

# THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

"Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12

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**"COMMENTS ON GALATIANS 3 - No. 1." (Page 406)**

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THERE is probably no portion of Scripture which is more commonly supposed to give "aid and comfort" to the enemies of the law of God, than the third chapter of Galatians. It is true that there are in this chapter, as in other parts of Paul's writings, some things "hard to be understood," but only the unlearned and unstable will wrest them to their own destruction. The student of the Bible may rest assured that the law of God stands fast forever and ever (Ps. 111:8), and cannot be overthrown. And he may also remember another thing: those texts which are the most depended upon by antinomians in their opposition to the law, will be found, after careful study, to be strong bulwarks in its support. No weapon formed against God's law can prosper. "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever." Ps. 119:152.

There is not a point in the third chapter of Galatians that has not been explained in our study of other texts; therefore in our brief study of this chapter we shall only emphasize facts already established. The reader will recall our remarks in a previous article on the particular errors into which the Galatian brethren had fallen, and the object of the epistle to them. It will not be necessary to give more than an outline of the statements there made. Men had come from Judea saying to the young converts, "Except ye be circumcised, . . . ye cannot be saved." This was teaching them that their salvation depended on their own works, and was directly contrary to Paul's teaching, that works outside of Christ amount to nothing. Paul taught that sinners can obtain justification only by the grace of God, through faith in the blood of Christ; these Jews taught that circumcision was the true means of justification. It can readily be seen that the latter teaching was directly subversive of the former, and that the acceptance of it was equivalent to the rejection of Christ.

In harmony with the above idea are the opening words of the third chapter: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" Christ and him crucified had been set forth among them, and Christ is "the truth." Through faith in him they had begun the Christian life, and now they were in danger of turning from him and endeavoring to be "made perfect" by their own works. For such a proceeding they justly merited the epithet "foolish."

Abraham is next taken as the model for Christians. "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Verse 6. Nothing else but his faith could be counted to him for righteousness, that is, for his past life; for any work that he could do could not take away a single sin. Abraham did works, as it is written, "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Gen. 26:5); but these works were done only through his faith. Works are necessary, but 'they are of no avail outside of Christ. Paul says:—

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:8-10.

The patriarch was justified by faith, and then by works his faith was made perfect, or shown to be genuine. James 2:22. Having shown that even Abraham was not justified before God by his own works, Paul shows that the promise is to none but the children of Abraham; and since the children of Abraham are those only who have the same faith that he had, only those that are of faith can receive the promise. These are his words:—

"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Gal. 3:7-9.

Following this statement, the apostle emphasizes the fact that we can be justified only by faith, and not by works. He says:—

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Verse 10.

This verse is the cause of much stumbling, and is often wrested from its true meaning, but its explanation is simple, and is contained within the verse itself. It is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." These words are quoted from Deut. 27:26, and Jer. 11:2-4, in both of which places they have unmistakable reference to the ten commandments. The law contains the whole duty of man, and the transgression of it brings death, and therefore the man who fails to obey it comes under the curse of God. But there is no man who has kept the law perfectly. Consequently if any are saved they must have recourse to something outside of the law; for the law cannot justify the sinner. Or, to use the words of Paul, "As many as are of the works of the law [that is, as many as depend upon the law], are under the curse." They are "under the law ;" condemned to death.

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith; but, the man that doeth them shall live in them." Verses 11, 12.

This is a repetition of the thought already presented, showing that no man can be just except through faith. It is parallel to Rom. 10:4, 5.

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