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a bit of irony when he says, "Would that they who unsettle you would even mutilate themselves." In the province of Galatia there were those who practiced self-mutilation as an act of merit. The priests of Cybele were famous for this hideous practice. The Galatians were familiar with this practice so Paul's reference would not likely shock them. Perhaps Paul means here that it would be much better if these men would identify themselves clearly with those who are outside of Christ instead of posing as Christians. How helpful it would be if all those who use the name Christian and yet deny Christ would be honest with themselves and the world.

#### Conclusion

We can best stand firm in the liberty we have in Christ by a positive exercise of the basic Christian graces; hope, faith, and love. Added to this must be a careful guarding against any deviation from the truth.