

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

Part Fifteen Practical Section

VI. Paul's Application of the Gospel Galatians 5:1 - 6:18

- A. Exhortation to Stand Firm in Christ (5:1-12)
- B. Exhortation to Love One Another (5:13-15)
- C. Exhortation to Walk in the Spirit (5:16-26)
- D. Exhortation to Christian Responsibility (6:1-10)

Introduction

In the midst of a disruption such as the Galatian Christians were passing through, there is the tendency to lose site of one's responsibilities. Time and energy is often consumed in wrangling and rivalry. Near the conclusion of Paul's letter some practical suggestions are given on how to restore things to their proper order. He encourages those who have not lost their testimony in the struggle to take the lead. He encourages all "not to be overcome with evil, but to overcome evil with good."

1. Fraternal Responsibility (verses 1 - 3)

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ..."

- a. The "if" or "even if" in this clause introduces a future possibility. It is general, applying to "to whom it may concern." All Christians are liable to such a fall.
- b. "overtaken" - could be translated "surprised." This could mean that the person involved is caught in the act of sin.
- c. "fault" - act of sin, a falling away from a divine precept. The word implies turning off the appointed pathway, like an automobile that swerves off the road into the ditch.

"Ye which are spiritual ..."

- a. Paul has already stressed the "Spirit-filled" life in the previous paragraph. The thought is implied that, "If you are spiritual, you will seek to restore the fallen brother." Those that were unwilling to have the fallen brother restored would place themselves in the category of the unspiritual.

"Restore such an one in the spirit of meekness..."

- a. The word translated "restore" is also used in Matthew 4:21 and Mark 1:19. In both of these references it is used of the fishermen mending their nets. The same word is used in the Greek classics to mean the mending of broken bones. It refers to a "skillful putting back together." When the human body is injured in one part, the rest of the body goes to work to repair the injured member. It is often true that competent physicians are needed to bring the body back to health, but much of the healing work is done by the internal actions of the body itself. In the "Body of Christ" a fallen brother constitutes an injury to the whole body. Every healthy member must go to work to restore the injured part. Christ the Great Physician will guide the healing process, but the members of the body must do their part.
- b. All this must be carried out in the spirit of meekness. A fallen brother must not be approached with the "holier than thou" attitude.

"Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

- a. When we view a fallen brother, we should say to ourselves, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." All Christians are liable and even prone to wander from the straight path.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

- a. In verse 13 of chapter 5 Paul introduced "bondage to love" rather than "bondage to the Law." Here he encourages bearing the burdens of others rather than bearing the burden the Law would impose. (cf. Matthew 23:4)
- b. Paul mentions the Law of Christ in contrast to the law introduced by the false teachers.
- c. Burden-bearing is the natural expression of Christian love. It is part of the "light" burden which Christ asks us to take upon us in Matthew 11:30.