

Salvation by faith and faith alone

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" (Galatians 2:16).

The Galatians, having accepted the gospel, were led astray by false teachers who presented to them "a different gospel" (Gal. 1:6), a counterfeit gospel, since there is but one for all time and for all men.

The counterfeit gospel was represented in these words: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). Now, although there is in these days no question as to whether or not one should submit to

the specific rite of circumcision in order to be saved, the question of salvation itself, whether by human works or by Christ alone, is as alive as ever.

Instead of attacking their error and combating it with hard argument, the apostle begins with an experience which illustrates the case in hand. In this narrative he shows that salvation is wholly by faith for all alike, and not in any degree by works. As Christ tasted death for everyone, so everyone who is saved must have Christ's personal experience of death and resurrection and life. Christ in the flesh does what the law cannot do (Gal. 2:21; Rom. 8:3,4).

But that very fact witnesses to the righteousness of the law. If the law were at fault, Christ would not fulfill its demands. He shows its righteousness by fulfilling or doing what it demands, not simply/or us but in us. We do not "set aside [nullify] the grace of God." If righteousness could come by the law, "then Christ died in vain."

Let it be repeated, righteousness cannot

possibly come by the law, but only by the faith of Christ. Disobedience, rejection of the Lord, is the spirit of antichrist. Only by keeping close to the word of God can we be kept from the temptation that is coming on all the world. The gospel of Christ which reveals the righteousness of God is the only possible salvation from it (see Rom. 1:16,17). [1]

Note:

1. The Glad Tidings, pp. 49-51.