

GALATIANS 2:18-19

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"For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." Galatians 2:18, 19

What is it that is referred to in the words, "If I build again the things which I destroyed"? There are at least two special thoughts involved in the words.

1. The one great idea of those who had turned back the Galatian Christians was justification by LAW. Whereas the truth of the gospel, which Paul had preached to the Galatians, and which even "an angel from heaven" could not contradict is justification by FAITH.

Paul has already shown, in verses 15, 16, that even they who were Jews by nature, and so had all the laws that the Lord had given, had believed on Christ in order that they might be justified by *faith* and not by works of *law*: and this for the accepted reason that by works of law no flesh can be justified.

This was the utter abandonment and destruction of all idea of justification by *law*. And having abandoned all idea of justification by *law*, in order, by believing in Jesus, to be justified by the *faith* of Christ, *now*, being justified by *faith*, shall I set up again the idea and the hope of being justified by *law*? Having abandoned the idea of justification by *law*, in order to find justification by *faith*, having *found* justification by *faith*, shall I again adopt the idea of justification by *law*?—God forbid; for when, to be justified by *faith*, I must abandon all idea of justification by *law*, if I now adopt again the idea of justification by *law*, I must abandon all idea of justification by *faith*. But when I abandon justification by *faith*, I make myself a transgressor; for "whatsoever is not of *faith* is sin." Therefore, if I build again the structure of justification by *law*, which I destroyed by justification by *faith*, I make myself a transgressor; because by the law is the knowledge of sin.

2. That which I destroyed by abandoning all idea of justification by law, and adopting justification only by the faith of Christ, is "the old man," "the body of sin." And to build again that which I destroyed is only to bring back from the dead that old man, is only to make alive the body of sin, *and that* can only make me a transgressor.

Justification by the faith of Christ means in *itself* the total abandonment of all sins committed, the remission of all "sins that are past," and also the *destruction of the body of sin*, so that "*henceforth* we should not serve sin." Therefore while seeking to be justified by *faith*, we must not be found sinners. For if I build again the body of sin which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. And in again adopting the idea of justification by law, I *do* build again, in *works*, what I destroyed by *faith*; because all seeking of justification by *law* is seeking justification by *our own works*, and our own works are simply works of *the flesh*, which are all sin; for "the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft,

hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like."

And in building again the structure of justification by *law*, which I abandoned in order to be justified by *faith*, I make myself a transgressor; because "for I through the law am *dead to the law*, that I might live unto God." Since abandoning the idea of justification by *law* and adopting justification by *faith* caused me to become *dead to the law* and *alive unto God*, then adopting again the idea of justification by *law*, which, in itself, is the abandonment of justification by *faith*, would cause me to become *alive to the law* and *dead unto God*. But to be dead unto God is nothing but to be dead *in trespasses and in sins*. And as to be dead unto God is to be dead in trespasses and in sins, and to be dead unto God is to be alive to the law, then to be alive to the law is only to be a transgressor.

Therefore, my brethren, justification by faith forever, without any works of any law of any kind whatever,—this is the only ground of hope of salvation.