticize someone, you are sowing. When you sing you sow, and when you scold your children you also sow.

The human life is a life of sowing, a life of putting forth things that grow and produce a harvest.

People sow whether they realize it or not and whether they intend to sow or not. You may have no intention for a certain negative thing to grow and produce a disastrous harvest. But as long as you sow, a harvest will result. Unsaved people do not realize that their life of sowing will eventually cause them to reap death and the lake of fire. No matter what your intention may be, as long as you sow, you will reap, and you will reap what you sow. We should not be surprised that we reap a certain thing, for that kind of reaping comes from that particular kind of sowing. A person should not be surprised if he sows soybeans and then reaps soybeans instead of corn. As long as he sows soybeans, he should not expect to reap corn or any crop other than soybeans. We need to be impressed with the serious fact that what we sow will return to us.

I am quite concerned that many believers do not realize that their life is a life of sowing. Whatever we are, wherever we go, and whatever we say and do are all sowing. In particular, we sow by our talking. Eventually, we shall be the first to reap the negative things we have sown. Even in seeking to know the affairs of others, we may sow the seed of death. As a result of our sowing such a seed, death will come into our own lives and also into the church. First we shall be the victims of this death. Then the death will spread to others. It is much better not to know things about others. The more we know, the more seeds we shall have to sow. Although it is dangerous to gather information about others, some saints in the church could even be called an information center. They can supply information about many people and places. Possessing such information opens the way for sowing seeds of death. From experience I have learned that it is better not to know so many things. Although I am in the church in Anaheim, I can testify truly that concerning the church there are a great many things I do not know and do not want to know. The less information I have, the less seeds I have to sow. Seeds of information about saints and

about churches are not seeds of life, but seeds of death. If you sow this kind of seed, you will reap the death you have sown.

The word sowing is actually equal to living. To be careful in our sowing is to be watchful concerning our living. I repeat, sowing causes a certain result. This was the reason Paul warned us to be careful of our sowing.

If we sow unto the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption, but if we sow unto the Spirit, we shall reap of the Spirit eternal life. In 6:8 flesh stands in contrast to the Spirit, and corruption in contrast to eternal life. There are only these two kinds of sowing and two kinds of reaping. There is no neutrality, no third kind of reaping. No doubt, corruption includes death. Sowing unto the flesh will always produce a harvest of corruption, whereas sowing unto the Spirit will always produce a harvest of life eternal.

TAKING THE SPIRIT AS OUR GOAL

Paul's words strongly imply that we must make a decision with respect to our aim, our goal. Will our aim be the flesh, or will it be the Spirit? In 6:8 Paul speaks of sowing *unto* the flesh and *unto* the Spirit. The Greek preposition rendered unto means "with a view to" or "resulting in." To sow unto the flesh means to sow with a view to accomplishing the purpose of the flesh. This is to have the flesh as the goal. But to sow unto the spirit means to sow with a view to accomplishing the purpose of the Spirit. This is to have the Spirit as our goal. The Spirit should be not only our life and walk, but also the goal of our living. There is no neutral ground between the flesh and the Spirit. Our goal is either one or the other. It cannot be anything else.

In different ways, both the flesh and the Spirit are all-inclusive. The flesh includes everything apart from the Spirit. Gossiping, criticizing, shopping in a worldly way, reading the newspaper apart from the control of the Spirit--all these are aspects of the flesh. Do you intend to take the flesh as your goal? What is the goal of your life on earth? I

hope that you all will be able to say that your goal is the all-inclusive Spirit. Sowing unto the Spirit includes calling on the Lord, praying, ministering Christ to others, and fellowshipping in life that others may be edified. We also sow unto the Spirit when we use our money for the Lord's purpose. If we sow unto the Spirit, taking the Spirit as our goal, we shall not go shopping in a worldly way. Instead, our shopping will be governed by the fact that we have chosen to take the Spirit as our goal. If the Spirit is our goal, then everything in our daily life will be with a view to this goal.

Paul's burden in the book of Galatians was to reveal Christ in such a way that He would be not only the focal point of God's economy, but also the focal point of our daily walk. God has revealed Christ into us, and now we need to live Him. This is the revelation presented in the first two chapters. As we have seen, Paul goes on to point out how we can experience such a Christ. If we would experience Him, we must have the Spirit as our life. This re-quires that we have a divine birth. Then we should walk by the Spirit and take the Spirit as our goal. We are not aim-less people who wander about without a goal. We have a clear, definite aim--the Spirit. If the Spirit is our goal, everything in our daily life will become meaningful. The way we dress, how we arrange things in our room, where we go, even what we eat--all will be a sowing unto the Spirit. When the Spirit is our goal, we live on earth with a view to this goal. However, if we let the flesh be our goal, we shall eventually reap corruption. This corruption may affect not only us, but also our family and even our descendants. In His grace, the Lord wants to help us take the Spirit as our goal. The way we talk to others, the way we spend our money, and every aspect of our living should be with a view to this goal.

Young people, I encourage you to make up your mind to take the Spirit as your goal. I would even suggest that you make a vow to the Lord concerning this. You may want to say, "Lord, I call heaven and earth to witness that I make a

vow to take the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit as my goal. I want whatever I say and do to be toward this goal. Lord, I don't want to sow anything that will result in corruption for me or others. I want to sow unto the Spirit and reap eternal life. Everything I do, I want to do toward the goal of the Spirit."

THE HOUSEHOLD OF THE FAITH

In 6:10 Paul says, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good toward all men, and especially toward those of the household of the faith." Paul's mention of the household of faith immediately after his word about sowing indicates that our sowing affects the household of the faith, which includes all the believers on earth. What you sow today will have an effect on the household of faith. Do not think, for example, that the way you cut your hair is a matter of no significance. In cutting your hair you sow either unto the flesh to reap corruption or unto the Spirit to reap eternal life. Furthermore, your sowing has an effect on the saints and even on the churches. If you sow unto the Spirit, the result will be a supply of life to the churches. If we see this, we shall surely desire to take the Spirit as our goal and live unto this goal. I have the assurance that if we live unto the Spirit by sowing unto the Spirit, we shall reap a harvest of eternal life. This will be a great benefit to our-selves, our families, the saints around us, and even all the churches on earth.

If we receive grace from the Lord to live Christ, we shall sow unto the Spirit and take the Spirit as our goal. The result will be life eternal. Instead of causing corruption, we shall be able to minister the life supply to those with whom we have direct contact. Moreover, because we have been sowing unto the Spirit, even those who contact us only indirectly will receive something of life. There is no need to try deliberately to carry on a work for the Lord. If we live unto the flesh, what we do as a Christian work will not be effective. What counts is not our working, but our sowing.

Every detail of our living is important because it is part

of our sowing. If we sow unto the Spirit in all the small parts of our daily living, we shall have a life unto the Spirit. The issue of this kind of life is life eternal. When our goal is the Spirit, we become a supply of life to others.

A GLORIOUS GOAL

I say once again that we believers are not aimless. We have a goal, an aim that controls and directs us. Whatever we do, we do with a view toward this goal. In drawing the Epistle to the Galatians to a close, Paul charges us to sow unto the Spirit, to live unto the Spirit, to say and do everything with a view to the Spirit. As sons of God, we need to take the Spirit as our unique and eternal goal. I urge you to take the Spirit as your goal in life that you may become one who supplies life to others. Tell the Lord, "Lord, from this time forth, my goal is the Spirit and only the Spirit. I'm so happy that I have such a goal. My life is meaningful, for I have a goal which directs me and controls me in all things." The Lord is sounding out the call in His recovery to take the Spirit as our goal and to live unto Him in every-thing that there may be a harvest of life eternal. How wonderful that we may have such a glorious goal in life!

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THIRTY-SIX

SOW UNTO THE SPIRIT FOR THE NEW CREATION

Scripture Reading: Gal. 6:7-16

Because the Galatian believers were missing the mark of God's economy, Paul wrote them this Epistle in the attempt to unveil God's economy and to bring them back to Christ. They had been distracted from the experience of Christ and the enjoyment of Christ to the keeping of the law and the practice of circumcision. Paul wanted them to turn back from the law and circumcision to the real blessing of God's gospel--the blessing of the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. This is the underlying thought in 6:7-16.

SOWING UNTO THE FLESH

Paul's concept was that those who were trying to keep the law and were practicing circumcision were sowing unto the flesh. In 6:8 Paul says that the one who "sows unto his own flesh, shall reap corruption of the flesh." Then in verses 12 and 13 he goes on to say, "As many as desire to make a good show in the flesh, these compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For neither do they that are circumcised themselves keep the law, but they desire you to be circumcised that they may boast in your flesh." Paul's use of the word flesh in these verses affords us a key to understanding what it means to sow unto the flesh. According to the underlying thought in this portion of Galatians, to sow unto the flesh is to practice circumcision and to endeavor to keep the law. Circumcision and law-keeping are both outward things. Paul strongly pointed out

that the Judaizers boasted of circumcision in the flesh. They compelled others to be circumcised so that they could boast in their flesh. Paul even says that they desired to "make a good show in the flesh." It was almost as if the Judaizers were saying, "Look at us--we have been circumcised. We have a sign in our flesh to show that we are circumcised people." In Paul's words, this is to make a good show in the flesh.

By seeking to make such a display in the flesh, the Judaizers were sowing unto their flesh, and the result was sure to be corruption. The Greek term for corruption does not mainly denote rottenness; on the contrary, the primary significance of this term is destruction. Those who were sowing unto the flesh by practicing circumcision were an offense to God, and God came in to destroy their religious system. Not too long after the Epistle to the Galatians was written, God sent the Roman army under Titus to destroy the city of Jerusalem with the temple and all that pertained to it. It was a most serious matter for the Judaizers not to give up law-keeping and circumcision.

In 6:7 Paul declares, "Do not be led astray, God is not mocked." God is the Creator, the Administrator, and the One operating all things in the universe. He is not mocked by those who stand against His economy. When He decided to put aside the law and circumcision, who had the right to stand against Him? What right did the Judaizers have to continue the practice of circumcision when God Himself had abolished it? By maintaining this practice in order to make a fair show in the flesh, the Judaizers were rebelling against God's governmental administration. Such rebellion, a real sowing unto the flesh, was bound to issue in corruption, in destruction.

AIMING AT THE SPIRIT AND REAPING ETERNAL LIFE

As believers in Christ, we need to sow unto the Spirit. God's economy is to give us Himself as the Spirit. We should take the Spirit as our aim, our goal, and not be so foolish as to aim at the law or circumcision. God's goal is to

become the all-inclusive Spirit in us for our enjoyment. What reason could we have for not aiming at such a marvelous goal?

When we see God's goal in His economy, we can realize how foolish the Judaizers were. We can also understand why God would send the Roman army to destroy the system of Judaism. It is a matter of utmost seriousness to insist on law-keeping and circumcision when God has made a change in His economy. Such insistence is offensive to God and is rebellion against Him and His economy. Nothing is more pleasing to God than to take the all-inclusive Spirit as our goal and to sow unto the Spirit. If we sow unto the Spirit, we shall reap eternal life.

The consummation of eternal life will be the New Jerusalem. In the New Jerusalem there will be neither the law nor circumcision. Instead, there will be the river of water of life flowing with the tree of life. This is life eternal. The New Jerusalem, the ultimate embodiment of eternal life, will be the consummate issue of our sowing unto the Spirit.

A NEW CREATION

After pointing out that the Judaizers wanted the Galatian believers to be circumcised so that they could boast in the flesh of the Galatians, Paul says, "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world." Instead of boasting in circumcision, Paul boasted in the cross of Christ. Circumcision is a shadow, but the cross is the reality. Whereas the Judaizers boasted in the shadow, Paul boasted in the cross through which the entire religious world--Judaism, the law, ordinances, and circumcision--was crucified to Paul. Furthermore, Paul could boast in the cross by which he had been crucified to the religious world.

In verse 15 Paul went on to say, "For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything to God. What matters to Him is a new creation. Through

the cross of Christ the new creation was brought in. This new creation is the rule by which the believers should now walk (v. 16).

As we have already pointed out elsewhere, the world in verse 14 is primarily the religious world, as indicated by verse 15. Paul could say, "Judaism has been crucified to me, and I have been crucified to Judaism. On the cross of Christ, the law, circumcision, and all the Judaistic observances have been crucified. At one time, Judaism was my world. But through the cross of Christ this world has been crucified to me, and I have been crucified to it." By the cross Paul was separated from Judaism. Therefore, he could declare that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision was anything. The only thing that avails is a new creation.

THE REASON FOR SOWING UNTO THE SPIRIT

Paul's mention of the new creation in 6:15 gives us the reason for sowing unto the Spirit. The result of sowing unto the Spirit is a new creation. Hence, we should sow unto the Spirit for the new creation. However, if we care for law-keeping and circumcision, we shall sow unto the flesh. Circumcision does not change the old creation, for it cannot change our nature. Circumcision cannot regenerate us, give us the divine life, or transform us. After a person is circumcised, he remains the old creation. But when we aim at the Spirit and sow unto the Spirit, the Spirit makes us a new creation.

We have seen that the phrase "unto the Spirit" means to aim at the Spirit and to take the Spirit as the goal of our living. Therefore, to sow unto the Spirit means that our life, living, and walk all must aim at the Spirit.

In 6:8 Paul charges us to sow unto the Spirit. Sowing involves all that we say and do and all that we are in our daily life. We should not think that after we say or do a particular thing there will be no consequences. No, whatever we say or do is an act of sowing that will eventually produce a harvest and be reaped by us. We

Christians are sowing all the time, and we shall reap what we sow. Instead of sowing unto the flesh, we should sow unto the Spirit, with a view to the Spirit. This means that we should take the Spirit as the goal of our sowing. The Judaizers were absolutely for Judaism. They focused their attention on the law, circumcision, and dietary regulations. Their aim in life was to carry out the law, circumcision, the ordinances, the regulations, and the keeping of the Sabbath. Their goal was Judaism and nothing but Judaism. The Judaizers were exceedingly ambitious to keep the law, to practice circumcision, and to fulfill all the regulations and ordinances of their religion. They were absolutely for Judaism, even at the cost of their lives.

Paul's aim was very different from that of the Judaizers. His goal was the Spirit, the all-inclusive Triune God. This was his only goal, and he was willing to forget everything else for it. Everything Paul did was unto the Spirit. What is the aim of your life? Can you say that you are aiming at the Triune God, or are you aiming at something else? How wonderful to be able to say that the Triune God is our goal, and we are aiming at Him.

In doing many different things we need to aim at the Spirit. Our goal should be to gain the profit which comes from aiming at the Spirit. To say that our goal is the Spirit means that our goal is the processed Triune God. In whatever we do, we should have the assurance that our goal in that thing is the Triune God. To sow unto the Spirit is to take the processed Triune God as our goal in life.

For us today, the Triune God is not merely objective. He is the Spirit as the aim of our daily living. For the Jews and even for many Christians, God is only objective. But to us, God is also subjective, for He dwells in our spirit to impart grace to us. Hence, our God is not merely the object of our worship; He is also the life-giving Spirit in our spirit. This indwelling One should be our goal.

THE NEED FOR A GOVERNING VISION

We all need a governing, directing, controlling vision of

the Triune God as our goal. If we see this vision, we shall be governed and directed by it. I can testify that by the Lord's mercy I saw this vision more than half a century ago, and I have not been distracted from it. This vision continues to control, govern, and direct me. My life is not aimless, for I have a definite goal. Throughout the years, the vision I have seen concerning the Triune God as my goal has strengthened me and upheld me.

If we see the vision of the Triune God as our goal, we shall not sow unto the flesh, but unto the Spirit, the all-inclusive Triune God dwelling in our spirit. This living Person should be our goal, and we should aim at Him in all we do, say, and are.

Paul knew that the Galatian believers were mistaken in aiming at the law and circumcision, which God had repudiated. He wanted them to come back to the life-giving Spirit, the One who is the totality of the blessing of the gospel. It seems as if Paul were saying to the Galatians, "Believers in Galatia, come back to the Spirit, take Him as the goal of your living, and aim at Him. This Spirit is the all-inclusive blessing of the gospel."

FULFILLING OUR NEED TO LOVE

Taking the Spirit as our goal is quite different from trying not to love the world. We were created with the capacity to love. We all need to love something. If you offer people something to love that is better than the world, they will love that instead of the world. However, because people have nothing better, they love the world. It is too shallow to charge Christians not to love the world. As human beings, we have the desire to love something, and this desire needs to be fulfilled. If it is satisfied by loving the Triune God, the One who is real, living, present, and subjective to us, we shall have no capacity to love the world. Something infinitely better than the world--the Triune God as the life-giving Spirit--has taken full possession of us. Believers are delivered from loving the

world not by teaching, but by loving the Triune God and being filled with Him.

After I had preached the gospel one night in the city of Nanking many years ago, a young woman said to me, "Mr. Lee, I agree with all you have said, and I appreciate the Christ you preach. However, I love the theater very much, and I want to know whether or not I shall have to give up the theater if I become a Christian." As I considered how to answer her question, I noticed that her little boy was with her. Then I said, "Suppose while you are talking with me your son picks up a sharp knife and plays with it. What would you do?" She told me that she could deal with the situation very easily by offering the child several pieces of chocolate candy. She told me she was sure that the child would drop the knife and fill his hands with candy. There would be no need to tell him to put the knife away, because he would be fully occupied with the candy. I said to her, "Don't you realize that attending the theater is like playing with a sharp knife and Christ can be compared to that candy? If you fill your hands with Christ, you will have no interest in this 'knife.'" She smiled and said that she was pleased with my answer. This incident illustrates the fact that it is not necessary to teach believers not to love the world. We need to present something better to occupy their love. Our need to love is filled by taking the Triune God as our goal. This goal is immeasurably greater than anything the world has to offer.

CONSTITUTED OF THE SPIRIT AND MADE NEW

If we sow unto the Triune God, we shall walk by the Spirit. Then spontaneously we shall be the new creation in a practical way. The meaning of the new creation is that God, the divine Spirit, mingles Himself with us and constitutes us with Himself to make us new. The ethical teachings of Confucius may improve people's behavior, but they cannot reconstitute anyone. But when we aim at the Triune God and walk by the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit,

the Spirit imparts the divine element into us and reconstitutes us with it. As a result, we no longer remain the old creation but become a new creation with a divine element wrought into us. The ultimate issue of this will be the New Jerusalem.

Today the church people in the Lord's recovery are undergoing the process of becoming reconstituted of the divine element. We are not aiming at self-correction or self-improvement. Our goal is not to learn patience or to develop the capacity to suffer. Such things are not the new creation. The new creation is a matter of God's chosen people taking the all-inclusive Spirit as their goal, aiming at Him, being one spirit with Him, and, as a result, having the divine element transfused into them to reconstitute them and make them new.

WALKING BY THIS RULE

In 6:16 Paul says, "And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God." The rule in this verse is not that of keeping the law, improving ourselves, or obeying religious ordinances. The rule is to aim at the Triune God and walk by Him. Those who walk by this rule will have peace and mercy.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THIRTY-SEVEN

RECEIVING AND ENJOYING THE GRACE OF THE LORD IN OUR SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Gal. 6:18, 1; 1:6; 2:21; 5:4; John 1:14,16-17; Heb. 10:29b; 4:16

PEACE AND GRACE

Paul ends the book of Galatians in this way: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen." At the beginning of this Epistle, Paul said, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:3). But at the end Paul speaks first of peace (6:16) and then of grace.

In 6:16 Paul says, "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God." According to this verse, peace is upon those who "walk by this rule." The rule here is that of sowing unto the Spirit to live the new creation. If we walk by this rule, peace will be upon us. The Israel of God consists of those who walk by this rule. In other words, all who live the new creation by sowing unto the Spirit are the true Israel of God, and peace is upon them. Paul's use of the preposition "upon" implies that peace rains upon us. Peace rains upon the real Israel of God, upon those who walk by the rule of living a new creation by sowing unto the Spirit. God is bestowing peace upon His real Israel.

In 6:17 Paul goes on to say, "For the rest let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the brands of Jesus." Here Paul seems to be saying, "I am enjoying peace. As far as anything else is concerned, do not trouble me. I have just one goal, and that is to walk by this rule. Because I'm a part of the true Israel of God, peace is bestowed upon me. I am under the rain of peace. Do not speak to me

about the law, circumcision, or the priesthood. For the rest, do not trouble me."

Why at the beginning of Galatians does Paul mention grace before peace and at the ending speak of peace before grace? Grace is God as our enjoyment, and peace is a condition which results from grace. Therefore, at the beginning we first have grace, then peace. But once we enter by grace into a condition of peace both with God vertically and with others horizontally, we need grace to keep us in such a peaceful situation.

GRACE WITH OUR SPIRIT

According to 6:18, the grace we enjoy is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Paul points out that this grace is with our spirit. In the book of Galatians Paul refers to the human spirit only in chapter six. In 6:1 he says, "Brothers, if ever a man is overtaken in some offense, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness." The spirit here is the regenerated human spirit indwelt by and mingled with the Holy Spirit. The fact that Paul mentions the human spirit both at the beginning and at the ending of chapter six indicates that this chapter deals mainly with our spirit.

If we do not know our human spirit, which has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, we have no way to enjoy Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit. We may use the practical application of electricity as an illustration of this. Although electricity has been installed in your home, you still need to use the switch to turn it on. If you do not know where the switch is, you will have no way to experience the benefit of electricity. The heavenly "electricity" has been installed in us, and our human spirit is the "switch" by which we may apply it. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ--the heavenly "electricity"--is with our spirit, the "switch."

In 6:18 Paul does not say that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with our mind, emotion, or will. He clearly and definitely tells us that this grace is with our spirit. Do you know the location of your spirit, mind, emotion, and

will and the difference between them? We know that we have all these faculties, but it is difficult to define them or to locate them. From our experience we have discovered these different aspects of our being. When we are happy or angry, we are exercising the emotion. When we make a decision, we use our will. When we think, we obviously use our mind. When a husband and wife are arguing, they may express their heated emotion, use their mind to present their case, and exercise their will to make decisions concerning the situation. But as they are arguing, something deep within may tell them to settle down and be quiet. This is not the mind, the emotion, or the will. It is the spirit, the leading part of which is the conscience. Whenever the conscience works, the spirit is functioning. In other words, your spirit works primarily through your conscience. The point here is that we have a faculty within us in addition to the mind, emotion, and will, and this faculty is the spirit.

According to the Bible, the function of the spirit is to contact God. When we heard the gospel, we repented of our sins. Repentance involves the exercise of our conscience. When the light of the truth was allowed to shine through our mind into our conscience, our conscience caused us to repent. Therefore, repentance involves the exercise of the leading part of our spirit. Although we probably did not realize it at the time, when we were saved, we exercised our spirit. In addition to repenting, we prayed to the Lord and called on Him. We may have said, "O Lord Jesus, You are my Redeemer. I thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. Lord, I love You, and I take You as my Savior." When we prayed in this way, exercising faith in the Lord, the Spirit of God came into our spirit and regenerated it. At the time we were saved, our spirit was exercised to repent and to receive the Lord. From that time onward, the Spirit has been dwelling in our spirit. Hence, the spirit is the place within us where we contact God, for it is here that the processed Triune God dwells as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit.

Often when we begin to pray, we are in our mind or

emotion. But gradually we pray ourselves into the spirit. Then we have the sense that we are meeting the Lord and that we and He are one. No words can describe how good it is to be one spirit with the Lord. How enjoyable this is! This enjoyment brings in the assurance that the Triune God is real.

THE SPIRIT OF GRACE

In order to understand what Paul means by grace in 6:18, we need to turn to the Gospel of John. In this Gospel we read that the Word which was in the beginning with God, and which was God, became flesh and tabernacled among us, full of grace and reality (1:1, 14). According to John 1:16, "Of His fullness we all received, and grace upon grace." Furthermore, John 1:17 tells us, "The law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ." The fact that the law was given and that grace came indicates that grace is a person. Grace was not given; it came with Jesus Christ. The grace in John 1 is the very Spirit mentioned elsewhere in the Gospel of John. When Christ came, something wonderful, called grace, came with Him. Actually, this grace is a wonderful Person, Christ Jesus Himself. According to John 1:16, of Christ's fullness we have received grace upon grace. But in John 7:39 and 20:22 we see that we actually received the Spirit, the holy breath. Putting these verses together, we see that the grace in John 1 is the very Spirit, the holy breath, in John 7 and 20. In Hebrews 10:29 the Spirit is even called the Spirit of grace.

To say that the Spirit is the Spirit of grace does not mean that the Spirit is one thing and grace is another, just as the expression "the Spirit of life" does not mean that the Spirit and life are two different things. Rather, just as the Spirit and life are one, so the Spirit and grace are one. In the same way, to speak of the light of God does not mean that light is something apart from God Himself. It means that God is the very light. In the same principle, when the Bible speaks of the Spirit of grace, it means the Spirit as grace.

We have emphasized the fact that grace is God becoming our enjoyment, that grace is Christ enjoyed by us. Now we need to lay equal stress on the fact that grace is actually the Spirit. Grace is God the Father embodied in the Son and the Son realized as the Spirit. Therefore, ultimately, the Spirit is the very grace.

From our experience we know that when we enjoy grace, we enjoy the Spirit. Whenever we are short of the experience of the Spirit moving in us and anointing us, we do not have the enjoyment of grace. Grace is the moving, acting, and anointing of the Spirit within us. The more we have the moving of the Spirit, the more grace we enjoy.

Once again we may use electricity as an illustration. It is possible to think of electricity as one thing and of electrical current as another thing. However, in actuality the current of electricity is electricity itself in motion. If electricity does not move, it remains electricity itself. But as soon as it begins to move, it becomes the electrical current. But the current is not one thing and electricity another. The current is electricity in motion.

This illustration of electrical current helps us to realize that the Spirit of grace is actually the Spirit moving, acting, and anointing within us. This matter is very subjective. When we see grace in this way, we have hit the mark concerning what grace is. Grace, of course, exists as a reality apart from us. But when grace comes into us, in our experience it is the Spirit. The grace which enters into us and becomes our enjoyment is nothing less than the Spirit Himself.

TURNING TO THE SPIRIT, EXERCISING THE SPIRIT, AND ENTHRONING THE LORD

How then do we receive grace and enjoy it? If we would receive grace and enjoy grace, we need to realize that our spirit is the only place we can experience grace. Just as electricity can be applied only by turning on the switch, so we can contact the moving, anointing Spirit only in our spirit. If you wish to receive grace and enjoy grace, do not

exercise your mind, emotion, or will. Instead, turn to your spirit and exercise it. Brothers are usually quite active in the mind, and sisters are usually very strong in the emotion. We need to turn from our mind and emotion back to the spirit, where we shall meet the Lord.

We thank the Lord for revealing to us where He is today. There can be no doubt that, on the one hand, He is on the throne in heaven. But, on the other hand, for our experience He is in our spirit. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace for timely help." The throne of grace is not only in heaven; it is also in our spirit. If it were not in our spirit as well as in heaven, how could we come forward to it? Some may argue that our spirit is not large enough to contain the throne of grace. Although this may seem logical in terms of size, the fact that we can come forward to the throne of grace indicates that, experientially, it is in our spirit. From my experience I know that when I turn to my spirit and call, "Lord Jesus," I immediately have the sense that the throne of grace is in my spirit.

Whenever we approach the throne of grace by turning to our spirit and calling on the name of the Lord, we should enthrone the Lord. We must give Him the headship, kingship, and lordship in us. What a tremendous difference this makes! Sometimes as we are praying we sense that the Lord is within us, but we are not willing to give Him the throne. Instead of recognizing His kingship, we exalt ourselves above Him and put ourselves on the throne. In a very practical way, we dethrone the Lord. Whenever we fail to enthrone the Lord, the flow of grace stops. At the very time we are praying, we need to allow the Lord to be on the throne within us, honoring Him as the Head, the Lord, and the King. Then grace will flow within us as a river.

In Revelation 22:1 and 2 we see that the river of water of life proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. God's throne is thus the source of the flowing grace. To dethrone Him, to take the throne away from Him, is to disregard the source of grace. This causes the flow of grace

to cease. This is not a mere doctrine, but something very experiential. Many of us can testify that whenever we fail to enthrone the Lord, we do not receive much grace in our times of prayer.

If we would receive grace and enjoy grace, the first thing we must do is turn to our spirit and forget our mind, emotion, and will. Satan, however, raises up one thing after another to keep us from the spirit. He may provoke an argument between husband and wife. As they are exchanging words, they will find it difficult to turn to the spirit, for their reasonings and their emotion have been stirred up. When our reasoning and our emotion are strong, we find it very difficult to turn to the spirit.

The best way to practice turning to the spirit and staying in the spirit is to have fixed times for prayer. Suppose you set aside ten minutes in the morning to contact the Lord in prayer. During this time, the only thing you should do is exercise yourself to turn to the spirit and stay in the spirit. Do not be concerned about all the things you must do that day. Reject your natural mind, emotion, and will and exercise your spirit to contact the Lord.

The reason so many Christians have little experience of the Lord is that they do not exercise their spirit. Many simply do not want to be in the spirit. Furthermore, in his subtlety, Satan seeks to provoke our mind, emotion, and will. Therefore, it is important for us to learn to remain in the spirit and not be provoked and drawn out by the enemy. We need to exercise our spirit to keep our mind, will, and emotion in their proper place. But if we allow our mind to be stirred up and our emotion to be provoked, we shall lose many opportunities to minister life to others from our spirit. Instead of using our mind in a natural way and instead of allowing our emotion to be provoked, we should exercise our spirit and pray, "Lord, what do You want me to do, and what do You want me to say? Lord, flow out from my spirit through my words to supply life to those in need." How much better this is than using our natural mind and emotion to deal with situations! What a vast difference this makes! Again and again, I wish to

emphasize the fact that our need is to learn to remain in our spirit and to use our spirit.

When we turn to the spirit and stay there, we need to recognize the Lord as the Head and the King and enthrone Him. We need to respect His position, honor His authority, and confess that we have no right to say or do anything on our own. All the ground within us must be given over to the King. If we enthrone the Lord within us, the river of water of life will flow out from the throne to supply us. In this way we shall receive grace and enjoy grace.

Grace is nothing less than the Triune God becoming our enjoyment. The Father is embodied in the Son, and the Son is realized as the Spirit. This Spirit, the ultimate consummation of the Triune God, now dwells in our spirit. Our need today is to turn to this spirit and remain there, enthroning the Lord. Then in a very practical way our spirit will be joined to the third heaven. We shall realize in our experience that, on the one hand, the Holy of Holies is in heaven and that, on the other hand, it is also in our spirit. This indicates that when we remain in our spirit, we actually touch the heavens. If we enthrone the Lord Jesus within us, the Spirit as the water of life will flow from the throne to supply us. This is grace, and this is the way to receive grace and enjoy grace.

As we receive the Triune God as our grace and enjoy Him as grace, we shall be constituted of Him. Little by little, we shall become one with Him organically. He will become our constituent, and we shall become His expression.

LIFE STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THIRTY-EIGHT

TWO KINDS OF WALK BY THE SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Gal. 5:16, 22-23, 25; 6:15-16; 3:2-3, 5, 14; 4:6, 29; Rom. 6:4; 8:4; 4:12; Phil. 3:16-18

In this message we shall begin to consider the matter of two kinds of walk by the Spirit. In 5:16 Paul says, "But I say, walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh." Galatians 5:25 says, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." As we shall see, in these two verses Paul uses two different Greek words for walk.

LIVING BY THE SPIRIT

For years I have tried to understand 5:25, where Paul speaks, on the one hand, of living by the Spirit and, on the other, of walking by the Spirit. I did not know the difference between living and walking. It seemed to me that walking included living. Eventually I came to see that to live by the Spirit involves first to have life and then to live. To be born is a once-for-all matter, but to have life and to live is not once for all. On the contrary, it is a lifelong matter, for we are constantly receiving life in order to live. For example, to stay alive we must breathe moment by moment. It is not sufficient to breathe only at the moment we are born. In like manner, we need to receive life moment by moment in order to live. To live by the Spirit is, therefore, to have life and then to live. Once we have life and live, we are able to walk, to have our being in a particular way.

WALKING ABOUT AND WALKING IN LINE

As we consider the two kinds of walk by the Spirit, we

shall refer to the walk in 5:16 as the first kind and to that in 5:25 as the second. The Greek word for walk in verse 16, *peripateo*, means to have our being, to deport ourselves, to order our manner of life, to walk about. It is used with respect to ordinary daily life. It denotes a common, habitual daily walk. This understanding of walking by the Spirit is confirmed by verses 22 and 23, where Paul speaks of the fruit of the Spirit. The various aspects of the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in these verses are not unusual things; they are aspects of our ordinary daily life. Therefore, the walk in verse 16 is our habitual and common daily walk.

The Greek word for walk in verse 25, *stoicheo*, has a very different meaning. It is derived from a root which means to arrange in a line. This may be illustrated by the movement of traffic in designated lanes on a highway. Thus, the Greek word for walk here means to walk in line. It also means to march in military rank. Walking in this way, like soldiers marching in rank, requires that we keep in step.

As we compare these two kinds of walk, we see that the second is more regulated than the first. In the second walk we need to walk like an army and keep in step, whereas in the first kind of walk we are free to walk about. However, both kinds of walk, the common, ordinary walk and the walking in line or in rank, are by the Spirit.

The same Greek word used for walk in 5:25 is also used elsewhere in the New Testament. In Romans 4:12 Paul speaks of those "who walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision." Here the walk is not the ordinary walk, but the walk that is regulated, a walk in a definite line. In this case, the walk is in the steps of the "faith of our father Abraham." Hence, the walk in Romans 4:12 is not a common, ordinary walk; it is a definite, particular walk, the walk in the steps of Abraham's faith. Paul's concept was that Abraham's faith was a lane in which we should walk and follow Abraham's steps.

Elsewhere in the book of Romans Paul used the Greek word for the first kind of walk. This word is used in Romans 6:4, where Paul says that "we also should walk in newness of life." It is also found in Romans 8:4, where Paul speaks of walking not according to flesh, but according to spirit. The walk in these verses is the common, ordinary walk of believers.

In Philippians 3:16 Paul also speaks of the second kind of walk: "Only this, whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk." Here Paul uses the Greek word *stoicheo* to denote an orderly walk in line or military rank. However, in Philippians 3:17 and 18 he uses the Greek word for the first kind of walk to refer to the common, ordinary walk: "Be imitators together of me, brothers, and observe attentively those who thus walk as you have us for an example. For many walk, of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." Paul's use of two different Greek words for walk indicates clearly that there are two kinds of walk by the Spirit in the New Testament.

THE COMPOUND SPIRIT

In order to understand more adequately the two kinds of walk by the Spirit, we need to see that the book of Galatians is a book that is very much concerned with the Spirit. The simple expression "the Spirit" is profound. This term is found in John 7:39: "But this He said concerning the Spirit, Whom those who believed in Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified." This verse says that before Jesus was glorified, "the Spirit was not yet." For years I had difficulty understanding this. I wondered how it could be possible for the Spirit to be "not yet." According to Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of God was in existence, brooding over the water. Furthermore, in the Old Testament we are told many times that the Spirit of the Lord, or of Jehovah, came upon certain people. Moreover, when the Lord Jesus was about

to be conceived in the womb of Mary, we are told that the Holy Spirit would come upon her (Luke 1:35). All these clearly indicate that the Spirit of God was in existence before John 7:39. In order to solve the problem raised by this verse, the translators of the King James Version added the word "given" in italics after the words "not yet." To their understanding, the writer of this verse was saying that the Spirit was not yet given. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, according to the way the Bible was actually written, not according to the way it is altered in translation, John 7:39 says that the Spirit was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified.

In his Epistles Paul uses the expression "the Spirit" a number of times, especially in the book of Galatians. In fact, in Galatians Paul does not even once speak of the Holy Spirit, although he frequently refers to "the Spirit." There is a great difference between the use of the term "the Holy Spirit" and the term "the Spirit." In Genesis 1:2 the Spirit of God is mentioned in relation to creation. Later the Spirit of the Lord, or of Jehovah, is used concerning the fellowship between God and His people. The term Holy Spirit is not used until the New Testament. (In the places where this expression is used in the Old Testament in the King James Version, the Hebrew should be rendered "Spirit of His holiness.") The Holy Spirit is spoken of with respect to the conception of the Lord Jesus in the womb of Mary, because God's intention was to bring forth One who is holy. Thus, the Holy Spirit was about to produce something holy out of humanity. The expression "the Spirit" is used for the Spirit of God only after the resurrection of Christ.

In the Old Testament the holy anointing oil is a type of the Spirit. This ointment was a compound formed by blending olive oil with four spices (Exo. 30:22-33). These spices signify aspects of Christ's death and resurrection. The fact that four spices were compounded with the olive oil indicates that Christ's humanity, death, and resurrection have been compounded into the Spirit of God

to make the compound Spirit. This compound Spirit is the Spirit in the New Testament. Before the Lord Jesus was glorified, such a compound Spirit was "not yet." But after His resurrection, His death and resurrection were blended with the Spirit of God to form the Spirit, the compound Spirit including not only divinity, but also humanity, the effectiveness of Christ's death, and the power of His resurrection. Therefore, after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jehovah, the Holy Spirit, is now the Spirit, the all-inclusive Spirit.

At the time of Genesis 1, the Spirit of God did not include humanity, but only divinity. The Spirit of God did not become the compound Spirit until the resurrection of Christ from among the dead. Now the Spirit includes divinity, humanity, the effectiveness of Christ's death, and the power of His resurrection. How rich and all-inclusive the Spirit is today!

THE ULTIMATE CONSUMMATION OF THE TRIUNE GOD

The Spirit as the compound, all-inclusive Spirit is the ultimate consummation of the Triune God. Our God is Triune: the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Every proper student of the Scriptures would agree that the three Persons of the Trinity may be regarded as distinct; however, we cannot say that They are separate. Such a claim would be heretical. When the Son came to earth, He did not leave the Father in the heavens. On the contrary, when the Son came, the Father came with Him. In the Gospel of John the Lord Jesus says that the Son came *from with* the Father (John 6:46, Gk.). When He came from the Father, He came with the Father. For this reason, the Lord Jesus said that He was never alone, for the Father was always with Him (John 8:29). Furthermore, in the Gospel of John we are also told that the Son would send the Spirit from with the Father (John 15:26, Gk.). We cannot separate the Son from the Father, nor the Spirit from the Father and the Son.

The Lord's response to Philip's request about showing them the Father illustrates this. Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father and it suffices us" (John 14:8). The Lord Jesus replied, "Am I so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How is it that you say, Show us the Father?" (v. 9). In verses 16 and 17 the Lord Jesus went on to say, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever; even the Spirit of reality, Whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you." Notice that in the next verse the Lord changes the pronoun: "I will not leave you orphans; I am coming to you." This indicates that when the Comforter, the Spirit of reality, comes, the Lord Jesus comes also. Furthermore, in verse 23 the Lord Jesus said that He and the Father would come to make an abode with the one who loves the Lord and keeps His word. From verses such as these we see that the Three of the Godhead, although distinct, are always together. They cannot be separated.

According to the Bible, the Father is embodied in the Son, and the Son is realized as the Spirit. Ultimately, the Three of the Godhead are expressed as the Spirit. This is the reason that, in our experience, when we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, we receive the Spirit. When we repented, believed in the Lord, and prayed to Him, we did not ask the Holy Spirit to come into us. Instead, we prayed for the Lord Jesus to come into us. However, although we asked the Lord to come in, the One who actually came in was the Spirit. This is true not only at the time we were saved, but also in our daily experience with the Lord. When we pray to the Father or call on the name of the Lord Jesus, telling Him that we love Him, eventually the One whom we experience with us and in us is the Spirit. From our experience we know that this Spirit, the compound, all-inclusive Spirit, is the ultimate consummation of the Triune God.

THE PROCESSED GOD

Our God today truly is the processed God. In the Old Testament there is no indication that God has been processed. This process began at the time of Christ's incarnation and continued throughout His human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. Some Christians object to the expression "processed God," with the argument that God is eternal and never changes. Yes, we definitely believe according to the Bible that God is eternal and that He is not subject to change. Nevertheless, we believe and teach, also according to the Bible, that God has passed through a process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. God has not changed, but He has passed through a process. God does not change in His nature or substance. But He has passed through a process. According to John 1:1 and 14, the Word which was in the beginning with God and which was God became flesh. The use of the word "became" in John 1:14 indicates a process. Likewise, 1 Corinthians 15:45 says that the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. This is another indication of God's process.

Some may object to our use of the word "process" because this term is not found in the Bible. However, the same objection could be made with respect to the word Trinity. The word Trinity cannot be found in the Bible either, but the Bible nevertheless reveals the fact that God is triune. In the same principle, although the Bible does not have the term "processed," it does reveal the fact that God has passed through a process. God Himself became a man by incarnation and lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years. Then He was crucified, descended to Hades, and came out from among the dead and entered into resurrection. Furthermore, He ascended to heaven with a glorified body of flesh and bones. Even now, the Lord is on the throne with such a body. Before Christ's incarnation, did the Lord on the throne in heaven have a body of flesh and bones? Certainly not! But for eternity He will be enthroned with such a body. Does this fact not indicate

that God in Christ has passed through a process? Hallelujah, our God today is the processed Triune God! The all-inclusive life-giving Spirit is the ultimate expression of this processed God.

RECEIVING THE SPIRIT

In the book of Galatians Paul asks the believers in Galatia if they received the Spirit by works of law or by the hearing of faith (3:2). From Paul's tone we can learn that receiving the Spirit is a very significant matter. Receiving the Spirit is not a matter of having an experience of speaking in tongues. To receive the Spirit is to be born of the Spirit (John 3:6). Balaam's donkey miraculously spoke a human language, but that donkey was not born of the Spirit. This illustration indicates that to be born of the Spirit is far greater than to speak in tongues. It may be that we never speak in tongues, but we can declare to the whole universe that because we have been born of the Spirit, we are sons of God. Moreover, we are not mere adopted sons or sons-in-law; we are sons in life born of God. We who have been born of God are divine. We have experienced a divine birth, and we have the divine life and partake of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). Surely this is the greatest miracle in the universe. Often when I consider this matter of the divine birth, I am filled with wonder and beside myself with joy. How marvelous that we are sons of God and that the Triune God is in us as the Spirit!

ONE SPIRIT WITH THE LORD

In his Epistles Paul charges us not to walk by a particular doctrine or instruction, but to walk by the Spirit. Recently the Lord has shown that He does not want us simply to live in His presence, but to live Christ by being one spirit with the Lord. Many years ago I was helped by the well-known book by Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*. When I was young, I loved that book very much. However, I have come to see that the practice

of the presence of God is actually an Old Testament matter. In the New Testament there is not a word about practicing God's presence. Instead, in the New Testament it is revealed that we should live Christ by being one spirit with Him. In Genesis 17 we read that Abraham walked before God, that is, in the presence of God. But in the New Testament, in 1 Corinthians 6:17 Paul says, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." This is more than simply walking in God's presence; it is to walk in oneness with Him. Paul's word about being one spirit with the Lord is not an illustration; it is a statement of fact. Furthermore, Paul did not say, "To me to walk is to be in the presence of the Lord." Rather, he said, "To me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). There is a tremendous difference between walking in the presence of God and living Christ!

During the last few years the Lord has shown me how much my practice has been the Old Testament way of walking before the Lord. I can testify that over the years I have been quite successful in walking before the Lord and living in His presence. But now I am practicing to be one spirit with the Lord. Again and again I confess my shortage to Him concerning this. Usually in the morning I pray, "Lord, I thank You for another new day to live You, another day for me to practice being one spirit with You. Lord, grant me this day's portion of grace that I may live one spirit with You." Although I may pray such a good prayer early in the morning, during the day I may fail again and again to be one spirit with the Lord. Sometimes I have asked myself how much time during the day I have spent truly one spirit with the Lord. I have seen how much I live according to ethics instead of according to the Spirit. But to be ethical is one thing, and to be one spirit with the Lord is another.

To walk by the Spirit simply means to be one spirit with the Lord. The first kind of walk by the Spirit, that mentioned by Paul in Galatians 5:16, is the walk in which we are one spirit with the Lord. From my experience I have learned that it is much easier to live in the presence of the

Lord than to live one spirit with Him. Often in speaking with others I am in the Lord's presence; however, I may have the sense that I am not one spirit with Him. Therefore, I need to pray, "Lord, forgive me. My speaking is before You, but it is not by You. It is simply my speaking carried out with a good intention. But I am the one speaking, Lord, not You."

In ministering to the saints, my desire these days is to point out that the requirement in the New Testament is that we live one spirit with the Lord. This is to walk by the Spirit. In all that we do and say we need to have the assurance that we are one spirit with the Lord. I can testify that when I ask myself how much of my living is actually one spirit with the Lord, I am defeated time and time again. Even as I am giving a message, I need to ask if I am truly one spirit with the Lord or just speaking with power from the Lord. I have given many messages on walking according to the Spirit. Now I wish to emphasize the fact that to walk according to the Spirit means to walk in one spirit with the Lord. As long as we are one spirit with Him, we are automatically according to Him. Paul could say, "To me to live is Christ," because he walked in one spirit with the Lord. When we are one spirit with Him, we truly live Him.

Walking in the presence of God easily fits in with our natural concept. However, it is not according to man's natural concept that believers would be one spirit with the Lord. It is easy to understand the word in Exodus about the Lord's presence going with the children of Israel. We may apply this word to ourselves and realize that as we go to a particular place, the Lord's presence will go with us. However, it is not according to our natural concept to think that we should live one spirit with the Lord. Some Christians have gone so far as to say that it is blasphemy to claim that we can be one spirit with the Lord. According to them, it is simply not possible for sinners ever to become one spirit with the Lord. Nevertheless, the Bible says clearly, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."

Although we may read this word, we may have no response to it, because we are veiled by religious, natural, and traditional concepts. We may not even have any concern about such a vital matter. But recently the Lord has brought us to the point where we simply must pay attention to the New Testament requirement to be one spirit with Him. Yes, according to the Old Testament practice, Abraham could walk in the presence of the Lord. But we are in the New Testament. According to God's New Testament economy, the Lord desires to come into us, to become one with us, and to make us one with Him. He wants us to be one spirit with Him. His economy today is that we walk in this one spirit with the Lord.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He walked in one spirit with the Father. When He spoke, the Father spoke in His speaking. He was one with the Father, and the Father was one with Him. The Lord lived by His Father. He wants those who believe in Him to live in the same way. Therefore, He said, "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me shall also live because of Me" (John 6:57). The Lord desires not simply that we live in His presence, but that we live by Him. To live by Him actually means to live one spirit with this living One. This is the New Testament requirement, and this is the first kind of walk by the Spirit covered by Paul in the book of Galatians.

I hope that many will be impressed with this word concerning living in one spirit with the Lord and will pray, "Lord, from now on I would not be satisfied simply with Your presence. Even if I could be as successful in practicing the presence of God as Brother Lawrence was, I would not be satisfied, because I know, Lord, that You would not be satisfied. You want to be one spirit with me. Lord, grant me the grace to be one spirit with You." In all that we say or do we need to exercise to be one with the Lord. The more we are one spirit with Him in our daily living, the more we shall enjoy salvation, sanctification, and transformation.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE THIRTY-NINE

WALKING IN THE DIVINE RULES AND STEPS BY THE SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Gal. 5:26; 6:15-16; Rom. 4:12; Phil. 3:12-16

In the foregoing message we pointed out that there are two kinds of walk by the Spirit. The first kind of walk refers to our ordinary daily living. The second kind of walk is a walk within a lane or in rank. In this message we shall consider in more detail the second walk, the walk in the divine rules and steps by the Spirit.

Actually everyone has two kinds of walk in his human life. The first kind of walk is general, a walking about. This includes all the ordinary things in our daily living. The second kind of walk is a walk with a specific purpose and toward a definite goal. For example, each day a young person must take care of the affairs of ordinary life. This is the first kind of walk. However, he must also go to school and study with a view toward graduation. This is the second kind of walk, the walk toward a goal.

TWO KINDS OF WALK

According to the Bible, every believer in Christ should have two kinds of walk by the Spirit. The first walk is our daily walk; the second is the walk in the divine rules and steps. As Christians, we are not those walking about on earth without a purpose. We have been created by God and also re-created and regenerated by Him with a definite purpose. Therefore, we must have the second kind of walk, a walk to fulfill God's purpose and to reach the goal of our life on earth.

The first kind of walk is needed as a support for the second kind. For example, no student can do well in school if his ordinary daily walk is not proper. If he walks in a way that is foolish or nonsensical, he will not be able to graduate. In such a case he would not have the first walk as a support for the second walk toward the goal of graduation. The second walk, which is related to carrying out our purpose in life, must be sustained by the first walk. Every human being needs to have two kinds of walk. In the first, he lives and walks about; in the second, he accomplishes his purpose on earth. To fulfill our purpose on earth, we need the second walk. But to carry out the second walk, we need the first walk. Thus, the first walk supports the second, and the second is the walk toward the goal.

In the first kind of walk by the Spirit, we live, have our being, and walk about by the Spirit. This walk is a support to the second walk, a walk with a direction toward a goal. As children of God, we are not those without purpose. Our lives on earth have a definite purpose. We do not walk about aimlessly. God has an eternal purpose, and His intention is that His people should live for His purpose. Both God's creation of us and His regeneration are for the carrying out of His purpose. Because God is purposeful and seeks to reach His goal, He charges us to have two kinds of walk by the Spirit: the walk which builds up a proper daily living and a walk in line with the divine rules and principles to reach the goal established by God.

Among today's Christians, both kinds of walk have been damaged. In the first place, many Christians do not live a proper Christian life. They do not have a life of prayer, they do not read the Bible regularly, and they do not contact the Lord consistently. Instead of walking by the Spirit, they walk by their ethics or morality. They may not steal or lie; however, even though they are good, honest, and faithful, they do not walk by the Spirit. Rather, they walk by their own standards. This means that in actual practice they walk by the flesh and the self. They may succeed in refraining from evil, but they do not care for the Spirit.

They care for their taste, choice, preference, and desire.

In order for us to have a proper living as children of God, we need to have the first kind of walk by the Spirit. This means that we should not walk by anything in place of the Spirit.

CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

If we would have the first kind of walk by the Spirit, we need to pray and call on the name of the Lord. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul commands us to pray without ceasing. I have found that it is impossible to pray unceasingly if we try to pray in a formal way, asking the Lord for help. We may carry on this kind of prayer for a long time, but we cannot do it unceasingly. However, we can pray without ceasing by simply calling, "Lord Jesus, O Lord Jesus." Although I am an elderly person and have been in the Lord for many years, I am still learning to call on the Lord's name continually. From experience I have discovered that it is very easy to forget this. Upon waking in the morning, I may begin to call on the Lord's name. But a few minutes later, I may be distracted by some thought and stop my calling. Suddenly, I realize where I am, and I once again begin to call, "O Lord Jesus."

Prayer is spiritual breathing. As we all know, we must breathe in order to stay alive. Wherever we may be, we can breathe spiritually by calling on the Lord's name. All day long, no matter what we are doing, we can contact the Lord by breathing His name. As we are going through our early morning routine, we can call on the Lord Jesus. We may find that as we are taking care of practical matters, we have thirty minutes to call on the name of the Lord Jesus. If we practice, we shall build up the habit of calling on the name of the Lord. This is part of the first walk, the walk in which we have a proper daily living by the Spirit.

If we do not have the first walk by the Spirit, we are not qualified to have the second. Because many Christians do not have a proper daily life by the Spirit, they are not

equipped to have the walk for the fulfillment of God's purpose. In order to have this second kind of walk, we must practice living one spirit with the Lord. We should not be loose, careless, or lazy. We must have a proper daily life by walking in oneness with the Lord. We should pray, read the Word, contact the Lord, and conduct ourselves properly in our relations with others. We all need to have this first kind of walk by the Spirit.

WALKING TOWARD THE GOAL

A good number of Christians have a proper daily walk, but they do not have the second walk. It seems that the goal of their Christian life is simply to be nice, good, and proper. If you ask them what the goal of their Christian life is, they may tell you that their goal is to be a good Christian in order to glorify God and to go to heaven one day and to see the Lord without any sense of shame. If you had asked me many years ago what the goal of my Christian life was, I would have said that my goal was to be a good Christian and to behave properly for the glory of God. Now I realize that according to the Bible God has a specific purpose, and He has set before us a definite goal that He wants us to reach. In addition to His purpose and goal, He also has provided a way. We may liken this way to a highway which leads to a specific destination. God's way is the line, the rule, the principle, by which we must walk to reach the goal. Praise our God that He is purposeful! He has a purpose to fulfill and a goal to reach. He also has set up a road which leads us to this goal. This road is the rule, principle, line, by which we must walk. To be sure, this walk is not the first kind of walk by the Spirit; it is the second kind of walk, the walk in line to reach God's goal.

The Greek word for this second kind of walk, *stoicheo*, is used four times in the New Testament. In Galatians 5:25 Paul says, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." Paul also uses this word in 6:16: "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God." Here we see that Paul connects the second walk with "this rule," the rule of being

a new creation. In Philippians 3:16 Paul also connects the second walk with the matter of rule: "Only this, whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk." In Romans 4:12 Paul connects this kind of walk with steps: "And the father of circumcision not only to those who are of the circumcision, but also to those who walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision." Paul's use of the word steps obviously implies a way. To walk in Abraham's steps is to walk according to a certain way.

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT AS THE RULE

If we consider Galatians 5:25 in light of the other verses where the Greek word *stoicheo* is used for walk, we shall see that to walk by the Spirit is to walk by the Spirit as our rule. The Spirit Himself is the way, the rule, the line, the principle, leading toward God's goal. The Spirit Himself should be our rule. If we would have the second walk by the Spirit, we must take the Spirit as our rule, our way. This may be illustrated by driving on a highway to reach a specific destination, which is different from merely driving around. When we drive on the highway, the lanes on the highway are a rule. Driving according to this rule, we are able to reach our destination.

In our Christian walk, the second kind of walk by the Spirit is a walk in which the Spirit is the rule. Our rule should not be doctrine or theology. Furthermore, it should not be the law. Paul's intention in writing to the Galatians was to tell them that they should no longer take the law as their rule. The Galatian believers had been distracted from the Spirit to the law and had taken it as their rule. Paul told them that they were foolish and that they should return to the Spirit as their rule. Since they had life and lived by the Spirit, they should also walk by the Spirit as their rule. If we would have the second walk for the fulfillment of God's purpose, we must first learn to walk by the Spirit as our way, rule, principle, and lane.

After World War II, my desire was to stay in north China. However, it was necessary for me to move first to the south and then to Taiwan. Although my intention was to go north, the Lord led me south. Eventually, I was led by the Spirit to come to the United States and remain here. Walking by the Spirit in this way was for me a real experience of the second walk, the walk to reach God's goal. To fulfill God's purpose and to reach His goal, we must take the Spirit as our highway. Because I have the assurance that I am taking the Spirit as my highway, I can be strong and bold.

I encourage all the saints to have the second walk by the Spirit. You need to pray, "Lord, I will follow You to have the second walk by the Spirit for the fulfillment of Your purpose. I do not want to walk by doctrine, theology, organization, or natural concepts. I want to walk by the Spirit as my unique highway."

According to 5:25, since we have received life and live by the Spirit, we should now have the second walk by the Spirit as our rule. We have been given life by the Spirit that we may walk by the Spirit to fulfill God's purpose. What a glorious goal lies before us! The highway which leads us to this goal is the Spirit, the ultimate expression of the processed Triune God. As we walk on this unique high-way, we should neither swerve nor turn around, but move on directly to the goal.

WALKING BY THE NEW CREATION

In 6:16 Paul says, "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God." The rule here is the new creation, mentioned in the preceding verse, where Paul says, "For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." In the second walk by the Spirit we must walk by the new creation. The new creation refers to man re-created with God. The first creation is for the new creation, for God's re-creation. Praise the Lord that when we were

regenerated we were re-created! In regeneration God is added to us. At the time we were regenerated, we received the Triune God into our being. I can testify that having the Triune God in me is not merely a doctrine or religion; it is a glorious reality. Hallelujah, the Triune God has been wrought into us! As a result, we are God's new creation.

Although God has made us a new creation, it is still possible for us to walk in the old creation. The Galatians were walking in the old creation in their striving to keep the law by the flesh. Paul tried to bring them back to Christ and the Spirit. He charged them to no longer walk in the old creation, but to walk in their spirit. To walk in the Spirit is to walk in the new creation. If we would have the second walk, we must walk by the Spirit and by the new creation.

In the ministry I am in fear and trembling lest I act in the self. If I should act according to the self or do anything by the flesh, I shall surely be in the old creation. Even when I speak for the Lord, I am fearful that I might speak something out of the self or by the self. My desire is to speak always from the Spirit. To speak from the Spirit is to be in the new creation.

As we are traveling on the highway of the Spirit, we should be careful not to do anything in ourselves. We should not drive our "car" by the old creation, but by the regenerated spirit. This means that we must drive the "car" by the new creation. To be either religious or non-religious is of no avail. The only thing that avails is the new creation.

In the Lord's recovery we do not want to do anything by the old creation. Our desire is to do everything by the Lord's mercy and grace in the new creation. This means that we would not do anything by the old man, but everything by the new man.

Recently in some meetings we have been considering the problems caused by opinions. When we are apart from the Lord, we are nothing but a constitution of opinion. If we are walking by the Spirit as the highway and yet still

hold to our opinions, this is an indication that we are driving the "car" by the self. Opinion is subtle, secret, and hidden. Often we are tempted to express our opinion about the church. But if we insist on our opinion, we may cause a problem. If we learn to drive the "car" by the new creation, we shall be fearful of expressing our opinions;

To say that the new creation is the rule by which we must walk does not mean that it is a different highway from the Spirit as our rule. Rather, it is to walk on the unique highway in a more particular, limited, and restricted way. The Spirit is the highway in a general way, whereas the new creation is the lane in a more particular way.

PURSUING CHRIST AND GAINING HIM

In Philippians 3:16 Paul says, "Only this, whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk." According to the context of this chapter, the rule in verse 16 is the pursuing after Christ mentioned in verse 12. Because Paul wanted to gain more of Christ, he pursued Christ. Thus, to walk by the same rule is to walk by the rule of pursuing Christ. This rule is even more narrow than that of the Spirit and the new creation. Paul was not pursuing success in his work; he was pursuing Christ. If we are merely pursuing success in our work, we shall be distracted from the highway.

We know that Paul wrote the book of Philippians from a prison in Rome. Although as a prisoner Paul had been deprived of many things, no one could deprive him of Christ. When he was in prison, he was still pursuing Christ in order to gain more of Him. In Philippians 3:14 he said, "I pursue toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He was one forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before (v. 13). Paul's desire was to reach the goal and gain the prize. The rule, therefore, in Philippians 3:16 is the rule of pursuing Christ in order to gain Him. In order to have the second walk, we must walk not only by the

Spirit and by the new creation, but also by the rule of pursuing Christ and gaining Him. This is the rule, the principle, and the lane by which we must walk. This is the second walk to reach the goal that we may win the prize.

PRACTICING THE CHURCH LIFE

If we read Paul's writings carefully, we shall find yet another rule by which we must walk. This rule is the church life, the Body life as revealed in Romans 12:1-5 and Ephesians 4:1-16. Thus, the second walk is by the Spirit, by the new creation, by pursuing and gaining Christ, and by practicing the church life. The church life also is a lane in which we must walk. It is a rule, a principle, which leads us to God's goal.

Today even many of those Christians who have the first walk by the Spirit do not have the church life. Because they do not have the second kind of walk by the Spirit, they are not able to fulfill God's purpose or reach His goal.

It is imperative that we all have the first kind of walk by the Spirit. In our daily life there should be the virtues, the fruit of the Spirit mentioned by Paul in Galatians 5:22 and 23: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control. A proper daily walk by the Spirit will qualify us and equip us for the second walk by the Spirit, the walk which accomplishes God's purpose. This second walk involves four rules or principles: the Spirit, the new creation, the gaining of Christ, and the church life. In order to have the second walk, and not just the first, we need to be under the regulation of the spirit, living by the new creation, pursuing Christ in order to gain Him, and practicing the church life. If we have the first walk by the Spirit but not the second, we may be regarded by others as "holy," "spiritual," or "victorious." However, we shall actually be purposeless. Even though we may have so-called holiness, spirituality, or victory, we shall be without purpose, for we shall lack the second kind of walk by the Spirit to reach the goal. We need both the first kind of walk to equip us and

the second kind of walk to carry out God's purpose that we may reach the goal and win the prize of the full enjoyment of Christ and experience of Christ.

IN THE STEPS OF ABRAHAM AND PAUL

On God's highway there are not only lanes or rules, but also steps. We have seen that in Romans 4:12 Paul speaks of walking in the steps of the faith of Abraham. For salvation, we must walk in the steps of Abraham. But for the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose, we need to walk in the steps of Paul. Paul said of himself that God had made him to be a pattern or example (1 Tim. 1:16). Paul is an example to all those who are running the New Testament race. For this reason, we need to follow in his steps.

I wish to emphasize repeatedly that to walk by these rules and in these steps is not related to our ordinary, common, daily walk; it is related to the specific and particular walk for the fulfillment of God's purpose and reaching His goal. As those who love the Lord Jesus and who are seeking Him, we need to have both kinds of walk by the Spirit. We need to have a proper daily living to qualify us, equip us, and empower us for the second walk to reach God's goal. Both walks are by the Spirit. Only by the Spirit can we have a proper daily life, and only by the Spirit can we walk toward God's goal. But as we practice the second kind of walk by the Spirit, we need to care also for the new creation, the gaining of Christ, and the church life. Then we shall reach God's goal and receive the glorious prize of the full enjoyment of Christ and experience of Christ.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE FORTY

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT AS THE ESSENCE OF OUR LIFE AND AS THE PATH FOR OUR WAY

Scripture Reading: Gal. 5:16, 18, 22-25

Colossians and Galatians are two books in the New Testament which reveal that Christ is life and everything to us. Colossians deals with culture, and Galatians, with the law given through Moses and the religion formed according to this law. Both the culture devised by man and the law given by God have been used by Satan to frustrate God's chosen people from experiencing Christ and enjoying Him. God's intention is to dispense Himself as the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, into our being so that He and we may be organically one. If we are organically one with the Triune God, He will be our life, and we shall be His living. Thus, God's ultimate intention in the universe is to dispense Himself into His people that they may have one life and one living with Him. Because Satan utilizes culture and the law to frustrate us from experiencing the Spirit as the ultimate realization of the Triune God, the books of Colossians and Galatians are very important.

THE SON OF GOD VERSUS RELIGION AND TRADITION

The book of Galatians is composed in a very particular way. In chapter one we see that the Son of God is versus the very religion formed and established according to the law given by God. In 1:16 Paul indicates that the Son of God has been revealed in us. The Son of God is not merely an object of our belief apart from us; He is the One who has

been revealed to us subjectively and has become one with us. The dear Son of God who has been revealed in us and who is now one with us is versus religion with all its traditions. God's intention is that religion and tradition must go and that only the Son of God remain.

However, today's Judaism and Christianity are filled with religion and tradition. Not much of the Son of God can be seen either in Catholicism or in the denominations. We are still surrounded by religion and tradition. I do not have the confidence that religion with all its traditions has been fully removed from us in the Lord's recovery. Do not think that because you have been in the church life for a period of time you have no religion or tradition, but only Christ, the Son of God. I do not have the assurance that only Christ is in us and that we are free from all religion and tradition.

When Peter, James, and John witnessed the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus on the mountain, Peter made the foolish suggestion that they build three tabernacles, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. Suddenly a voice from heaven declared, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I delight; hear Him!" (Matt. 17:5). When the disciples lifted up their eyes, "They saw no one except Jesus Himself alone" (v. 8). Their experience on the mount of transfiguration illustrates what Paul is saying in the first chapter of Galatians. Just as Moses and Elijah had to give way to Christ, the beloved Son of God, so religion and tradition must be set aside, and only the Son of God should remain.

Because religion is in our very marrow, it is extremely difficult to get rid of it. We may be under the influence of tradition when we pray. For example, we may feel that the best way to pray is to kneel down, not to sit in a chair. But how can we say what is the best position to take in prayer? The feeling that kneeling to pray is better than sitting may come from tradition. It is common among Moslems to prostrate themselves during set times of prayer. In a visit to Jerusalem I observed Moslems in a mosque praying in

this way. Within me I had the sense that they were not truly worshipping God. Instead of worshipping Him in reality, they performed their ritual in a religious, traditional manner. Although the Lord Jesus and Paul the apostle knelt to pray, the Lord did not command us to kneel down to pray or to prostrate ourselves before God the Father when we worship Him. The Lord gave no such commandment. But in John 4:24 He said that God is Spirit and that those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit. This word was spoken to a Samaritan woman beside a well. The Lord Jesus ministered living water to this woman, and she drank of this living water. According to the context of John 4, to drink the living water is to worship God the Father.

While the Lord Jesus was talking with the Samaritan woman, the priests in Jerusalem were worshipping God in the temple. Where was the true worship taking place--in the temple or beside the well? To answer this question properly we need to realize that the One who spoke to the Samaritan woman beside the well was actually God Himself. God was there with the Samaritan woman, not in the temple in Jerusalem. The worship carried on by the priests in the prescribed, orderly way was vain. If you had been there, would you have been worshipping God with the priests in the temple or with the Samaritan woman by the well? If we are honest, we must admit that we probably would have been with the priests worshipping according to tradition.

Although for years we have been saying that we must do away with tradition, I do not have the assurance that we are free from it. In a very subtle way tradition continues to undermine our experience of Christ and enjoyment of Him. We need to see from Galatians 1 that tradition must be set aside and that only the Son of God should be revealed in us. This revealed Son of God is versus religion with all its tradition.

In Galatians 1 we see that the Son of God replaces religion with its tradition. Now in Galatians 2 we see that

Christ, God's anointed One, replaces the law. In verse 19 Paul says that through the law he died to the law that he might live to God. Then in verse 20 he goes on to say, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." Therefore, according to chapter one, the Son is revealed in us, and according to chapter two, Christ lives in us.

THE SPIRIT

In chapter three Paul begins to speak of the Spirit. In verse 2 he inquires of the Galatian believers, "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" In chapter one we have the Son of God revealed in us and in chapter two, Christ living in us. But here in chapter three Paul indicates that the One we have received is the Spirit. The Spirit in chapter three is the very Son of God in chapter one and Christ in chapter two. When Paul writes concerning the revelation in chapters one and two, he speaks of Christ. But when he turns to our experience in chapter three and in the chapters following, he emphasizes the Spirit. The Spirit we have received is the totality of the blessing of the gospel promised by God to Abraham (3:14).

In 4:6 we see that we have not only received the Spirit, but that the Spirit of God's Son has entered into us. According to 4:29, we are those born according to the Spirit. The Spirit has come into us, and we have been born of Him. As sons of God, we have His life and nature. The life and nature of God are not poured into us like water into a bottle. No, we receive the Father's life and nature through a process of conception and birth. We all have been born of God through the Spirit. Now that we have received God's life and nature, in a very real sense we are divine. How could a child not have the life and nature of his father? Likewise, how could the children of God not have God's life and nature? However, to say that we have received the divine life and nature does not mean that we shall ever be deified or worshipped as God Himself. To say that we are deified to become an object of worship is

blasphemy. But it by no means is blasphemy to testify that we have the divine life and nature because we have been born of God, and as a result we are divine. We are children of God with the Spirit dwelling in our being in a very subjective way.

TWO ESSENCES--THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

In chapter five we have the two kinds of walk by the Spirit. Verse 16 says, "Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh." The walk here refers to our ordinary daily living. It is to live and have our being by the Spirit. In verse 25 Paul speaks of the second kind of walk, that of walking by certain rules or principles to reach the goal for the fulfillment of God's purpose: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." In this message we shall deal with these two walks together and consider walking by the Spirit as the path for our way.

The Spirit in 5:16 and 25 is the processed Triune God. The Triune God has passed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection to become the processed, compound Spirit living in us. Now that such a Spirit dwells within us, we should have our daily life by this Spirit. This means that the Spirit should become the very essence of our life.

I am concerned that instead of walking by the Spirit and living in the essence of the divine life, many of us are still living by the flesh, by the essence of our fallen life. To walk by the Spirit means that we take the Spirit as the essence of our life. As regenerated people, we have two essences: the flesh and the Spirit. Before we were saved, we did everything by the flesh. Because we were constituted of the element of the flesh, the flesh was the essence of our life, our constitution. The actions of the flesh may differ, but the essence is the same. For example, one person may despise his parents and another may honor them, but both actions are by the flesh if the flesh is the essence of their living. One day the all-inclusive Spirit, with the essence of the divine life, came into us. From that

time onward it has been possible for us to live either by the essence of the flesh or by the essence of the Spirit. In Galatians 5 Paul charges us to walk by the Spirit, that is, to take the Spirit as our essence and constituent. No longer should we live by the flesh, our old constituent, but by the Spirit, our new constituent. Whenever we love, we should love by the Spirit, by the new essence. Likewise, even when we hate, we should do so by the Spirit as our essence. Christians should not only love, but also hate. We certainly should hate Satan, sin, and the world. Whether we love or hate, we need to live by the all-inclusive Spirit as our essence. The crucial matter is not whether we love or hate, or whether we are proud or humble. It is by what essence we love or hate or we are proud or humble. If we live by the Spirit as our essence, it is right to hate certain things. But if we love by the flesh as our essence, God will be very displeased. God does not approve of the flesh in any way. In our daily life we should no longer walk by the flesh as the essence of our being. Instead, we should take the Spirit as our essence and do everything by the Spirit.

In the first kind of walk by the Spirit we take the Spirit as the essence of our life. Then whatever we are, whatever we do, and whatever we have will be by the Spirit as our essence. This means that our essence will be the Triune God processed to become our constituent. Then in a practical way the flesh will be crucified. In the words of 5:24, those who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts. If we take the Spirit as our essence and crucify the flesh, every aspect of our daily walk will be by the Spirit.

THE ESSENCE AND THE PATH

The first kind of walk by the Spirit is for the second--that of taking the Spirit as the path for our way. We all must walk along a certain way. The path of this way should be the Spirit Himself. For the first kind of walk, the Spirit is our essence; for the second kind, the Spirit is our way.

Galatians 5:25 says, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also

walk by the Spirit." Here Paul seems to be telling the Galatians, "Not only have you been living by the law, taking it as the essence of your life, but your goal has been established according to the law. The law has become the path for your way. Now you are not merely living under the law, but you are walking according to it. Dear Galatians, you must come back to the Spirit and leave the law on the cross. Take the Spirit as the essence of your daily life in place of the law. If you live by the Spirit as your essence, you should also take the Spirit as your pathway to reach God's goal. Taking the Spirit as your essence and pathway excludes law, doctrine, religion, tradition, and regulations. None of these things should be your way toward God's goal. The unique pathway is the Triune God as the life-giving Spirit. He alone should be the principle, the rule, the path, according to which you walk."

The underlying thought in 5:25 is very deep. By uttering such a word concerning walking by the Spirit as our rule or principle, Paul eliminated law, religion, tradition, doctrine, and regulations as the rule. The governing principle, the directing rule, of our walk must be the Spirit. We should do certain things and refrain from doing other things not because of regulations, but because we take the Spirit as the essence of our life, the essence of our new being. If you ask me why I would not do a particular thing, my answer would be that I am walking by taking the Spirit as the essence of my being. However, should I answer that I would not do that thing because it wastes time or because it damages the Lord's testimony, my answer would be religious and traditional. Our only reason for doing things or for not doing things should be that we take the Spirit as our essence and thereby live Christ.

When we have the first kind of walk, that of taking the Spirit as our essence, we shall be able to have the second kind of walk toward God's goal. Day by day, the Spirit will be our pathway. Then we shall walk according to the Spirit, not according to doctrine, theology, religion, tradition, or organization. The wonderful processed Triune

God will be our pathway, and we shall walk in Him. Walking by the Spirit as our way, we shall be able to reach the goal and gain the prize, which is Christ Himself.

If we are one with the all-inclusive Spirit, He will no doubt lead us to walk in Himself as our way. As a result, the Spirit becomes the rule, the principle leading to God's goal. Spontaneously the Spirit becomes the lane, the regulation, on the way to God's goal. Thus the all-inclusive Spirit becomes the path for our way. If we walk along this pathway, we shall surely reach God's goal, and His purpose will be accomplished.

The book of Galatians indicates that we should not live by the law, religion, tradition, organization, doctrines, or regulations. Instead, the processed Triune God who lives in us should be the essence of our new being and the very path as our way. We should live by Him and walk in Him, having the two kinds of walk by the Spirit.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE FORTY-ONE

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT TO LIVE CHRIST

Scripture Reading: Gal. 1:13-15a, 16a; 2:19-20; 3:2, 5, 26-27; 4:6, 19, 29; 5:16, 18, 22-23; 6:18

In the book of Galatians God's two economies, His Old Testament economy and His New Testament economy, are dealt with in a full way. Concerning each of these economies, the Bible uses a particular word. The word for God's economy in the Old Testament is law, and the word for His economy in the New Testament is Christ. Which do you prefer, law or Christ? In contrast to the Jews, who love the law, we who believe in Christ would all say that we prefer Christ to the law. Yes, on the one hand, we do love Christ, but, on the other hand, we may still embrace the law. In actual experience, we may embrace the law more than we embrace Christ.

A HIDDEN LOVE FOR THE LAW

Most Christians who love the Lord and have a heart to seek Him have a hidden love for the law. When some hear such a word, they may argue and say, "We don't want the law. We love Christ and want only Him." This may be the situation on the surface, but deep within, subconsciously, most Christians still love the law. Although they may not realize it, there is some kind of law hidden within them, like a cancer growing on a person's vital inward organs. Such a person may appear healthy on the surface, but he has a serious disease within him. Only when surgery is per-formed does the extent of this disease become known. We may be good Christians who love the Lord and seek Him; however, we may not be conscious of the fact that we still keep the law hidden within us.

Not many Christians have their daily walk according to Christ. Can you say that you have been walking according to Christ today? During times of prayer we may have our living and our being according to Christ. But after we pray we may have our living and our being according to something other than Christ. Whenever we do not live according to Christ, we live according to law. This is my reason for saying that although we love Christ, we still hold to the law.

Our situation can be compared to that of Abraham, who loved Sarah, his wife, but who also became involved with Hagar, a concubine, who signifies the law. In 4:24 and 25 Paul identifies Hagar with Mount Sinai, the place where the law was given. In typology Hagar, the maidservant, signifies the law. In a very real sense, Hagar, the law, is within us, and we love her. This law may not be the law of Moses. Instead, it may be some type of self-made law.

As seeking Christians, we may walk day by day according to the law hidden within us, not according to Christ. Suppose, for example, that a sister is subject to many irritations, but she does not become angry and lose her temper. Her behavior is very good. However, we need to ask why she does not lose her temper. Is it because she is living according to Christ, or because she is walking according to certain rules and regulations? Let us suppose, as another example, that whenever a certain brother is tempted to tell a lie, he exercises himself to speak the truth. But why does he tell the truth instead of a lie? Does he speak the truth according to Christ or according to some kind of rule or regulation? In other words, in the matter of telling the truth, does he live according to Christ or according to the law? It is very possible in matters such as this to live not according to Christ, but according to the law.

FOUR KINDS OF LAWS

From my experience I have learned that it is easy for Christians to live according to various kinds of laws instead of according to Christ. We may live by ethical

teachings we have assimilated from our culture, or according to biblical principles learned from studying the Scriptures. Moreover, we may live according to the laws we ourselves have made. How easy it is for us to make laws for ourselves! Although we make laws easily, it is difficult for us to change them. In addition to living by ethical teachings, principles, and our self-made laws, we may also live according to what may be called "the law of the inner life." When we live by this law, we may try without Christ to deal with the flesh or deny the self. Instead of living according to Christ, we may live according to these four different kinds of law--the laws of social ethics, biblical ethical principles, self-made laws, and the inner life law.

Recently, I have been enlightened of the Lord and also rebuked by Him concerning how little I actually live Christ day by day. I have had to confess to the Lord that only a small part of my time each day has been spent in living Christ. Most of the time I unconsciously and automatically live according to ethics, some kind of law, or certain habits I have built up. Instead of having Christ as the unique constituent of my daily walk, I have ethics, principles, self-made laws, and even the law of the inner life as my constituent. As a result, much of the time I live by natural ethics, biblical ethics, self-made laws, or the inner life law instead of according to Christ.

Living by these four kinds of laws does not require that we pray, trust in the Lord, or depend on Him. Our attitude may be that the Lord may sit on the throne in heaven, but we do not need Him to help us live on earth. We may think that we ourselves are quite capable of living in a proper way. We can be ethical and even "spiritual" without Christ and without the spirit. We may even succeed to "bear the cross" and "crucify" ourselves, also without Christ. Nevertheless, in doing all these things, we are not living according to Christ, but according to certain of the laws I have mentioned.

OUR FAILURE TO LIVE CHRIST

Before you were saved, you might have paid little

attention even to your self-made laws. But after you were saved and especially after you began to seek the Lord in the church life, your self-made laws began to exert a very strong influence on your daily living. You can say truly that you love the Lord and seek Him, but can you honestly say that you live Christ day by day? Instead of living Christ, you may live your kind of law. When you break one of your self-made laws, you repent and make confession to the Lord. But have you ever repented and confessed for not living Christ? I do not believe that many Christians have made this kind of confession.

In recent months my confession to the Lord has mainly been related to my failures in living Christ. In the morning I may have an excellent time to pray and enjoy the Lord. During my prayer, I am one spirit with the Lord and live Him. But afterward I may go to the breakfast table, begin to eat, and completely forget about Christ and living Him. Sometime later I may suddenly realize what has happened and come back to Christ and say, "O Lord, forgive me. Lord, I want to be one spirit with You." For a few minutes, I may again be with the Lord. However, I soon become occupied with something else and forget Him again. Is this not your experience also? We cannot say that we live Christ. Instead of living Him, we live our laws, culture, religion, and tradition.

We have pointed out that the book of Galatians covers God's two economies. His first economy, the economy in the Old Testament, involves law, our ethical laws as well as the God-given law. Whenever a person is regenerated, he continues to live according to the ethical laws he has assimilated from his culture. Very few, if any, live Christ. Even though we may seek Christ, we still live our own cultural laws and, thereby, in our actual experience, keep ourselves in God's first economy.

A CHANGE OF ECONOMY

The second economy of God, His New Testament

economy, is wholly related to Christ. Before Paul was converted, he was altogether in God's first economy. In 1:14 Paul tells us that he "advanced in Judaism beyond many contemporaries in my race, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." So zealous was he for the Jewish religion that he resolved to persecute all those who were living in God's second economy. For this reason, he "persecuted the church of God excessively and ravaged it" (1:13). We are all familiar with the fact that when Paul was on the road to Damascus, the Lord intervened and revealed Himself to Paul, causing him to fall to the ground. Paul experienced a genuine conversion, a real turn from God's old economy of the law to His new economy of Christ. He refers to this turn in 1:15 and 16, where he tells us that it pleased God "to reveal His Son in me."

Christ was revealed not only to Paul, but also into him. When Paul was a leading religionist, a "top dog" in Judaism, the Son of God entered into him. This was the reason Paul says in 1:16 that the Son of God was revealed in him, not merely to him. Because he had such a revelation of Christ, Paul could testify to the believers, "Dear saints, I want to tell you that I have the living Person of the Son of God within me. There is utterly no comparison be-tween this Person and the law. The law is good, but it is inferior to this living Person. For years, I tried to keep the law. But one day the living Person of the Son of God was revealed into me. What a wonder! What a miracle! Even now as I am writing to you, this living Person is one with me. When I write, He writes, for He writes in my writing."

What we see in chapter one of Galatians is a change of economy, a shift from the old economy to the new in which the Old Testament economy is replaced by the New Testament economy. This change is not a matter of theory, philosophy, or culture. It is an actual shift related to the economy of God. Formerly, Paul was absolutely given to God's Old Testament economy. But after Christ was revealed into him, he was wholly in God's new economy.

DEAD TO THE LAW

In 2:19 Paul says, "For I through law have died to law that I might live to God." Paul wanted the Galatians to realize that he was dead to the law. No matter how good the law may be, Paul had died to it and had nothing more to do with it. Death had separated him from the law. This made it possible for him to live to God.

ONE LIFE AND ONE LIVING

In 2:20 Paul goes on to say, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me." Here we see that the very Christ who had been revealed into Paul now lived in him. The two, Christ and Paul, had one life and one living.

This oneness of life and living can be illustrated by the grafting of a branch from one tree into another tree. The tree and the branch which has been grafted into it share one life and have one living. Paul and Christ lived such a wonderful grafted life. What we have here is not an exchanged life, the exchange of the human life for the divine life, but a grafted life, the grafting of the human life into the divine life. In this grafted life we and Christ are one. How marvelous! There are no words adequate to describe it. This grafted life is the life and living which are according to God's New Testament economy.

RECEIVING THE SPIRIT

In 3:2 Paul asks the Galatian believers, "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" In chapter one Paul speaks of the Son of God revealed in him and in chapter two, of Christ living in him. But now he suddenly changes the term and refers to the receiving of the Spirit. This indicates that the very Son of God revealed in us and Christ who lives in us is the Spirit we have received by the hearing of faith. Do not make the mistake of considering the Son of God, Christ, as separate

from the Spirit. According to the traditional theology of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are three separate Persons. When we teach from the Scriptures that Christ is the Spirit, we are condemned and charged with heresy.

We cannot adequately explain the Trinity in a doctrinal way. But from our experience we know that the Son of God is Christ and that Christ is the Spirit. Whenever we say, "Lord Jesus," the One we receive is the Spirit. The fact that the Spirit comes whenever we call on the name of the Lord Jesus indicates that Christ and the Spirit are one. For this reason, when we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, we receive the Spirit. This proves that the Spirit is the very Person of Jesus Christ. Just as when we call on the name of a certain person, the person, not the name, responds, so when we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, the Spirit comes. We know from our experience that there never has been a time that we have called, "O Lord Jesus," when Jesus responded and the Spirit did not respond. Without exception, whenever we called on the name of the Lord Jesus, it was the Spirit who came.

Galatians 1 and 2 are concerned with revelation and speak of the Son of God revealed in us and Christ living in us. But when we turn to experience, as seen in 3:2, we realize that the One we receive is the Spirit. The Spirit is the very Person of Christ, the Son of God.

Receiving the Spirit does not take place once for all. Like breathing, it is a lifelong matter. This is the reason that in 3:5 Paul uses the present tense, saying, "He therefore Who is supplying to you the Spirit and doing works of power among you, is it by the works of law or by the hearing of faith?" Here Paul does not say that God supplied the Spirit or that He shall supply the Spirit; he says that God is supplying the Spirit. Because God is continually supplying the Spirit, we need to receive the Spirit continually.

BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Galatians 3:27 says, "For as many as were baptized into

Christ have put on Christ." How wonderful! On the one hand, Christ has been revealed in us and is now living in us; on the other hand, Christ has been put upon us. We have Christ both within and without. He is our center and also our circumference, our inside as well as our outside. Inside, we have Christ, and outside we also have Christ. Christ is our inward content and also our outward expression. This Christ whom we experience in such a way is the Spirit.

BORN OF THE SPIRIT TO BECOME SONS OF GOD

In chapter four we see that Christ has redeemed us so that we may receive the sonship (v. 5). Moreover, because we are sons, "God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba Father!" (v. 6). In a foregoing message we pointed out that we became sons of God through a process of conception and birth. The Spirit entered into us not like water poured into a bottle, but through a very real conception and birth. We have actually been born of the Spirit. The Spirit entered into us through a process of divine conception leading to a marvelous birth. Through this process of conception and birth, the Spirit has been wrought into our being organically. This organic union took place within us when we were regenerated. Now we have the Spirit in a way that is truly organic and subjective.

Because we have been joined to the Spirit organically, there is now no way to separate the Spirit from our spirit. For example, after the food we eat has been digested and assimilated metabolically, it can no longer be separated from us. In like manner, now that the Spirit has come into us organically, He cannot be separated from us nor we from Him. Praise the Lord that the Spirit of sonship has entered into us and that we have been born of the Spirit to become sons of God!

CHRIST FORMED IN US

As sons of God, we now need Christ to be formed in us

(4:19). For Christ to be formed in us requires that we forget our self-made laws and allow Christ to occupy us in full. The more Christ occupies us inwardly, the more He is formed within us.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

In chapter five Paul charges us to walk by the Spirit. In verse 16 he says, "Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh." To walk by the Spirit here actually means to live Christ, to move, act, and have our being according to the indwelling Spirit. Our reason for not losing our temper or for not indulging in certain kinds of worldly entertainment should be that we are living according to the Spirit. Likewise, if we are calm or excited, the reason for our calmness or excitement should simply be that we are living according to the Spirit.

If we live Christ in this way, we shall spontaneously have a living which issues in the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23). After naming various aspects of the fruit of the Spirit, Paul says that against "such things" there is no law. His use of the expression "such things" indicates that the fruit of the Spirit is not limited to the items mentioned in verses 22 and 23. All the items mentioned by Paul are virtues which are different aspects of Christ expressed. These virtues are not works; they are fruit. Hatred is a work of the flesh, whereas love is a fruit of the Spirit, the spontaneous issue of living Christ. A tree does not produce fruit by working. The fruit produced by a tree is an issue of the inner life of the tree. Likewise, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, and all the other aspects of the fruit of the Spirit are not the result of our working; they are different aspects of the unique spiritual fruit which is produced out from the Christ who dwells within us and whom we live out.

LIVING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT TO EXPRESS CHRIST

In all the small matters of our daily life, we need to

walk by the Spirit. For example, when a brother gets a haircut, he should not have his hair cut according to a certain way or standard, but according to the Spirit. Even in the matter of a haircut he should have fellowship with the Spirit. Likewise, the sisters need to dress according to the Spirit, not according to a certain way practiced in the local churches. To conform to a certain way of dressing common to those in the local churches may be a very good habit or practice, but it is not life. If the sisters dress according to a certain habit, the issue will not be life. But if they dress by the Spirit and according to the Spirit, the result will be life.

To walk by the Spirit and thereby to have every aspect of our daily walk in correspondence to the Spirit is altogether a matter of life. It is not a matter of habit, custom, or conformity. From the human point of view, it may be good for people to conform to certain standards and practices, for this will result in improved behavior. It may cause those who are crude and unruly to become kind and obedient. Although such an outward change is good, it has nothing to do with Christ or the Spirit. What God wants is not that we conform to certain customs and habits, even though such conformity may be very good in human eyes. God wants us to live Christ, who is realized as the Spirit. God's New Testament economy is wholly a matter of walking by the Spirit to live Christ. The first kind of walk by the Spirit revealed in the book of Galatians is a walk in which we live Christ, expressing the various aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. Our daily life as Christians should be a life of walking by the Spirit to live Christ by expressing Him with all His excellent virtues.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE FORTY-TWO

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT ACCORDING TO THE ELEMENTARY RULE TO LIVE A NEW CREATION AND THE ISRAEL OF GOD

Scripture Reading: Gal. 5:25; 6:15-16

We have pointed out that the book of Galatians presents a comparison of God's two economies: the economy in the Old Testament, which concerns the law, and the economy in the New Testament, which is centered on Christ Himself. According to His New Testament economy, God's intention is to dispense Christ into us and to make Christ one with us and us one with Him. This is altogether different from our natural concept. For this reason, I am rather concerned that many of us still do not fully realize that as those who are saved and regenerated by the Spirit of God with the divine life and nature, we are now one spirit with God. Before we were saved, we and God were separate, far removed from each other. But when we were saved and regenerated, God was conceived in us and born into us. By the new birth we and God have become one spirit. How marvelous!

We may read the Bible again and again without being impressed with God's intention as revealed in the Bible. Instead, we may pay our attention to such things as Paul's commandment for husbands to love their wives, or for wives to submit to their husbands. Matters such as love and submission fit our natural concepts. But the mystery of God dispensing Himself into us to make us one with Him is contrary to our natural concept. This is the reason that even though this is revealed in the Scriptures, we do not have the ability to comprehend it. How we need the Lord's mercy that we may know His intention!

TWO KINDS OF WALK BY THE SPIRIT

Recently I have begun to pay attention to the fact that in the book of Galatians Paul uses two different Greek words for walk. In 5:16 he says, "Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh." Here the Greek word is *peripateo*. In 5:25 Paul goes on to say, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." Here the Greek word is *stoicheo*, the verbal form of the Greek word for element used in 4:3 and 9, and Colossians 2:8. Galatians 4:3 speaks of "the elements of the world," and 4:9, of "the weak and poor elements." Colossians 2:8 also refers to "the elements of the world." These elements denote basic, rudimentary, or elementary principles. For example, in mathematics there are the elementary principles of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Likewise, philosophy and ethical teachings are also composed of rudimentary elements. There are also elements, basic principles, elementary rules, in God's economy.

As we have indicated, in Galatians 5:25 the Greek word for element is used as a verb. The same word is also used in 6:16, where Paul says, "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God." It is difficult for translators to find an English equivalent for this Greek verb. If we say, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also element by the Spirit," no one will be able to understand what we mean. Thus, translators are forced to use the word "walk." Yes, according to Greek usage, the word does convey the thought of walking. How-ever, it is not to walk in a general way, in the sense of walking about, but to walk in a specific way according to a certain rule, principle, or lane.

This Greek word is used in Acts 21:24 with the meaning of walking orderly with respect to the teachings of the law. The expression "walk orderly" in this verse is the translation of the Greek word *stoicheo*. It is used to denote a walk that is in order or in line. For example, when soldiers march, they walk in order, keeping rank and walking in line. This is an illustration of what it means to walk orderly.

In our daily living as Christians, we need to have two kinds of walk by the Spirit. The first is a general walk, whereas the second is the walk according to a certain rule or principle for the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. In the first kind of walk, we need to display the fruit of the Spirit, the virtues listed in 5:22 and 23. However, we are not here simply to exhibit such virtues as love, joy, and peace. We are here for the fulfillment of God's purpose. Thus, we need to walk according to certain rules or principles for the fulfillment of this purpose. For God's purpose, we need to have a walk that is orderly, a walk that is according to certain elementary rules or basic principles. Loving and being joyful are not basic rules or principles. These are simply different aspects of our daily life as Christians, not the characteristics of the walk which leads to the fulfillment of God's purpose. This walk, the second kind of walk by the Spirit, requires that we walk according to basic principles and elementary rules.

We may use the daily life of a young sister who is a student to illustrate the two kinds of walk by the Spirit. On the one hand, this sister lives with her family at home. If she truly lives Christ, she will show forth the virtues of Christ to the members of her family. On the other hand, she needs to be a proper student at school and fulfill all the requirements leading to graduation. At home she needs to walk as a daughter and sister, but at school she needs to walk as a proper student. She needs to have both the general walk at home with her family and the more specific walk at school according to basic rules and elementary principles.

In the first three chapters of Galatians, we see that Christ is revealed in us (1:15-16), that Christ lives in us (2:20), and that Christ has been put upon us (3:27). Christ is thus our inward content and also our outward expression. Furthermore, we are all "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (3:26), and the Spirit of the Son of God has been sent into our hearts (4:6). Praise the Lord that we are now sons of God! As God's sons, we need a walk by the Spirit to express Christ in all His virtues. We also need another kind of walk by the Spirit, the walk

according to certain rules or principles, leading toward the goal for the fulfillment of God's purpose. If we have the second kind of walk by the Spirit, we shall be not only sons of God, but also a new creation and the Israel of God. We need to live the new creation and as the new Israel of God. In order to live a new creation and live as the Israel of God, we need the second kind of walk. We need to walk orderly according to the elementary principles of God's economy.

In chapter four we see that we are sons of God with the Spirit of the Son of God in our hearts. In chapter five we see that we need two kinds of walk by the Spirit, a general walk to express Christ and a purposeful walk toward the goal. The second kind of walk constitutes us those who live a new creation and who are the Israel of God. To live a new creation and to live as the Israel of God, we need to walk in such a way as to observe all the basic principles of God's New Testament economy.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE NEW CREATION

According to 6:15 and 16, the second kind of walk by the Spirit is intimately related to the new creation. Verse 15 declares, "For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." Verse 16 goes on to speak of walking by "this rule." The rule here is that of being a new creation. This new creation is equal to the Israel of God, also mentioned in verse 16.

The Judaizers boasted in circumcision. According to 6:13, they wanted the Galatian believers to be circumcised so that they could boast in the flesh of the Galatians. As a work carried out in the flesh, circumcision is wholly related to the old creation. Even though a person may bear the mark of circumcision on his body, he is still part of the old creation. Whether or not one has been circumcised in the flesh, he is part of the old creation. Both circumcised Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles are in the old creation. In the eyes of God, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails

anything. God wants a new creation. The old creation is our old man in Adam (Eph. 4:22), our natural being by birth, without God's life and divine nature. The new creation is the new man in Christ (Eph. 4:24), our inner being regenerated by the Spirit (John 3:6), having God's life and the divine nature wrought into it (John 3:36; 2 Pet. 1:4), with Christ as its constituent (Col. 3:10-11).

The difference between the old creation and the new creation is that in the old creation God was not added to man, but in the new creation He is dispensed into His chosen people. No matter how good Adam might have been before the fall, God had not been added to Adam. Adam was good, but he did not have the divine element within him. He was simply the old creation, the creation without the element of God.

We may liken this old creation to a glass of plain water and the new creation to a glass of tea. Tea is formed by the mingling of tea with water to make tea-water. The water in the glass of plain water may be pure. But the fact remains that there is no element of tea in this water. This illustrates the fact that even if the old creation were pure, it still would not have the element of God. Only when God's element is added to His creation and mingled with it does that creation become the new creation. Because God, the heavenly "tea," has been added to us, we are no longer the plain water of the old creation, but the "tea-water" of the new creation. In a sense, we have been "tea-ified." Using another expression, we may say that we have been "God-ified." God has been added to us to mingle with us and to saturate us and thereby to make us a God-man. God's desire is not simply to have a good man or even a pure man--His intention is to have a God-man.

If we as Christians live merely according to the law or according to ethical standards, we shall live without God. In our living God will not be mingled with us or saturated with us. Even though we may love others, this love will be in the old creation. But if we are enlightened, we shall see that as Christians we must walk by the basic principle of

the new creation. This basic principle is that God is mingled with us. If we love others according to this principle and not merely according to ethics, God will love in our loving. We shall love others together with God.

The submission a sister renders to her husband may be either of the old creation or of the new creation. On the one hand, in her submission there may be nothing of the mingling with God. Such a submission may simply be according to the standard of a particular culture. In certain cultures, women are taught to be very submissive. This submission, however, is of the old creation. To use the illustration of water and tea, this submission is nothing more than a glass of plain water. It is utterly lacking in the element of tea. How much different is a sister's submission when she lives according to the basic principle of the new creation, the mingling of God with man! Such submission is truly the expression of Christ. It is not simply pure water--it is water mingled with tea. In the case of submission in the old creation, the sister walks according to certain principles or rules assimilated from her culture. But in the case of submission in the new creation, the sister walks according to the basic principle of the new creation. By walking in this way, she lives the new creation. Her walk is not simply according to ethical principles, but according to the principle of the new creation, the principle that man should live by the divine life. Therefore, to live a new creation is to walk by the divine life and divine nature as a governing principle.

A MYSTERIOUS LIVING

This matter of walking by the principle of the new creation is mysterious, and not many Christians have seen it. Walking by the principle of the new creation is mysterious because this is an organic matter altogether related to life. Life is mysterious and abstract. We can see a person's skin, but we cannot see the life in him.

In this walk by the principle of the new creation, we experience Christ much more than in the first kind of walk.

When we have this walk, we are a new creation not only in position and nature, but also in daily practice. The new creation becomes very practical in our daily living.

As we have pointed out, the basic principle of the new creation is that a human being lives the divine life. Our daily walk should be regulated by this principle, the principle of living by the divine life. The more we walk according to this principle, the more we shall be the new creation in a practical way. Then others will realize that in our living there is something higher than ethics. They may find it difficult to designate this mysterious element, for it is actually the wonderful Person of Christ living in us. All those who love the Lord Jesus should be mysterious in the eyes of others. Unsaved parents should be able to say of their daughter, "What a wonderful person she is! However, we are not able to describe accurately just what kind of person she is. She is able to suffer what we cannot suffer and to live in a way that we cannot live." This is the new creation. Unbelievers have no concept of a new creation, but as believers we need to live this new creation.

THE ISRAEL OF GOD REPRESENTING GOD

If we live a new creation, we shall be the real Israel of God. According to the book of Genesis, Jacob, a heel-holder, a supplanter, was transformed into Israel, a prince of God and a victor. As a prince and a victor, he could overcome all negative things. Today we need to be such an Israel, a prince to execute God's government on earth. If we have the second kind of walk by the Spirit, an orderly walk according to God's eternal purpose, we shall become a new creation in a very practical way, and we shall also be the Israel of God, representing God, exercising His authority, and carrying out His administration on earth for the fulfillment of His purpose. Ultimately, this Israel of God will become the New Jerusalem.

The new Israel of God must be a new creation. For this we need God Himself to be wrought into us, to saturate us, and to make us one with Him. Then we need to live such a

mingled life. By living the mingled life of the new creation, we shall be the Israel of God on earth today, His princes and victors executing His authority and representing His government. Today's Israel of God is a miniature of the coming New Jerusalem, which will be the ultimate consummation of the new creation and of the Israel of God. May we all see this and walk according to it!

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE FORTY-THREE

WALK BY THE SPIRIT IN THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST IN OUR SPIRIT

Scripture Reading: Gal. 5:16, 25; 6:16, 18

In God's New Testament economy He first makes us His sons and then the new creation and the Israel of God. Toward the end of Galatians, Paul speaks both of a new creation (6:15) and of the Israel of God (v. 16). The fact that he refers to these matters in the conclusion of the book is an indication of their importance. Hence, it is crucial that we have a proper understanding of the new creation and also of the Israel of God.

PEACE UPON THE ISRAEL OF GOD

In 6:16 Paul says, "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God." Here Paul does not mention peace in a general way, but in a particular way. Furthermore, he does not say "peace be unto you," but says "peace be upon the Israel of God." For peace to be upon us is different from it being unto us. Peace upon us is more subjective than peace unto us. According to 6:16, this peace is not upon the believers generally; rather, it is upon those who walk by this rule, the elementary rule of the new creation. Peace will be upon those who walk by the rule of the new creation. This indicates that here in the conclusion of Galatians peace is conditional. In order for peace to be upon us, we need to be those who walk by the rule of the new creation to be the true Israel of God.

Before Paul speaks of grace in verse 18, he inserts verse 17 and says, "For the rest let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the brands of Jesus." The insertion of this

verse is a further indication that at the end of Galatians both peace and grace are mentioned with certain conditions. If peace is to come upon us, we must fulfill the conditions. Because peace here comes upon us in a very particular way, we need to meet a certain requirement, the requirement that we walk by the rule of the new creation to be the Israel of God.

We have pointed out that in Galatians Paul speaks of two kinds of walk by the Spirit. The walk in 5:16 is a more general walk, whereas the walk in 5:25 and 6:16 is a particular walk, a walk according to a certain rule or principle. Having the second kind of walk is a condition for peace to come upon the Israel of God. This is not the peace which comes upon God's people in a general way; it is a specific peace which comes upon a particular people, those who have the second kind of walk by the Spirit.

SONS OF GOD AND THE ISRAEL OF GOD

In 3:26 Paul says, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." As sons of God, we are His folks, members of His household. But God's New Testament economy is not only to make us His sons, but also to make us the Israel of God.

Perhaps we can understand the difference between the sons of God and the Israel of God if we consider as an illustration how a son in a royal family is trained to be king. On the one hand, such a son grows up as a member of the royal family, the son of the king and queen. On the other hand, he must be trained in order to become king in the future. Thus, he must have two kinds of living: the first, as a son in the royal family; the second, as a king-to-be. If he has the first kind of living without the second, he will not become equipped or qualified to be king. A boy is not trained to be a king overnight. Nor does he become qualified to be a king simply by developing certain virtues. If he is joyful, loving, meek, faithful, and self-controlled, he will be a very good boy. But these virtues in themselves do not qualify him to be a king. As a king-to-be, he must be

trained to live and act in a kingly way. The way he sits in a chair or converses with others must be kingly. As one with a dual status--that of a son in the royal family and that of a king-to-be--he must have two kinds of living.

TWO KINDS OF LIVING

We who believe in Christ Jesus also have a dual status. On the one hand, we are sons of God, members of the divine family. On the other hand, we are kings-to-be, those destined to be kings. Kingship is related to the Israel of God. We should be not only sons of God, but also the Israel of God. To be proper sons of God it is sufficient to have the fruit of the Spirit, such as those virtues listed in 5:22 and 23. But to be kings, the Israel of God, we need another kind of living, a particular kind of walk by the Spirit. We need both the living of sons of God and that of the Israel of God.

Many Christians do not have the first kind of walk by the Spirit, much less the second. We thank the Lord that, by His mercy, many in the church life today do have the first kind of walk by the Spirit to live Christ. But now the Lord is calling us to go on to have the second walk by the Spirit, the second kind of living. This is the living not merely of sons in the divine family, but of those who will be kings in God's kingdom. May our eyes be opened to see that we are kings in the royal family! Our destiny is not only to be sons of God; it is to be kings reigning in the kingdom of God.

Do you live in a kingly way? If you live in this way, you will be kingly even when you laugh. If we see that Paul's word about the Israel of God implies that we need a kingly walk, the aspiration to live in a kingly way will be stirred up within us. We may even want to pray, "Lord, cause me to live and walk in a kingly way so that I may be qualified to be part of today's Israel of God."

In a sense, the nation of Israel is the Israel of God and a testimony of God, even though many Israelites are rebellious and very sinful. However, the real Israel, the spiritual Israel, is the church. But because both the nation

of Israel and the church are in a low condition, there is the need for the Lord to recover the real Israel of God. For such a recovery, we need two kinds of living, two kinds of walk. In the first walk we shall have such virtues as love, joy, peace, meekness, and longsuffering, all of which are the expression of the Christ who lives in us. We also need the second kind of walk so that we may be the Israel of God bearing God's kingship, representing Him with His authority, and executing His governmental administration.

These two kinds of walks are illustrated by our life as citizens of the United States. On the one hand, we are persons living in an ordinary way; on the other hand, we are citizens of this nation. As persons, we need to be loving, peaceful, joyful, faithful, and meek. However, in order for the United States to remain a strong nation, we also need to live as good citizens, fulfilling all the requirements of the government. As citizens, we need to pay taxes, serve in the army, and fulfill other obligations. Spiritually speaking, we are both the sons of God and the Israel of God. As sons of God, we need to be loving, joyful, peaceful, faithful, and meek. As the Israel of God, we must walk according to the elementary rules of God's New Testament economy.

Whereas those Christians who truly desire to go on with the Lord usually care only for the first kind of walk and desire to be spiritual, holy, and victorious, we need to care also for the second kind of walk. In particular, we need to care for the church life. However, many Christians who are "spiritual" or "holy" do not care in the least for the church life. These Christians are interested in prayer, Bible study, gospel preaching, or improving their behavior. According to their concept, this is all that is necessary. But because they do not walk according to the principle of the new creation, it is not possible for them to become the Israel of God.

A NEW CONSTITUTION

The new creation is synonymous with the church. The term the Israel of God is also a synonym for the church.

Why, then, did Paul not use the word church in Galatians 6? The answer is that Paul's intention was to point out that the church is a new creation, a new constitution. It is especially needful for us today to realize that the church is a new constitution. When we use the word church, many think of a building with a steeple or of a certain religious organization. But according to the Bible, the church is a new creation. Because our inner being has been constituted of the divine nature, we have become a new creation.

Both the old creation and the new creation are corporate entities. There were not two old creations, and there are not two new creations. Both the old creation and the new creation are uniquely corporate. We who believe in Christ are all one new creation, just as we are all one church.

The expression "the new creation" denotes the nature, the inward and intrinsic organic constituent, of the church. The church is an organism with an intrinsic constitution. This constitution is the new creation. Paul says that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, neither being religious nor unreligious, avails anything, but only a new creation. By this he means that in the universe the only thing that avails or matters is the intrinsic and organic constitution, involving the mingling of God with man. We need to walk not only with certain virtues that express Christ; we also need to walk according to the principle, the rule, of such a new creation.

A WALK WITH IMPACT

To walk according to the basic principle of the new creation is to walk in a regulated way like soldiers marching in cadence. It is this kind of walk which causes the churches to have impact. The reason the so-called church is weak is that the believers do not have the second kind of walk by the Spirit. They have no real concern for the practice of the church life. But if in a locality there are even a small number of saints who have the second walk and march together in cadence, the church there will have

impact. Those saints will not simply be sons of God; they will truly become the Israel of God.

Do you know who defeated the Canaanite tribes, took possession of the good land for the building up of the temple, and brought God's kingdom to earth? It was the Israel of God. Israel in the Old Testament is a type of the church in the New Testament. Thus, the church today must be the Israel of God in reality. Praise the Lord that in God's New Testament economy we have been made both the sons of God and the Israel of God!

GRACE WITH OUR SPIRIT

At the very end of Galatians Paul says, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" (6:18). The grace of Christ is with our spirit. However, many Christians know only of the Holy Spirit; they do not know anything of the human spirit. For this reason, whenever they see the word spirit in the New Testament, they assume that it refers to the Holy Spirit. They are ignorant of the fact that besides the Spirit of God, the Bible speaks of the human spirit. Three verses in the New Testament mention these two spirits. John 3:6 says, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit"; John 4:24, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit"; Romans 8:16, "The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit."

The Spirit of God and our spirit are both crucial for God's economy today. The Spirit is the very Triune God who has passed through the process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). This life-giving Spirit now dwells in our spirit and witnesses with our spirit that we are sons of God. First Corinthians 6:17 tells us that he who is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. This is a clear indication that the two spirits have become one.

According to Paul's word in 6:18, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with our spirit. Grace here is Christ Himself as our enjoyment. Today Christ as the Spirit is in our spirit for our experience and enjoyment. This

enjoyment of Christ is the very grace that is with our spirit. In this enjoyment and by this enjoyment we may walk by the Spirit to live Christ and to live the new creation and the Israel of God. Both kinds of walk by the Spirit are in the enjoyment of the Lord Jesus Christ in our spirit.

ENJOYING THE LORD BY CALLING ON HIS NAME

We may enjoy the Lord in our spirit simply by calling on His name. Do you know why we enjoy the Lord when we call on Him? We enjoy Him in this way because by calling on the Lord we automatically exercise our spirit. For example, even though I may not have the intention to exercise my legs and feet, I spontaneously exercise them whenever I walk. In like manner, whenever we call on the Lord from deep within, we automatically exercise our spirit. Anywhere and at any time we may enjoy the riches of Christ by calling on the Lord's name. By calling on the Lord in this way we walk by the Spirit. Calling on the Lord also defeats the negative things within us.

Suppose a young married sister has a problem with her temper. She earnestly desires to be a good wife and mother, and she loathes her temper. However, she has no way to overcome it. Years ago, I did not know how to advise someone plagued by the problem of temper. Now I know that the best cure for this plague is to call on the name of the Lord with the exercise of the spirit. By calling on the Lord in this way we breathe in a spiritual element which subdues our temper. After more than fifty years of experience and after having contacted many different aspects of organized Christianity, I have come to the conclusion that the best way to enjoy the Lord is to call on Him.

As Christians we should be known by the fact that we call on the name of the Lord Jesus. We know that this was a mark of believers in the first century by the fact that Saul of Tarsus was given authority by the chief priests to bind all those who called on the Lord's name. Calling on the name of the Lord Jesus should also be a mark of

believers today. The church people especially should be known as those who call on the Lord.

Like breathing, calling on the name of the Lord is a simple matter. But just as we cannot stay alive if we "graduate" from breathing, so we cannot live spiritually if we stop calling on the name of the Lord. Often the most needful things in life are the most simple. What is more necessary to maintain life than breathing? Yet, breathing is so simple. In contrast to cooking, it does not require a great deal of labor. Likewise, how simple it is to call on the name of the Lord Jesus! However, many learned ones do not care for such a simple practice, preferring instead to do things that are much more complicated. Some even criticize us and defame us for calling on the name of the Lord Jesus. For them, this practice is a form of chanting. Calling on the Lord has nothing to do with chanting, for calling is a practice altogether according to the Bible. Oh, how we need to call on the Lord Jesus that we may enjoy Him as our grace and have the two kinds of walk by the Spirit! I encourage you to breathe spiritually by calling on the Lord Jesus. By calling on the Lord we enjoy Him. Let us, then, walk by the Spirit in the enjoyment of Christ in our spirit.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE FORTY-FOUR

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT AS SONS OF GOD

(1)

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:2, 4-6, 9-11, 13-16, 23, 26, 29; Gal. 3:2-3, 5, 11b-14, 26; 4:4-6, 29; 5:16-18

In the New Testament the books of Romans and Galatians stand together in a special category. These two books reveal not only God's redemption, but also the economy of God's redemption. Redemption is one thing, and the economy of redemption is another. When many Christians read the books of Romans and Galatians, they can easily see the matter of redemption. However, very few see God's economy of redemption, because this matter is somewhat hidden in these two books. Although the word economy cannot be found either in Romans or in Galatians, the fact of the economy of redemption can nonetheless be found in these books. Our burden in this message is to consider God's economy in His redemption.

GOD'S GOAL IN REDEMPTION

Although redemption is covered both in Romans and in Galatians, redemption is not God's goal. Rather, it is a process, or step, toward the goal. In God's economy redemption is used to bring forth a certain issue or result. What is God's goal in redemption? Also, what is the issue produced by God's redemption? The answer to both questions is sonship. Sonship is both God's goal in redemption and the issue of the process of redemption. However, many Christians only see that Romans covers justification by faith. They do not see the divine sonship in the book of Romans. If we read Romans carefully, we shall see that justification by faith is covered for the most part

in the first four chapters. Beginning with chapter five, Paul moves on toward the goal of sonship. According to the revelation found in the book of Romans, God is transforming sinners into sons. Hence, the book of Romans shows us how God is in the process of producing sons out of sinners. Here we see God's economy. God's economy is not simply to redeem lost sinners. His economy is to redeem sinners with a view to making them His sons. In God's economy the two main matters are redemption and sonship.

In the Bible the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, is not for doctrine, theology, or teaching. The Trinity is for God's economy. In His economy, God the Father is the One who plans, who forms an eternal purpose. Because He has a purpose, a plan, He has a great many arrangements to correspond to His purpose. In the Trinity, God the Father is the source, the One who plans to accomplish His economy. For the carrying out of the divine economy, two crucial matters must be worked out--redemption and sonship. In Galatians 4 we see that the Father sent forth His Son to accomplish redemption (vv. 4-5). Then He sent forth the Spirit of His Son to bring forth the sonship. Thus, for the accomplishment of His economy, the Father sent forth first the Son and then the Spirit.

Galatians 4:4 and 5 say, "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, come of a woman, come under law, that He might redeem those under law, that we might receive the sonship." For the accomplishment of redemption, it was necessary for the Son of God to become a human being born of a woman and born under the law. In order to put on humanity, a human nature, He had to "come of a woman." It is a heresy to say that Mary was the mother of God. Although Jesus was God incarnated as a man, Mary was not the mother of God. She was the mother of the man Jesus. By coming of a woman, Jesus, the Son of God, was a man with blood and flesh (Heb. 2:14). If He had not had blood and flesh, there would have been no way for

the Son of God to accomplish redemption. Redemption required the shedding of blood.

After the Son of God accomplished redemption for us, the Spirit was sent to carry out the sonship and to make it real to us in our experience. The Spirit was sent to make all the redeemed ones sons of God. Thus, Christ came for redemption, and the Spirit came for sonship. Christ redeemed us, and the Spirit imparts the divine life into us to make us sons of God.

THE SPIRIT

Again and again, the books of Romans and Galatians speak of the Spirit. This is especially true of Romans 8. Verse 2 speaks of the Spirit of life and verse 15, of the spirit of sonship. Because we have a spirit of sonship, we have the life of the Son of God. Spontaneously we cry, "Abba, Father." In verse 9 Paul speaks of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ and in verses 11 and 13, of the Spirit. The expression "the Spirit" is also found in verse 16: "The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God."

The term "the Spirit" is very significant. John 7:39 says, "But this He said concerning the Spirit, Whom those who believed in Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Why does this verse say that "the Spirit was not yet"? Although the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jehovah, and the Holy Spirit were in existence before the glorification of Christ, "the Spirit" was not. In Genesis 1:2 we see that the Spirit of God was brooding upon the water. The Old Testament also speaks frequently of the Spirit of Jehovah. When the Lord Jesus was about to be conceived in the womb of Mary, there is mention of the Holy Spirit, because something common, human nature, was to be made holy by the Spirit of God (Matt. 1:18, 20). But when Jesus cried out, saying, "If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37), He spoke concerning the Spirit. However, "the Spirit was not yet" because Jesus was not yet glorified. He had not

been crucified and resurrected. But after His crucifixion and resurrection, the Spirit came. Today the very Spirit who witnesses with our spirit is *the Spirit*. Second Corinthians 3:17 even says, "Now the Lord is the Spirit." Notice that this verse does not say, "The Lord is a Spirit," but, "The Lord is *the* Spirit."

THE WALK OF GOD'S SONS

Romans 8:14 says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." This verse indicates that Romans 8 is concerned not with the birth of the sons of God, but with the walk of God's sons. Those who are led by the Spirit truly are sons of God. The word walk is used strongly in verse 4: "That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to spirit."

Under the influence of the natural concept, Christians often think that after we are saved, we should have a walk which glorifies God. We pay attention to Paul's word about walking in a way that is worthy of our calling, but we understand this exhortation according to our natural concept. Immediately after people are saved, they automatically try to behave in a way that glorifies God. Such a thought comes spontaneously. It is not wrong to say that we need behavior that glorifies God. However, regarding this we may be under the influence of a natural concept. According to the natural concept, to walk worthy of our calling is to be honest, faithful, humble, gentle, kind, and loving. We may think that we shall glorify God if we have such virtues, and that others will appreciate us. However, the book of Romans, a basic book in God's revelation, does not charge us to walk in this way. On the contrary, it teaches us to walk as sons of God.

There is a great difference between walking as sons of God and walking as redeemed sinners who express such virtues as honesty, kindness, and love. The goal of God's economy is not merely to have a group of people who are faithful, kind, and loving. God's goal in His economy is to

produce sons. A person may be honest, faithful, and loving, but he may not be a son of God. God wants sons. He does not want honest, faithful, loving sinners. His purpose is not to make sinful husbands into those who love their wives, or sinful wives into those who submit to their husbands. We repeat, God's goal in His economy is to bring forth many divine sons.

BORN OF GOD TO BE HIS SONS

In order to be sons of God, we must first be born of Him. The Gospel of John emphasizes this. John 1:12 and 13 say, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Then in John 3:6 we are told that that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Sonship is altogether a matter of life and nature, which depend on birth. We have been born of God to become sons of God. Therefore, we can declare with assurance that we are not God's sons-in-law, nor merely His adopted sons; we are God's sons in life, sons born of Him.

According to the divine revelation in the Scriptures, we emphasize the fact that, through regeneration, an organic union has taken place between us and God. We have an organic relation with God, a relationship in life. First, because we are sinful, God sent His Son to redeem us. But God has also sent His Spirit to impart the divine life and nature into our being. Now that the divine life has entered into us, we have an organic union with God. This crucial matter, however, has been neglected by those Christians who emphasize traditional teachings and concepts.

Since you have been born of God to become a son of God, do you have the boldness to declare that you are divine? As sons of God born of Him, we are in a very real sense divine. When we teach this, some accuse us of teaching the deification of man. We definitely do not believe or teach that as sons of God we shall become God Himself. Nevertheless, it is a fact that we have the divine

life and nature. Otherwise, it would not be possible for us to be sons of God. Does not a child born of a German father have a typical German life and nature? Likewise, because we have been born of God to be sons of God with the divine life and nature, we are divine. Some twist our word and claim that we teach that sinners can become part of the very God-head. Yes, we teach that as children of God we are members of God's family. But we certainly do not teach that we shall ever become God Himself. However, the fact remains that since our Father is divine, all the members of His family are also divine. As a human being has the life and nature of his father, so we, God's sons, have the life and nature of our Father. In this sense, we are divine.

Having become sons of God, we now need to walk as sons of God. God does not want a group of people who are simply kind, honest, and loving. He wants a family. In Galatians 6:10 this family is called "the household of the faith." To walk as God's sons we need to be divine. It is not adequate merely to be ethical or religious. It is not necessary to be a son of God in order to be humble or kind. A person may be humble or kind in a natural, ethical way. However, to live as sons of God we certainly must be divine. We must have the life of God and also the Spirit of God.

Toward the very end of the Bible, we read of the Spirit and the Bride (Rev. 22:17). The Spirit is the consummation of the Triune God, and the Bride is the ultimate issue of redeemed mankind. The fact that the Spirit and the Bride are one is proved by their speaking as one. Together, the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!"

The Bible reveals the organic union between the believers and the Triune God, but religion emphasizes virtues and good behavior. According to the religious concept, as believers we must be honest, faithful, loving, and submissive. But God's economy requires not merely that we have these virtues, but that we walk according to the Spirit. One person may be humble in a natural way, whereas another may be humble because he is living by the

life and nature of God. Apparently, both kinds of humility are the same. Actually, they are very different. The one may be compared to polished copper; the other, to gold. If we walk according to the Spirit, we shall not be like polished copper; we shall have the appearance of gold, of the very nature of God.

It is not God's intention simply to have a group of good people; He wants many sons who are one with Him organically and who possess His very life and nature. Only these sons can be members of the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is an organism, not an organization. Good people may be organized into a society, but they cannot become the organism known as the Body of Christ. Because the Body is organic, all the members of the Body must have an organic element in them. We receive this element by the new birth, by regeneration.

WALKING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

After we are born of God to be sons of God, we then must walk as sons according to the Spirit. In Romans 8 Paul does not speak of things such as humility, faithfulness, or honesty. Here he is not concerned with human virtues. Rather, he charges us to walk according to spirit. All those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God. To walk as a son of God is not a matter of possessing certain virtues; it is altogether a matter of walking according to spirit. Of course, if we walk according to spirit, there will be a certain issue brought forth in our living. However, the emphasis in Romans 8 is not on the issue; it is on the nature of God's sons. As those who have been born of God, we should not endeavor to cultivate certain virtues. Instead, we should endeavor to walk by the Spirit.

I am concerned that walking by the Spirit as sons of God may be little more than doctrine to us. We may have the knowledge that we simply need to walk by the Spirit, but in our daily living we may live in a natural, ethical way. Should someone bother us, we may either become angry or try to control ourselves. But in neither case do we

turn to the spirit, exercise the spirit, and walk by the spirit.

Often after we see something of the Lord, Satan comes to test us. Suppose the Lord makes you clear that as a son of God what you need to do is simply walk according to the Spirit. A short while later, your husband or wife may offend you. At such a time, you may forget about walking by the Spirit. Instead of walking by the Spirit, you may either become irritated or try to suppress your anger. You may even pray that the Lord will help you. But not even praying in this way is walking by the Spirit.

Religion teaches people to behave; it does not teach them to walk according to the Spirit. According to the Bible, instead of trying to improve our behavior, we should walk by the Spirit. We have been born of the Spirit. Now we need to receive grace to walk by the Spirit. Should your husband or wife offend you, simply walk by the Spirit. Do not try to suppress your temper or force yourself to be patient. That is mere outward behavior. What you need to do at such a time is to exercise the spirit to walk according to the Spirit. Do not say to yourself, "I must walk in a way that is worthy of the church life. If I lose my temper, it will be a shame to me. I must hold back my temper and behave in the proper way." This is not God's economy--it is religion and ethics. God's economy is to make us His sons in an actual and practical way. For this, we must walk according to the Spirit.

CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF GOD'S FIRSTBORN SON

Many Christians read Romans 8 without paying attention to the matter of sonship covered in this chapter. Verse 14 says that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God, and verse 15 speaks of a spirit of sonship. Furthermore, verse 29 says that God has predestinated us to be "conformed to the image of His Son, that He should be the firstborn among many brothers." The many brothers of Christ are the many sons of God (Heb. 2:10). Moreover, the sonship in Romans 8 is not in the

aspect of birth, but in the aspect of walk. We need to walk as sons of God so that we may be conformed to the image of His Son. Birth takes place once for all, but being conformed to the image of God's Son is a lifelong matter. Day by day we are being conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God. This conformity takes place as we walk by the Spirit. In the Lord's recovery the main thing the Lord wants us to practice is to walk by the Spirit and according to the Spirit.

If we walk by the Spirit, God will be able to have mature sons. These sons will also be heirs to inherit God's riches. If we would be heirs, we must be full-grown. We wish to emphasize the fact that we are being conformed to the image of the Son of God, not to certain practices which may be found among the saints in the church life. I am somewhat concerned that the saints may be conformed to the church life instead of to the image of the Son of God. Some saints may undergo a good deal of change, but this change may not be the real transformation, a metabolic change in life. It may merely be an outward change of conforming to certain ways of living common among the saints in the church life. God does not want this kind of change. He wants to see a real transformation take place inwardly in our being so that we may be conformed to the living image of the Son of God. In order for this kind of change to take place, we need to walk in the Spirit, by the Spirit, and according to the Spirit.

REDEMPTION FOR SONSHIP

We have seen that in Romans redemption is for sonship. The same is true in Galatians. Galatians 3:13 and 14 say that Christ redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Thus, Christ accomplished redemption so that we might receive the Spirit. Galatians 4:5 says that Christ redeemed us so that we might receive the sonship. After Christ accomplished redemption for us, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into

our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!" Both Romans and Galatians mention the cry of "Abba, Father." This is a further proof that in these books redemption is for sonship.

WHAT GOD IS SEEKING TODAY

Both Romans and Galatians speak of walking by the Spirit. These books do not charge us to walk according to certain doctrines, teachings, or exhortations, but to walk according to the Spirit. No matter how well we may behave, we do not walk as sons of God unless we walk according to the Spirit. Suppose someone asks you why you do not engage in a certain form of worldly entertainment. The proper answer is that the Spirit does not lead you to do such a thing. Likewise, if you are asked why you do certain things in your family life or refrain from doing certain other things, your answer should simply be that you live that way because you are walking according to the Spirit.

To some degree at least, we are still under the influence of religious concepts. For this reason, when we read the Bible, it is easy for us to pay attention to such admonitions as wives submitting to their husbands, and husbands loving their wives. We can also understand commandments that speak of humility, kindness, and patience. However, such commandments are not basic factors in God's economy. The basic factor is that we have been born of God and are now divine sons of God with His life and nature. Because we are His sons, God wants us to walk according to the Spirit as His sons. The result, the issue, of walking by the Spirit as sons of God is the Spirit's responsibility, not ours. Our responsibility is simply to walk according to the Spirit.

The climax of the New Testament is the Spirit. Our living, behavior, walk, conduct must all be according to the Spirit. When we walk according to the Spirit, we are sons of God in actuality, and we are being conformed daily to the image of His Son. This is what God is seeking today.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE FORTY-FIVE

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT AS SONS OF GOD

(2)

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:26; 4:4-6; 5:16; John 1:12-13

In the foregoing message we pointed out that the books of Romans and Galatians reveal not only God's redemption, but also the economy of God's redemption. It is rather easy for us, the children of God, to know God's salvation, but not so easy to know the economy of God's salvation. Although the word economy cannot be found in either Romans or Galatians, God's economy in His salvation is nonetheless implied. In both its ancient and modern usage, the word economy denotes a plan with a certain arrangement, management, administration, and even dispensation. The economy of God has its arrangement, management, and stewardship related to God's dispensation of Himself in the Son through the Spirit into His chosen and redeemed people.

SONSHIP--THE GOAL OF GOD'S ECONOMY

Now we must go on to see the goal of God's economy. God's goal in His economy is sonship. God's intention is to produce many sons. If we read the Bible carefully, we shall see that God has a good pleasure, a heart's desire. The desire of God's heart is that He be expressed through many sons. The Bible reveals that God is a great Father with a very large family. In New Testament terms, God has a household. Who can say how many sons God has? Since every genuine believer in Christ is a son of God, God's sons must number in the millions. Because God has so many sons, He truly is a great Father. Even the sisters

are counted among the sons of God. Nowhere are we told that Christ, the firstborn Son of God, has sisters. Rather, He has only brothers, and these brothers of Christ are the many sons of God. Thus, it is important for the sisters to realize that they are brothers of Christ and sons of God.

According to the Bible, the function of a son is to express the father. Hence, the Son of God is the expression of God the Father. The Lord Jesus once said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Furthermore, John 1:18 says, "No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." The New Testament also indicates that as the Son of God Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4). An image is an expression of something or someone. For God to have millions of sons means that He, a great Father, needs a vast, universal, and eternal expression. As sons of God, we express our Father, for we have been born of Him. God's economy, His administration, is to carry out His purpose to have many sons to be His corporate expression.

Ephesians 1:4 and 5 say that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, "having predestinated us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself." Before anything was created, God chose us and predestinated us, put a mark on us, unto sonship. God has marked us out to be His sons. However, many Christians are not aware of God's choice and predestination. According to their concept, we are merely fallen sinners in need of God's salvation. They have never dreamed that God has destined us for sonship.

According to the Bible, sonship involves having the life and nature of the Father to express Him and inherit all that He is, has, and does. To inherit whatever the Father is, has, and does actually is to inherit God the Father Himself. Sonship in the Bible means to have God's life and nature to express God and to inherit God with all His riches. Furthermore, sonship implies perfection. As sons of God, we must be perfect even as He is (Matt. 5:48).

Perfection is synonymous with maturity. A small boy is the genuine son of his father, but this boy does not yet have the full sonship, because he is not mature.

Even if we have the Father's life and nature and have the maturity, the perfection, to express Him and inherit Him, the sonship will not be full until our body is transfigured. In Romans 8:23 Paul says, "And not only so, but we ourselves also, having the firstfruit of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly expecting sonship, the redemption of our body." The redemption of our body refers to the transfiguration of the body. One day our body will be changed, not simply outwardly, but organically and metabolically by having the divine element wrought into it. Today our faces may be rather bright, but they are not yet shining. But when our body has been metabolically and organically transfigured through the supply of the divine life, not only our faces but our whole physical being will shine. That will be the full sonship, for then we shall ex-press God in full. We shall express Him spiritually, psychologically, and even physically. From our faces light will shine to express God. Concerning this 1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (lit.). When we see Him, He will be shining with the glory of the Father, and we shall be shining with this glory also. This is full sonship.

Thus, from the New Testament we see that as sons of God we have God's life and nature to inherit God with all His wealth and to express Him to the uttermost. This son-ship is the desire of God's heart. Our wonderful, eternal Father wants a universal expression of Himself through many sons.

AFTER GOD'S KIND

Genesis 1:26 says that God created man in His image and after His likeness. God created man in this way because it is His intention that He be expressed by man.

Genesis 1 indicates that every living thing was created according to its kind. Man, however, was made not after his own kind, but after God's kind. Do you have the boldness to proclaim that, as a human being you are after God's kind? If we realize that we were made in God's image and after God's likeness, we should have the boldness to say that we were created after God's kind. However, to say that we are after God's kind does not mean that we are God or that we shall ever become God. But according to Genesis 1:26-28, we human beings are after God's kind.

Adam in Genesis 1 had the image of God and the likeness of God, but he did not have the life and nature of God. Therefore, according to Genesis 2, God placed man in front of the tree of life. This indicates that Adam needed to partake of God's life with the divine nature. Even though Adam had been created in God's image and after His likeness, he still needed to eat of the fruit of the tree of life in order to have eternal life. In the first two chapters of Genesis we thus have a complete record of God's creation of man.

REDEMPTION AND REGENERATION

Adam in Genesis 1 and 2 did not have eternal life. Rather, he simply had the human life as a vessel to contain the divine life. Romans 9 indicates clearly that man is a vessel. Our human life is a vessel to contain the divine life. But before man received the eternal life, he fell. Therefore, God sent His Son to be a man with blood and flesh to accomplish redemption and to bring fallen man back to God's original purpose. Redemption thus recovers man to God's purpose. Hallelujah, through the blood of Christ shed on the cross, we, fallen sinners, have been redeemed! Both Romans 3 and Galatians 3 speak of God's marvelous redemption.

Redemption, however, is not an end in itself. It is a procedure, part of a process, to reach God's goal of sonship. For this reason, both Romans and Galatians indicate that Christ redeemed us that the divine life could be imparted

into us for our regeneration. We had been created by God, but we still needed to be regenerated. Although we were created with the human life, we needed to be regenerated with another life, the divine life. Thus, redemption issues in the impartation of divine life. This is regeneration. By the regeneration of the Spirit, we become sons of God.

GOD'S CREATURES AND GOD'S SONS

Man in Genesis 1 was only a creature of God. He was not yet a son of God. According to Genesis 1:26, God created man in His image and after His likeness, but He did not beget man with the divine life at that time. There in Genesis 1 God was our Creator, and we were His creatures. But after Christ came to accomplish redemption and we believed in Him, His blood made it possible for the divine life to be imparted into us. In this way, we were regenerated, and God became our Father.

In creation God was our Creator, but in regeneration He becomes our Father. Now, having been regenerated, we are not merely creatures of God--we are sons of God. Hallelujah, God is both our Creator and our Father! As the Creator, He created us, and as the Father, He begot us. Now we can declare boldly that we not only have the image and likeness of God outwardly, but that we have the life and nature of God inwardly. We are living sons of God! God's economy is to impart His very life and nature into us to make us His sons.

A CREATURE LIFE OR A SON LIFE?

Now we must come to a crucial point and ask an important question: Since we are sons of God, should we live as God's creatures or as God's sons? In other words, does God want us to live a creature life or a son life? There can be no doubt that God's desire is that we live as sons, not as creatures. But how can we live as sons of God? First, to live as a son of God, we must become a son of God. The only way to become a son of God is to believe in the Lord Jesus and receive Him. John 1:12 says that those who

receive Christ have the authority to become children of God. As children of God, we have been born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). Hallelujah, we have become sons of God by believing in the Lord Jesus!

Now that we have become sons of God we need to realize that we are more than creatures. As those who are sons and not merely creatures, we should not live a creature life but a son life.

There is a great difference between living the life of God's creatures and living the life of God's sons. For example, both the Bible and Confucius teach submission. But Confucius' teaching concerning submission is merely ethical. The Bible's teaching about submission is related to our living as sons of God. The teaching regarding submission found in the classical writings of Confucius only helps us to live as creatures of God. It has nothing to do with living as sons of God. No matter to what degree a Chinese person may practice submission according to the teachings of Confucius, he is still living as a creature of God, not as a son of God.

In one of his writings called *The Highest Learning*, Confucius speaks of developing and cultivating the "bright virtue." To him, the highest attainment in ethics was to cultivate this bright virtue. Nevertheless, no matter how much we may develop this bright virtue according to the teachings of Confucius, we are still creatures of God.

What Confucius called the bright virtue is actually the conscience. Thus, to develop the bright virtue is to develop the conscience. But even if one develops his conscience to a very high degree, he is still merely a creature of God, because he does not have the life of God. However, we who believe in Christ have the divine life and the divine nature. Now that we are sons of God, it should not be our goal to develop our bright virtue. To do this is simply to improve our living as God's creatures. Instead of teaching us to improve our living as creatures, the Bible charges us to live as sons of God.

Ethics improves the human virtues of God's creatures from one angle, and religion develops them from another. Both with religion and ethics the principle is the same. However, in contrast to both ethics and religion, it is not the goal of God's salvation to develop the virtues of God's creatures. First, God's goal in His salvation is to make us sons. Second, His goal is to supply us with the divine life that we may grow. Third, God Himself as the life-giving Spirit dwells in us to live, move, and work in us. The disciples of Confucius may boast in their bright virtue. They may be proud of the fact that they have cultivated and developed this virtue. However, our boast is not in our bright virtue. Our boast is that we have God Himself living in us. Due to the influence of our religious background and environment, we Christians may not realize how wealthy we are. Our wealth is the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

EXPERIENCING THE TRIUNE GOD

For many Christians today, the Trinity is simply a matter of theology, not of experience. However, in the Bible the Trinity is not presented as a doctrine. There are verses which teach us concerning justification by faith, but there is not one verse teaching us about the Trinity in a doctrinal way. On the contrary, the Trinity is presented in the Scriptures with the emphasis related to our experience. For example, 2 Corinthians 13:14 says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellow-ship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (lit.). What do we have here, the doctrine of the Trinity or the experience of the Trinity? Surely this verse speaks of the experience of the Triune God. Consider another example: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father...that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, that Christ may make His home in your hearts..." (Eph. 3:14, 16-17). In these verses Paul refers to the Father, the Spirit, and Christ the Son. According to the context, this reference

to the Triune God is altogether related to our experience. The same is true of the Lord's word in Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Once again, the Trinity is presented not as doctrine, but as an experience. Experientially, the believers are to be baptized into the Triune God. What blindness to say that the Trinity is merely for doctrine and not for experience!

In John 14 we have a deep and profound revelation of the Triune God. In response to Philip's request to show the disciples the Father, the Lord Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (v. 9). The Lord went on to ask, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?" (v. 10). Later in this chapter the Lord said that He would ask the Father to give the disciples another Comforter, the Spirit of reality (vv. 16-17). But as a careful study of verses 17 and 18 discloses, the coming of the Spirit of reality is the coming of the Lord Jesus Himself. Thus, in John 14 we have the Father seen in the Son, and the Son realized as the Spirit. This is for our experience, not for mere doctrine. We may experience the Father by seeing the Son, and we may experience the Son by realizing the Spirit. How marvelous that we have the Triune God within us! As the Lord says in John 14:23, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him." To be loved by the Father and to have the Father and the Son make an abode with us is surely a matter of experience, not of doctrine. Therefore, it is absolutely right according to the Scriptures to speak of the Trinity in relation to our spiritual experience.

The followers of Confucius' teachings may boast in their bright virtue, but we can boast that the Triune God dwells within us. We have the Father, the Son, and Spirit. Instead of trying to develop our bright virtue, we may experience the Triune God growing in us. In the words of Colossians 2:19, we may grow with the growth of God. We grow by the

growth of God within us. We do not merely have something bright--we have the Triune God living and growing in us.

The One who is living and growing in us is the Spirit, the ultimate consummation of the Triune God. God is Spirit (John 4:24), and the Lord is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17). Now we have the Spirit within us. Although the Triune God indwells us, we do not have the consciousness of three living within us, but of one. Our God is triune; He is three-one. How God can be both three and one is far beyond our understanding. But even though we cannot understand the Trinity, we can enjoy the Triune God living and growing within us. On the one hand, He is the Lord in the heavens, but, on the other hand, He is the Spirit dwelling in us.

WALKING BY THE TRIUNE GOD

In the light of the foregoing, let us now consider Paul's word, "Walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16). The Spirit by whom we are to walk is the very Triune God. Thus, to walk by the Spirit simply means to walk by the Triune God. It is possible for us to walk by the Triune God because we have been born of Him to be His sons with His life and nature. In fact, we have the Triune God Himself. Unbelievers, including the learned followers of Confucius, cannot walk by the Spirit because they do not have the Spirit within them. They may have a bright virtue to develop, but they do not have the Spirit by whom to walk. In contrast to those who follow the ethical teachings of Confucius, we should not seek to develop our bright virtue, but seek to walk by the Spirit. All those who are still trying to develop their bright virtue, their conscience, must realize that they are living only as God's creatures, not as His sons. But we who have been regenerated of the Spirit of God are not just creatures of God--we have become sons of God. As God's sons, we are not developing our bright virtue; we are walking according to our God, according to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

THREE KINDS OF TEACHINGS

Concerning our living as human beings there are three main kinds of teachings. First there are the various ethical teachings. People of every nationality and culture are taught to improve their behavior. They are trained in an ethical way to be nice, kind, gentle, humble, and loving. Certain teachings of this kind even encourage us to pray to God and ask Him for help to live in a proper way.

A second kind of teaching is that in order to live properly we need to be led, inspired, and strengthened by the Holy Spirit. This kind of teaching is popular among Christians today. According to this teaching, through the Holy Spirit we can be humble and loving. Although there is nothing wrong with this teaching in itself, it is possible that it can be used merely to help believers live as God's creatures with the help of God's Spirit. It certainly is not wrong to exhort others to trust in the Holy Spirit and to receive help from the Holy Spirit. But everything depends on what ground we have for trusting in the Holy Spirit. If we trust in the Holy Spirit on the ground of being God's creatures, we are actually usurping the aid of the Spirit. If we would trust in the Spirit, we must stand on the ground that we are sons of God. Then we shall enjoy the Father's Spirit.

When you trust in the Holy Spirit, on what ground are you standing? Do you stand on the ground that you are God's creature? Is it simply your desire to be a good person? Because you know that you are weak and that God is merciful, do you ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to strengthen you to live properly as one of His creatures? If so, then you are standing on the ground of the creature to claim the help of the Holy Spirit. It is right to trust in the Spirit, but the ground of a creature is not the proper standing for trusting in Him. The proper ground on which to stand to claim the fullness of the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the ground that we are sons of God.

According to the third kind of teaching, we have been born of God to be sons of God with the divine life and

nature. Because we are God's sons, He not only gives us the Spirit, but He Himself is now the Spirit within us to make us sons in a full way. He is not simply helping us to be more loving, humble, or powerful. Having passed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, the Triune God is now in us as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit to be our life and life supply. His goal is to accomplish the sonship and to make us sons of God in full. In the meantime, we should simply walk according to Him.

Many Christians borrow Galatians 5:16, take it out of context, and use it to charge the believers to walk by the Spirit. They do not consider this verse in the context of the whole book of Galatians. This book reveals that we once were sinners condemned by God according to His righteous law. However, God sent His Son to accomplish redemption for us so that we may become sons of God. Now as God's true sons, we have God's life, God's nature, and even the Triune God Himself as the all-inclusive Spirit dwelling within us, working, moving, acting, and anointing to make us sons of God in full. Because we are God's sons and because the Triune God is working within us toward the goal of full sonship, we should walk by the Spirit. To understand 5:16 in this way is to understand it according to the context of the entire book of Galatians.

In the Lord's recovery today, we are not merely exhorting the saints to walk according to the Spirit. Rather, our aim is to help the believers see that they are sons of God indwelt by the all-inclusive Spirit. We should walk according to this Spirit, according to the Triune God who dwells within us. If this is our experience, then we do not live by the first kind of teaching nor by the second kind, but by the third, the teaching according to God's economy in His salvation.

LIFE-STUDY OF GALATIANS

MESSAGE FORTY-SIX

WALKING ACCORDING TO THE ELEMENTARY RULES

Scripture Reading: Gal. 5:25; 6:8, 12-16, 18; Phil. 3:14-16

In Galatians 5 Paul speaks twice about walking by the Spirit. In verse 16 he says, "Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh." In verse 25 he goes on to say, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." For more than forty years I have been seeking the proper understanding of these verses. In itself verse 16 seems rather easy to understand. As a number of Bible teachers have pointed out, the word "walk" here means to live, move, act, and have our being. Hence, to walk by the Spirit is to live, to have our being, by the Spirit. Since the word "walk" has this meaning, why does Paul in verse 25 speak both of living by the Spirit and walking by the Spirit? For many years, I was troubled by this verse.

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

It is important to realize that in 5:16 and 25 Paul uses two different Greek words for walk. In verse 16 Paul uses the word *peripateo*, a general word for walking. This word means to walk about, to live and have our being. This meaning of walk is equal to "live" in verse 25. To walk by the Spirit is to live by the Spirit. In verse 25 Paul uses a different Greek word for walk, *stoicheo*. It is difficult to find an English equivalent for this Greek word. The word *stoicheo* is the verbal form of the noun "element." The Greek noun for element is used in 4:3 ("the elements of the world") and 4:9 ("poor elements"). It is also found in Colossians 2:8, where Paul again speaks of "the elements of the world." These elements are elementary rules or

basic principles. Thus, *stoicheo* is a verbal form of the Greek word for elementary principles, basic rules. At least one version adopts the rendering, "to practice the elementary principles." This version says, "Since we live by the Spirit, let us also practice the elementary principles."

The same Greek verb is also used in Acts 21:24. After telling Paul that there were thousands of believing Jews and that they were all "zealous of the law," James urged him to go to the temple with four others and purify himself with them (vv. 20-24). James went on to tell Paul that if he did this, all would know that "those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law." The expression "walk orderly" is the translation of the Greek word for "walk" in Galatians 5:25. To walk orderly means to walk according to certain basic rules or elementary principles.

LIVING A NEW CREATION

Paul also uses the verb *stoicheo* in 6:16: "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God." It is correct to render the Greek here as "walk according to the elementary principles." Here Paul added the phrase "by this rule." According to the context, "this rule" is the rule of being a new creation, as mentioned in the preceding verse. To "walk by this rule" is to live a new creation.

In 6:15 Paul says, "For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." Here we see that we are to live neither a life of circumcision nor of uncircumcision, neither a religious life nor an unreligious life. Rather, we are to live a new creation. The new creation here is the totality of all the sons of God. God's sons are the new creation.

There is a basic difference between the new creation and the old creation. God's life and nature are not wrought into the old creation, but the new creation does possess the divine life and the divine nature. Adam did not have the

life of God or the nature of God. We can receive the divine life and nature only by believing in the Lord Jesus and being regenerated by the Spirit. When we believed in Christ, God's life and nature were imparted to us and caused us to become a new creation.

According to Paul's concept in Galatians, a person would still be in the old creation even if he were circumcised. The act of cutting the flesh could not cause anyone to receive the life of God. Both those who are circumcised and those who are uncircumcised are still part of the old creation. It is not God's intention in His economy that we live either a circumcised life or an uncircumcised life. God's goal in His economy is that we live a new creation.

If we would live a new creation, we must do all things in oneness with the Triune God, and the element of God must be wrought into us. For example, I may love a certain brother according to my natural life, not according to the divine element received through regeneration. Because this particular brother seems to be diligent, obedient, and sub-missive, I may be very fond of him. This kind of love is entirely a matter of the old creation. It is a case of one person in the old creation loving another in the old creation. If I would love this brother according to the new creation, I must condemn myself and my natural, even selfish, love for him. Then I need to love the brother by my regenerated being with the divine element. In such a case, I do not love him because he is submissive or good to me. Even if he offends me, I would still love him because I am living not by the natural life, but by the divine element within me. Then my love will be of the new creation, full of the divine element. The first kind of love, the natural love, the love in the old creation, is the expression of the love of a fallen creature. But the second kind of love, the love in the new creation, is the expression of the love of a son of God.

What matters today is not whether we are religious or unreligious. What matters is whether or not we are living a new creation. To live a new creation is to live, walk, have our being, and do all things, great and small, with the

element of God. In all that we do, we should act not in ourselves, but according to our regenerated being, filled with the divine element.

Even our conversation with others should be by the divine element within. If we sense that we are speaking apart from this element, we should not proceed further. In our daily conversation we should speak not in ourselves, but with the divine element. Then our conversation will be part of the new creation.

In our relations with others we should not be religious or unreligious, but should live a new creation. Suppose I treat another brother in a very rough manner. This is to be unreligious. But suppose that, as an elderly brother who has been in the church life for many years, my roughness and toughness have been dealt with. Now in relation to others I am refined, gentle, and kind. However, there is no need for me to pray or to be one with the Lord to behave this way. Rather, I am gentle and kind in a religious way without the Lord. Should someone mistreat me or offend me, I may restrain myself and force a smile. This is to be religious, to be in the circumcision rather than in the uncircumcision.

Even in teaching the Scriptures I may be in the old creation. If someone does not understand my teaching the first time, I may patiently explain the matter again. My kindness, patience, and gentleness may be admirable, but they have nothing to do with the new creation. In teaching the Word of God to others, I need to exercise my spirit and do everything by my regenerated being with the divine element and not by the natural life. Then I shall live neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, and I shall be neither religious nor unreligious. Instead I shall live a new creation. To live in this way is to walk "by this rule," by the elementary principle of the new creation.

If we walk "by this rule," we shall live neither a religious life nor an unreligious life, but we shall live a new creation as sons of God. This rule should be our regulation, our basic principle. This is to walk according to the elementary rule.

HOLDING TO OUR OWN RULES AND PRINCIPLES

No matter what our nationality may be, we all unconsciously or subconsciously hold to certain principles. We all have our own basic principles or elementary rules. For example, we may follow the principle of always being nice and never losing our temper. Suppose an unmarried sister living in the sisters' house has such a principle to regulate her daily life. If she loses her temper, she will be filled with regret. She may even cry in remorse because she has broken one of her basic principles.

When a sister is about to get married, she may vow to herself that she will never lose her temper with her husband. She may never tell others that she has made such a vow, but God knows about it. Furthermore, this vow may become an elementary principle which governs this sister's married life. From the first day of her marriage, she walks according to this elementary principle. However, to take such a principle as our elementary principle is wrong. The only elementary principle we should take is that of walking according to the new creation. Instead of caring about our temper, we should simply live a new creation as sons of God. Rather than practice niceness or submissiveness, we should practice the divine sonship, the new creation.

TAKING THE NEW CREATION AS OUR BASIC PRINCIPLE

The new creation must be our basic principle, our elementary rule. The Son of God with the divine life and the divine nature dwells in us to be our enjoyment. As a result, we now have the divine element, even the processed God Himself within us. What a tremendous difference it makes to take this element as our basic principle and walk according to it!

When I was young, I once heard a missionary say that the teachings of the Bible and those of Confucius are the

same. He went on to tell us that Confucius teaches us to honor our parents and that the Bible does likewise. Then he went on to encourage us to accept Christianity, since its teachings were the same as those of Confucius. When I heard this, I said to myself, "If this is true, why should we accept Christianity when we already have the teachings of Confucius?" What blindness to say that the teachings of Confucius and those of the Bible are the same!

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT AS THE ELEMENTARY RULE

The Bible does not teach us to seek the help of the Holy Spirit to behave properly as God's creatures. According to the revelation in the Bible, God's intention is to make us His sons. In His creation of mankind, God made the necessary preparations to reach this goal. He created man in His image and after His likeness. He designed and created man as a vessel to contain Him. Because we became fallen, God sent His Son to redeem us. When we believed in Christ, God sent the Spirit of His Son into us to regenerate us and make us sons of God. Now the Spirit, the ultimate consummation of the Triune God, dwells in our spirit to work, move, act, and anoint us that we may be sons of God in a full way. As God's sons, we need to walk according to this Spirit, taking the Spirit as our elementary rule, our basic principle. To walk by the Spirit in this way is to walk according to the elementary principles.

We should not take ethical standards or religious requirements as our principle. Rather, our elementary principle should be the new creation, the divine sonship with the life and nature of God. Day by day, we need to take the sonship, the new creation, as our elementary principle and walk according to it. If we do this, we shall grow in God's sonship unto maturity. Then one day we shall be in glory, and God will shine forth from within us. In this way we shall be a vast, universal, corporate expression of the Triune God. That will be the

consummation of the divine sonship. In our daily life we should practice living according to this sonship as our basic principle, our elementary rule. Praise the Lord that it is possible for us to walk in this way!