

- system of "salvation by works" which Paul calls a "yoke of bondage" in verse one.
- (2) "Christ shall profit you nothing" - to enter into a system of salvation by works is to admit that Christ cannot save. In salvation Christ is everything or nothing. If we trust Him and Him alone we can be saved. If we trust Him and trust our own works in addition we cannot be saved.
- "Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to the Cross I cling."
- b. in Christ, circumcision is no advantage (verse 6)
- (1) Doubtless there were those who argued that circumcised Christians were better than uncircumcised Christians. Paul makes it clear that this is not the case. Some of the bitter disagreements among Christians could be avoided if we would only keep things in their rightful place.
- c. doctrinal deviation is a serious matter, however insignificant it may appear (verses 7-10)
- (1) "Ye did run well, who did hinder you"
- (a) often Paul refers to the figure of the foot race when speaking of the Christian life. See Philippians 3:14, Hebrews 12:1,2.
- (b) the word translated "hinder" is a military term which means to break up the road so as to hinder an advancing army. If the army of the Lord is to advance it must do so on the straight road of doctrinal fidelity. Those that teach doctrines contrary to the Word of God are like those bent on sabotage who seek to blow up the bridges and the roadway, causing the army to halt.
- (2) "a little leaven"
- The leaven of Bible times was a small piece of dough that was left to ferment. When the small fermented piece was placed in the fresh dough it would effect the whole larger piece causing it to rise. Leaven is frequently used in the Bible as a figure for sin. It is used in the Bible as a figure for sin. It is used in Matthew 16:6,12 and here in Galatians 5:9 to symbolize doctrinal corruption. In I Corinthians 5:6 it symbolizes moral corruption.
- The Galatians might have had the tendency to minimize the importance of the false doctrines which were being spread among them. Paul warns against minimizing even the smallest deviation from the truth.
- As an illustration, when scientists chart the course of a moon rocket they must be very careful for they know that the slightest deviation will cause the rocket to miss the moon by thousands of miles. The rocket uselessly goes on past the moon into the dark endless reaches of space. A slight doctrinal deviation left uncorrected will cause the church to enter the darkness of infidelity.
- d. To encourage someone to be circumcised in order to better reach the lost and to be circumcised in order to be saved are quite different matters.
- (1) In Acts 16:3 we read that Paul had Timothy circumcised in order to remove an offense which would hinder their work among the Jews. It was reported in Galatia that Paul was preaching circumcision, which was not the case. Paul answers the charge in verse 11. Why were the Jews still persecuting Paul if he had agreed with them. If he had given in on this point the cross would no longer be offensive to the Jews.
- (2) The word for offense means the "trigger of a trap." To the Jew the cross was a death trap. The cross meant trusting, while the Jew was interested in doing. If Paul had given up trusting for doing, the Jews would have had no quarrel with the Apostle.
- e. Circumcision as advocated by the Judaizers was no better than a heathen rite. (verse 12)
- Circumcision had no place in the dispensation following the coming of the Promised Seed. As a rite of the Church it had been replaced by baptism. (Colossians 2:11,12) To continue to use it as a rite would be to practice it outside the scope of God's revealed will. This would place it in the same realm with other rites not sanctioned by God's Word. In verse 12 Paul uses