

thought. **How turn ye again.** The Galatians had shown a tendency to descend from the high state of Christians to the lower plane of Jews. **The weak and beggarly elements.** Rev. Ver., "Radiments," as in verse 3. That is, turning from the freedom of the Gospel to the slavery of the law; from sonship to bondage; from knowledge to the beginnings of education in the Jewish law. **Ye desire again.** They had been slaves before in heathenism, now they are willing to be slaves over again in Judaism.

10. Ye observe. In a slavish way. **Days, and months,** etc. The Jewish Sabbath; the monthly observance with the new moon; the reasons of fasts and feasts; the Sabatical year; and all the minute details of Jewish ceremonialism, not only as given in the Pentateuch, but as amplified by the Jewish scribes to such a degree that Moses himself would never have recognized them.

11, 12. I am afraid of you. "I fear concerning you." **Labor in vain.** Twice Paul had visited them and preached the Gospel to them, and now it seems that his work has come to naught by their renouncing Christ for Judaism. **Be as I am.** Paul bids them follow his example, in disregarding Jewish rites, and becoming a Gentile among the Gentiles. **I am as ye are.** "I was a Jew, but I became in manner of life a Gentile." **Ye have not injured me.** "I suffered no harm in my fellowship with God or my Christian privilege by laying aside my Jewish scruples."

13. Through infirmity. There is probably a reference here to an attack of illness which Paul suffered while preaching in Galatia. **At the first.** On my first visit, as he had been to the province twice. **My temptation... in my flesh.** Paul refers to his bodily infirmities, which might have been a temptation to them to despise him and reject his preaching. They had disregarded it then; why should they now change their opinion of him and turn away from his teaching? **Received me.** They had listened to him as a messenger of God, nay, as they would have heard Christ himself.

15. Where is then the blessedness. They had congratulated themselves upon having him among them, had honored him, in all his infirmities. But now their love was growing cold, and Paul asks "why?" **I bear you record.** From the following clause many have thought that Paul's infirmity, or "thorn in the flesh" (properly, *stake in the flesh*), was a weakness of his eyes. But others (Alford, Cook, Whedon) reject such an inference.

16. Become your enemy. Something had occurred to change the warm love of the Galatians into enmity, and it was not any change in Paul, but the influence of Judaizing teachers. **I tell you the truth.** Rather was it a proof of his continued friendship and love for them.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty where-with Christ hath made us free. Gal. 5. 1.

OUTLINE.

1. The Child a Servant, v. 1-3.
2. The Child a Son, v. 4-7.
3. The Son in Bondage, v. 8-16.

LESSON HYMNS.

No. 136, S. S. Hymnal.

Let us sing with one accord.

No. 139, S. S. Hymnal.

Sing with a tuneful spirit.

No. 201, S. S. Hymnal.

Gracious Saviour, gentle Shepherd.

TIME.—A. D. 57, probably at the close of the year.

CONNECTING LINK.—While Paul was in Greece (end of Lesson VII.) he received word of the condition of the Churches in Galatia, in Central Asia Minor, leading him to write this epistle.

EXPLANATIONS.—*The heir*—Paul is here speaking of the Jewish people, who were the chosen family and heirs of the promise of God. *A child*—Here meaning the time of preparation before Christ came to the Jews. *Servant*—Even the child of a king must learn obedience. *Until the time*—The time until he becomes full grown. *When we were children*—The Jewish people, before Christ came. *In bondage*—During the time while the Jews were being taught to look for a redeemer. *Fulness of the time*—When the world was ready. *Adoption of sons*—Christ lifts us up from servants to sons. *Abba, Father*—"Abba," a word of tenderness; "Dear Father" is the thought. *Heir of God*—Because the son inherits all things. *How turn ye again*—The Galatians had turned back from being Christians to become Jews. *Observe days*—The sacred days of the Jewish year. *Be as I am*—Paul was free from Jewish rules which had been ended in the Gospel. *Through infirmity*—Perhaps meaning that Paul's stay among them was owing to illness. *Temptation*—Some trouble, the "thorn in the flesh," which Paul had constantly. *The blessedness*—Their enjoyment of Paul's words of preaching. *Tell you the truth*—He wrote severe words to this people, because they were ready to turn from his teaching to that of the Jews.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Christian liberty. Gal. 4. 1-16.
- Tu. Freed from the law. Gal. 3. 10-28.
- W. The children of promise. Gal. 4. 17-31.
- Th. Steadfastness enjoined. Gal. 5. 1-13.
- F. The apostle delivered. Acts 12. 1-11.
- S. Heirs with Christ. Rom. 8. 14-26.
- S. Christ our liberty. Isa. 53. 1-12.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME READING.

1. The Child a Servant, v. 1-3. What is an heir? When is he like a servant? Why? Under whose rule is he? When is he free from service? Under what bondage were the Jews