

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

## INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

June 1,  
1884.]

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

[Gal. 4:  
1-16.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free."—Gal. 5: 1.

**TIME.**—Written late in A.D. 57, or early in 58.

**PLACE.**—The place of writing cannot be exactly fixed. Some have supposed at the close of the apostles' stay at Ephesus; others on the voyage from Macedonia to Corinth, others, at Corinth.

**INTRODUCTION.**—The Galatians were descendants of one branch of the great Celtic migration, which in the third century, before Christ swept eastwards into Greece, and eventually settled in parts of Asia Minor. A restless and warlike race, when they were not engaged making excursions in the territory of their neighbours on their own account, they were ready to fight for any prince or people that would pay for their services. Galatians are recorded to have served in the body guard of Herod the Great. There were numerous Jewish settlers in Galatia, but the inhabitants were mainly Gentiles, and in their treatment of the Gospel message exhibited the characteristic instability of their race. They readily accepted the preaching of Paul and became converts of Christianity, but with almost equal readiness they seem to have listened to the efforts of the Jews who dwelt amongst them, and who would have made their faith little better than a degraded Judaism. To counteract these hostile, perverting influences, and to keep the Galatians true to the Gospel, and Gospel liberty, this epistle was written. The epistle stands closely connected with that to the Romans, both with respect to topics and phraseology. Taken together these epistles present a full exposition of Christianity as God's way of Salvation, and especially of the relations which the Law bears to the Gospel in that way.

**NOTES AND COMMENTS.**—Ver. 1. "The heir:" repeated from the last verse of the preceding chapter, and should be read in connection, here those who can claim the blessing God has promised. "A child:" like an infant, one under full age, a minor; with us a young man is "of age" at twenty-one, with the Romans it was at fourteen or seventeen. "Differeth nothing," as to the right of controlling his own actions, he may have the right to a property, and even if the father be dead, it may be in his possession, but he cannot legally assert his ownership; if still a child he is under guardians, and by them controlled.

Ver. 2. "Tutors—governors," Rev., "guardians and stewards:" his affairs are managed for him, not by him. "Time appointed:" by the heir's father. The idea is that the father has fixed a time for his son to be of full age, and until that time has put him under guardians.

Ver. 3. "We:" reference especially to the Jews. "Were children:" the Jewish economy was a state of religious childhood, the Christian of full spiritual manhood. "In bondage under the elements" (Rev. "rudiments") "of the world:" that is we had to learn the rudiments, the alphabet of our faith, just as instruction is given in the world by signs and pictures.

Ver. 4, 5.—"Fulness of time:" the "time appointed" of ver. 2; the time which God had fixed upon in His infinite wisdom. Speaking from a human standpoint, it would appear as if the time was indeed the "fulfillment of time" for the Gospel; events had made the people much more disposed to receive it: Gospel, while seventy years later the Jewish nation was scattered, never to be re-consolidated as a nation. "His Son—made" (Rev. "born") "of a woman:" the twofold nature of Jesus, Son of God, and Son of man. Emphatically *His own Son*, not as in verse 5: those who are sons by adoption "Under the law." Christ was subject to the law, moral and ceremonial: as our representative, He was under all its obligations, perfect in His observance Himself, yet, for the violation of it by mankind, in whose stead He appeared, He had to suffer its penalties. "Redeem" from the slavery and curses of the law to the liberty of the adoption. "Might receive:" enter upon our inheritance as the sons of God, being adopted by Him. Thus those who are enemies of God may by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ become the children of God, and if "Children then heirs." Rom. 8: 14-17.

Ver. 6, 7. "Because sons:" the indwelling of the Spirit follows the adoption into God's family, and the Spirit gives an assurance of sonship, so that we cry "Abba Father." We get the universality of the blessing here, for Jew and Gentile; the Hebrew says: "Abba," the Greek: "Father." So these Galatian Gentiles had the proof in themselves that they were the sons of God. "Servant:" Rev. "Bond-servant," in bondage to the law. "An heir" Rev., "through God," which more correctly conveys the idea of verses 2, 4, 6, that the gift and the blessing are from the Father.

Ver. 9. Having set forth the privileges given them through God's grace, the apostle now, in vigorous language, contrasts that into which they were willing to be led. "Weak and beggarly elements:" Rev., "Rudiments:" so called because of the elementary character of the Jewish dispensation, with its types and shadows of something higher, as if a scholar should desire to go back again to the alphabet and pictures of his childhood. "Weak:" because they are utterly unable to do for man what his nature cries out for. "Beggarly," as opposed to the riches of the inheritance which God has given.

Ver. 10. "Days:" as the Jewish Sabbath and festival days of the year. "Months:" feasts of the new moon. "Times:" the festivals recurring at longer intervals than a month, as Tabernacles, Pentecost and Purnim. "Years:" as the commencement of the year with the month Tisri. So far had the Galatians been led away, but had not adopted Circumcision, although they were in danger of so doing. See chap. 5: 2, 3; 6: 12, 13.

Ver. 11. "Afraid of you:" Paul feared that if they were so ready to turn again to the beggarly rudiments of form that they had no vital Christian principle, and that his labours amongst them had been "in vain."

Ver. 12. "Be as I am—I am as ye are:" Imitate me in this, that, born a Jew, I have cast aside the bondage of Jewish observances, and a Pharisee of the Pharisees; I became as a Gentile among Gentiles. "Ye have not injured me:" REV. connects this with what follows, which makes the meaning quite clear.

Ver. 13, 14. "Infirmity of the flesh—at first:" on his first visit, as mentioned in Acts 16: 6, he had an attack of illness. This drew to him the sympathy of the Galatians and gave him the opportunity to preach Christ "at the first." He had been there twice; his second visit is narrated in Acts 18: 23, "my temptation," Rev., "that which was a temptation to you:" His "thorn in the flesh:" 2 Cor. 12: 1, which was a temptation to the Galatians to despise him. It was, perhaps, this affliction which led his enemies to speak of his personal appearance as "mean." So far from despising him for this, they received him "as an angel," one of God's bright and perfect messengers, nay, even as Him who is Lord of angels, "Christ Jesus," Himself.

Ver. 15. "Where—blessedness:" Rev., "Gratulation of yourselves," in their first reception of the Gospel, they had been full of rejoicing, and congratulated themselves on having secured such a blessing. "Now," says the apostle, "what has become of that blessedness and rejoicing?" "I have plucked out:" so deeply were they attached to the apostle and his teaching that they would have given up what was most valuable and indispensable for his sake.

Ver. 16.—Yet because he told them afresh the truths of the Gospel, some seemed to think him "an enemy." The best friend is he who speaks the truth, and this should produce anything but enmity. yet for this, he who was once counted as an "angel," was now counted an enemy.

## HINTS TO TEACHERS.

**Prefatory.**—Teachers generally, of junior classes especially, will need to simplify this lesson and to put it in the thoughts of to-day. To do this they must get into their own minds a thorough appreciation of the apostle's teaching, and how it will specially bear upon the young, giving to them at the same time principles fitted to go with them through life.

**Topical Analysis.**—The topic is "Christian Liberty," this is shown by contrast. (1) Bondage. (2) The liberty wherewith God makes us free.

On the first section it may be well briefly to show the bondage from which these Galatians had been delivered and that into which they were foolishly entering, then the bondage, the slavery, in which we may be held. The Galatian Gentile converts had been delivered from the terrible bondage of heathenism and pagan superstition with their horrid rites, their degrading observances, and their cruel demands, yet they were willing to take upon themselves another form of ceremonial bondage, which those who had received it made tenfold more burdensome by their traditions, while all the time it was not only needless, not required by God, but was opposed to the Spirit of the Gospel of His Son. So to-day we may take upon ourselves the burden of rites and ceremonies and observances, all man-made, not given by God, and may weary ourselves in seeking peace through these when God is giving us all that we need without money and without price. Teach, then, first, that salvation is not from or in the externals of religion. But further there is a bondage under which some of your scholars may be labouring, the bondage of sin, led captive by the Devil. Tell them that Christ came to make them free, to give them liberty, to break the bonds of sin and have the freedom of the children of God. Then there is the slavery of sinful habits and how many are suffering from this cause. Warn, entreat, your scholars, now, in their youthful days, to guard against the growth of appetite and the indulgence of habits which in the years to come will form a chain they cannot break. Many are these habits, these chains, and oh, how they grow link by link until at last they bind fast their poor helpless captive; gambling is one, profanity, worldly amusements, and perhaps most terrible of all, the drinking habit that leads so many captive to death and hell every year: beseech that they touch not, taste not, handle not, never fasten upon themselves the first link of the chain, for the battle is half lost then. Show that there are but two states: God's freedom, and the Devil's bondage, and that he who is not in the one is in the other.

The other aspect is *Liberty*. What will you teach? That it is not *liberty to do wrong*—our liberty is the liberty of the "servants of God," and as such alone are we to use it. It is not the liberty of disobedience to parents, of profaning God's day, of neglecting the place of worship, of giving up the Bible, such is not the liberty Christ gives, while he delivers us from the bondage of sin he puts a "yoke" upon us, but He says "My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Liberty allows us to do as we please, only so far as we please to do right. It is freedom in things innocent, it gives us no right to send dynamite through the mails, or poisonous liquor through society. *Those who are God's freemen are God's sons*, those whom He redeems from bondage He does so that they may "receive the adoption of sons." How glorious the change from a slave of Satan to a son of God! "and if a son then an heir of God through Christ," heirs of the kingdom which He hath prepared for those that love Him. Draw the contrast sharply and vividly between bondage and liberty; show where the power of resistance to bondage and victory over evil is to be obtained; tell of Him who is ready to help every struggling soul, whether fighting against the beginnings of sin or striving to break away from its yoke, and you may live to know that this Sabbath's teaching has been the turning-point in the history of some of your scholars, has saved them from the downward path and turned their feet into the way of peace.

DEAN HOWSON, who published a book on the subject upwards of twenty years ago, will make at the forthcoming York convocation for the establishment of an order of deacons.

for license. Mr. Armstrong reported on the remittance of probationers' scheme in the following terms: The committee upon a review of the whole situation consider the system of distribution at present in operation preferable to that proposed in the remittance, which report was received and adopted. Rev. Professor McLaren, D.D., of Knox College, Toronto, was nominated as Moderator of the next General Assembly. Mr. Whillans was appointed to represent the Presbytery on the Synod's Committee on Bills and Overtures. The Rev. D. Findlay, Mr. Robert Mackie and Mr. Alexander Anderson, commissioners to the Assembly, resigned, and Rev. Thomas Bennett, Mr. James Gibson, and Dr. Thorburn were appointed in their stead. Rev. Dr. Jenkins being present was invited to sit as a corresponding member. Rev. Mr. Jamieson requested leave of absence for three months. The leave asked was granted. Rev. W. D. Armstrong introduced an overture on the evils resulting from the intense party politics of the country. The Presbytery agreed to transmit the overture to the General Assembly. Messrs. Dougald Currie, and Robert Gamble, students, were examined in systematic theology, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, philosophy and personal religion. The examination was highly satisfactory, and the Presbytery agreed to make application to the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa to take them on public probationary trials for license. Next day several reports were submitted; received and adopted, the chief of which were the Home Mission report and the report on French Evangelization. In connection with the Home Mission report it appeared that the Augmentation Scheme had met with marked success throughout the Church, the committee being able for the half year ending with March last to augment the stipends of the ministers of those congregations who had met the regulations laid down by the General Assembly up to \$750 with a manse. The French Evangelization committee submitted a plan of a church building for the French Presbyterian congregation of Ottawa, which was approved, and the committee authorized to proceed with the erection of the building, and further, that Mr. Ami be instructed to continue his canvass for subscriptions in aid of the said building so as to secure that the congregation enter the church free of debt if possible. Mr. Farries moved, seconded by Dr. Moore, and it was agreed that the Presbytery have learned with deep sorrow of the sudden death of the Rev. A. F. Kemp, LL.D., and alike on account of the important services which our departed father and brother rendered in many ways to the Church at large, and his recent connection with this Presbytery and with higher education in this city as principal of the Ottawa Ladies' College, and of his high scholarly attainments and Christian character, the Presbytery desire to place on record their sense of the loss which they have sustained, and of their heart-felt sympathy with Mrs. Kemp and family in their sore bereavement, and they pray the Father of Mercies to comfort them in their day of trial and sorrow, and that a copy of this resolution be sent to Mrs. Kemp. A resolution in the following terms was passed: In the opinion of this Presbytery much injury results to the cause of Christ, 1. From frivolous and pernicious literature circulated both in the form of books and newspapers. 2. From the almost exclusive secular character of the education provided in our Public schools and the subordinate position assigned to the Bible and religious instruction in them. 3. From questionable and undignified modes of raising money for religious purposes, which tend to lower the estimation of the Church in the public mind, to destroy seriousness, to develop frivolity and to undermine the principles and motives of true Christian liberality. 4. The Presbytery would, therefore, recommend ministers, kirk sessions and church members to watch against these evils and as far as in their power seek to have them removed. At the afternoon sederunt Dr. Moore presented the report of the committee appointed to revise the list of questions for Presbyterian visitation. The report was received and adopted. The Presbytery adjourned to meet again on Tuesday next, at two o'clock p.m., in the same place.—JOS. WHITS, Pres. Clerk.

PRESIDENT WHITE tells the Cornell Alumni Association that he sees real improvement in university life within the last fifteen years. He thinks that many follies and absurdities have been scorched and shrivelled out of existence by popular indignation uttered through the press. He expects to see the attempts by classes to discipline the faculty entirely eliminated very soon from the colleges.