

# The Recovery of Paul's Letter to the Galatians

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- 13 ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ ἐκλήθητε, ἀδελφοί·  
μόνον μὴ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν εἰς ἀφορμὴν τῆ σαρκί,  
ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις.
- 14 ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται,  
ἐν τῷ· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν.
- 15 εἰ δὲ ἀλλήλους δάκνετε καὶ κατεσθίετε,  
βλέπετε μὴ ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἀναλωθῆτε.
- 16 λέγω δέ, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε  
καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε.
- 17 ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος,  
τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα κατὰ τῆς σαρκός,  
ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκειται,  
ἵνα μὴ ἂ ἐὰν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε.
- 18 εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε,  
οὐκ ἔστε ὑπὸ νόμον.
- 19 φανερὰ δέ ἐστιν τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκός,  
ἅτινά ἐστιν πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσέλγεια,
- 20 εἰδωλολατρία, φαρμακεία,  
ἔχθραι, ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθειαι,
- 21 διχοστασίαι, αἰρέσεις, φθόνοι,  
μέθαι, κῶμοι, καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις,  
ἃ προλέγω ὑμῖν καθὼς προεῖπον,  
ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες  
βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν.
- 22 ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος ἐστιν  
ἀγάπη, χαρά, εἰρήνη,  
μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη,
- 23 πίστις, πραῦτης, ἐγκράτεια·  
κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος.
- 24 οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ  
τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν  
σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν  
καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις.

25 εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι,  
πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν.

26 μὴ γινώμεθα κενόδοξοι·  
ἀλλήλους προκαλούμενοι,  
ἀλλήλοις φθονοῦντες.

6.1 ἀδελφοί, ἐὰν καὶ προλημφθῆ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τινι παραπτώματι, ὑμεῖς  
οἱ πνευματικοὶ καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος,  
σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν, μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῆς.

2 ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε, καὶ οὕτως ἀναπληρώσετε τὸν νόμον  
τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

3 εἰ γὰρ δοκεῖ τις εἶναι τι μηδὲν ὄν, φρεναπατᾶ ἑαυτόν.

4 τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος, καὶ τότε εἰς ἑαυτὸν  
5 μόνον τὸ καύχημα ἔξει, καὶ οὐκ εἰς ἕτερον. ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον  
φορτίον βαστάσει.

6 κοινωνεῖτω δὲ ὁ κατηχούμενος τὸν λόγον τῷ κατηχοῦντι ἐν πάσιν  
ἀγαθοῖς.

7 μὴ πλανᾶσθε·  
θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται.  
ὁ γὰρ ἐὰν σπείρῃ ἄνθρωπος,  
τοῦτο καὶ θερίσει·

8 ὅτι ὁ σπείρων εἰς τὴν σάρκα ἑαυτοῦ  
ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς θερίσει φθοράν·  
ὁ δὲ σπείρων εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα  
ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος θερίσει ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

9 τὸ δὲ καλὸν ποιοῦντες μὴ ἐγκακῶμεν· καιρῷ γὰρ ἰδίῳ θερίσομεν  
10 μὴ ἐκλυόμενοι. ἄρα οὖν ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν, ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν  
πρὸς πάντας, μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως.

If Paul wanted to warn the Galatians against Judaizers who were trying to persuade them to be circumcised, it seems strange that he should suddenly also warn them against antinomianism. This change of emphasis has prompted a number of interesting theories, the most famous of which is Lütgert's.

Wilhelm Lütgert,<sup>1</sup> followed by the American scholar J. H. Ropes,<sup>2</sup> has tried to reconcile the attack on antinomianism in this section with the rest of the book by supposing that Paul was fighting on two fronts: against opponents who accused him of betraying the freedom he once preached, of being still a half Jew, as well as against Judaizers who wanted Gentile Christians to be circumcised. The first group of opponents were "Pneumatikoi" who encouraged the Galatians to fall back into pagan ways, and the (rather gentler) passages of polemic against licentiousness and in favour of obedience were directed against them.

The difficulty with this theory is that there is no discernible trace in Galatians that Paul is fighting on two fronts.<sup>3</sup> Yet the problem remains. How can we fit the sort of polemic in this section into the historical situation where Paul is facing a specific attack?

Schmithals<sup>4</sup> has attempted to meet the problem by supposing that the opponents were gnostic Jewish Christians, in effect combining the two groups proposed by Lütgert. The best evidence for Schmithals's theory is to be found in 4.8–10, where Paul seems to be attacking a gnostic position, but I have already tried to show that this attack was not written by Paul, and did not fit his actual opponents. The support his theory seems to find here, in 5.13 to 6.10,<sup>5</sup> I should meet in the same way. But here there are in fact no particular opponents in mind at all, as there were in 4.8–10. This section is directed to all Christians, to meet the common human temptations. It has nothing in particular to do with the urgent problem Paul was trying to meet in his original letter.

Far from being a sustained argument, 5.13–6.10 is really a collection of moral admonitions telling Christians at large what are their duties. There is no connection between one admonition and the next, except sometimes a similarity of subject or a catchphrase; the collector is not pursuing a connected argument. The collection is similar to the collection called *The Two Ways* (Didache 1–6; Barnabas 18–21), and to the Epistle of James and parts of the Synoptic Gospels. I think that there are fifteen separate pieces of advice, each stylistically distinct, and distinct in thought, from its neighbour. Once this formal characteristic is established, it becomes almost impossible to hold that Paul was directly responsible. In order to show clearly the formal characteristics, I have reproduced the whole of the passage in Greek on pp. 65–6 above.

The first saying consists of 5.13–15, seven lines of even length devoted to the warning that if freedom degenerates into individualistic licence, the community can easily destroy itself. The issue is the general issue confronting the Church at all times, but has nothing in particular to do with the Galatians. Their temptation was not to use their freedom as an occasion for the flesh, but to think that they had to become Jews in order to believe properly in Jesus Christ.

The second piece of advice, 5.16–17, gives a moral psychology; the human dilemma, which is perhaps a God-given check on man, is that he cannot do what he wants to do, because the flesh lusts against the spirit. The only remedy is to walk continually in the spirit and not pander to the flesh. I doubt if God's Holy Spirit is meant in this context, or that spirit and flesh are thought of as external powers or forces. "Spirit" and "flesh" in this context are probably the constituent parts of every man.

The section consists of three couplets. It is loosely related to the preceding section, of course, but on closer examination there is no inner connection between advice about how a man who is free should behave, and advice about how every man should understand the warfare going on within him.

The third saying, 5.18, is not an admonition at all, but a statement of moral fact. The Spirit is God's Spirit, in all probability, and this is a clear statement of Christian freedom. Those led by the Spirit are not under law because they do all that law requires and more. I do not think this is an antinomian statement, nor do I think it had any particular bearing on the problem facing the Galatians. They were tempted to become Jews not for moral reasons, but in order to be full children of Abraham and followers of Christ.

This verse is a couplet consisting of two short lines almost equal in length.

Verses 19–21 are a list of the works of the flesh that disqualify men from inheriting the Kingdom of God. The seemingly personal note in the beginning of the last triplet, "of this I warn you, as I warned you before", is not really personal, but simply a reminder that the Church must constantly listen to teachers who have always taught thus, and who continue to do so, in anticipation of the day of judgement, when the worthy will inherit God's Kingdom. Whether or not Paul would have spoken like this is a matter for debate, but I cannot see how this stylistically formal moral

admonition could have found a place in his urgent letter to the Galatians.

The piece consists of nine fairly even lines.

The fifth part, 5.22–3, might seem to belong with the fourth section, being a list of the fruits of the spirit in contrast to that of the works of the flesh. There is a relation—that is why they have been put together—but no real connection. This fifth part gives the fruits of the Holy Spirit which, when present in a man, guarantees that no law can be cited against him, whereas the fourth part listed the vices to be avoided by those who would inherit the Kingdom.

In form, too, these moral sayings are quite different. The fifth admonition is basically two sentences, the first sentence consisting of four cola, perhaps, in which the virtues are grouped in threes, but with nothing like the massive structure of the fourth admonition, with its nine stately lines. There is no direct correspondence between the vices in the first list and the virtues in the second.

The sixth part of the collection, 5.24, is the first one to mention Christ. It is a beautiful strophe, with four cola of almost equal length. The crucifixion is appropriated for the moral life of the Christian: to belong to Christ Jesus is to crucify the flesh in all its weakness and strength.

The seventh saying, 5.25, is an admonition to persevere in the spiritual life once begun. Although it consists of a couplet of two cola similar in length to the cola in verse 24, there is no connection either in style or in thought. The former is a statement and this is a conditional sentence; both are designed to make the reader see the consequences of what he claims for himself, but in different ways. The moral in each case is quite different, the former a call to self-denial, and the latter a call to perseverance.

The eighth saying, 5.26, is a straight command. It consists of three cola, the first forbidding the root tendency (conceit), the second condemning its positive manifestation (aggressiveness), and the third its negative manifestation (envy).

The ninth saying, 6.1, is a piece of advice in prose to the spiritual leaders of the Church about how they should deal with a moral offender. They should not be too harsh, and they should take care not to imperil their own moral character.

The tenth saying, 6.2, deals with relations between Christians. In contrast to the ninth saying, it does not particularly concern leaders of the community, and the burdens that have to be borne

are not especially burdens caused by the moral failings of others. This is a prose saying. I doubt very much whether Paul could have employed such a phrase as "the law of Christ" in writing to the Galatians without a great deal of explanation; above all he emphasized to them that Christ had shown on the cross that no one could be justified by reliance on the Law, meaning by the Law the divine code that constituted Judaism. The phrase, "the law of Christ", transports us into an entirely different situation (despite 1 Cor. 9.21).

The eleventh saying, 6.3, is also in prose, but the form is conditional. This is a truism, of course, but it is meant to make the reader who does think he is someone ask himself whether he really is. Despite the  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ , there is no connection between this statement, concerned with self-examination, and the preceding command to bear one another's burdens. The  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  is probably simply a strengthening word like our "yes": "Yes, if anyone thinks he is something . . ." (cf. Didache 6.2, which has no inner connection with 6.1).

The twelfth moral statement, 6.4-5, is an exhortation to self-sufficiency in life. It is not logically compatible with 6.2, but one characteristic of proverbial wisdom is that incompatible sayings can live together quite happily, because they each get their point in rather different circumstances. This saying holds out to the moral pilgrim the hope of being able to say to himself that he owes his character to no one else; in any case, no one else can really shoulder his load.

The thirteenth piece of advice, 6.6, is probably an instruction to the student to share his whole wealth with his teacher. Perhaps it owes its place here to the fact that the previous word partly concerned the moral student who had to learn to stand on his own feet, but otherwise there is no connection between this verse and its context.

The fourteenth command, 6.7-8, has a poetic form again, the first in poetry since 5.26. It consists of four couplets, and warns the reader that he cannot escape the consequence of the decision he makes about the foundation of his life.

The final saying, 6.9-10, is a prose command, linked with the preceding one because of the catch-word "reap", but not really connected. The point of this advice is that Christians should persevere in doing good, especially in doing good to fellow-Christians. The fourteenth saying was individual, but the fifteenth social;

although both look ahead to the ultimate consequence of our actions now, the former concerns the basic choice to be made, and the latter the behaviour to be followed day after day.

The whole collection of sayings is Christian, although it incorporates pieces of wisdom drawn from Jewish and Greek sources. There is no inner idea running through the collection, although each saying shares the family likeness. Weisse and Cramer both attempted to eliminate certain sayings as non-Pauline, but Völter was nearer the truth when he suggested that 5.13—6.11 was a later addition to Galatians. I can find nothing specifically Pauline in the collection, and nothing that would have had specific bearing on the situation facing the Galatians. The collection was probably added to the epistle at an appropriate place because an epistle meant for building up the Church at large would need to have its own ethical section. The man who added this section did not, of course, make up any of the teaching himself, but merely inserted the corpus traditional in his church; he may well have thought that it derived from Paul.

1. *Gesetz und Geist: Eine Untersuchung zur Vorgeschichte des Galaterbriefes* (Gütersloh 1919).
2. *The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929): “. . . this passage [5.13ff] calls imperatively for the explanation which Lütgert’s theory supplies” (p. 40).
3. See W. G. Kümmel, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (13th edn of Feine-Behm, Heidelberg 1964), pp. 193f; English translation of the 14th edn (1966), pp. 194f.
4. “Die Häretiker in Galatien”, *ZNW* 47 (1956), pp. 25–67.
5. See particularly section 5 of his essay, *ibid.*, pp. 50–5.