

- 1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?
- 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
- 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

There are many ways to get drunk, but the results are all the same. The straightforward way is to use alcohol—to drink until you lose the use of your faculties. There is also the way of drugs. There are many mind-changing drugs that cause the mind to lose its sense of perception.

The drunken person loses the connection between his mind and reality, because his senses are dulled or put to sleep. He misunderstands what people say; he misunderstands what they do.

I remember years ago in Redding, California, Penny and I had gone out to a restaurant one evening and were walking down the sidewalk to our car. We passed a bar, just as a man was forcefully expelled from it. He came out of the door so rapidly that he almost knocked us down. He spun around, gathered himself, looked up into my face, and said, “And that goes for you, too!”

It was funny and we laughed about it. I have told the story many times. But it isn’t funny, really. It is sad that a man would allow himself to be so out of tune with reality—to lose his sense of what is going on.

This is the heart of idolatry. Idolatry supposes that the world is very different than it is. Idolatry imagines gods and goddesses. It fills the world with them and tries to manufacture explanations for the things that happen. Sometimes it dispenses with gods and goddesses altogether and tries to find natural causes for things. It imagines a world where the God of the Bible does not exist. Because of the mixed-up nature of the mind, the man loses touch with reality, the truth about himself and the truth about the God who made him. The idolater imagines such and such a world and then acts in terms of his imagination. This is even recommended and taught to children.

Paul describes this situation clearly in Romans 1.

- 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
- 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.
- 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves:
- 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Notice: Your view of God will determine your view of creation. You cannot be wrong about God and be right about His creatures. The poor man who was drunk and thrown out of the bar was not able to discern the truth about me. He was out of touch with reality.

The real evil, however, is not the loss of touch with reality. As Paul says in Romans 1; the reason the people were wrong about the creatures is because they were mixed up about God. The truth of God was changed into a lie in their minds and that is why the worshipped and served the creature.

This is why doctrine matters. This is why truth matters. This is why it is deadly to be lazy in spiritual things. In the passage we read a moment before in Gal. 3, Paul compares the mindset of the Galatians as those who were bewitched. The word “bewitched” has the idea of fascination, being put under a spell, because of the charm of the person who is doing the bewitching. He also calls them “stupid” or “foolish” so that they could not absolve themselves of the blame.

- I. Coming under the influence of lies is also a form of drunkenness. See Isaiah 29:
- 8 It shall even be as when an hungry *man* dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, *he is faint*, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.
 - 9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.
 - 10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.
 - 11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it *is* sealed:
 - 12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.
 - 13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:
 - 14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, *even* a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid.
 - 15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?
 - 16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

What madness it is to think that God has no understanding! It must be madness to think that God, who made the eye, cannot see; or He who made the ear, cannot hear; or that He who gives man judgment and reason, cannot or will not judge the world.

Vs. 9: they stagger, but not with drink. They are drunken, but with lies and deceit, not with liquor.

- a. The worst form of drunkenness is to be overwhelmed with lies. Think of those poor, benighted, but very wicked people, who stole aircraft and crashed them into the Pentagon and the World Trade Towers.
 - b. This is the reason that every idolater is a liar. It is either to know and love Christ who is the truth, or to be given over to the drunkenness of sin and misery—to live your whole life denying the truth about yourself and about the world you live in.
 - c. If you cannot perceive the truth, then you cannot act with intelligence—you will always misunderstand the situation.
- II. Christ had been evidently set forth before them. He had been displayed as on a billboard for all of

the Galatians to see. Why couldn't they understand? How stupid they were to allow clever and charming men to bewitch them and take them away from Christ.

- a. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.
 - i. All other ways that men attempt to find God are the ways of drunkenness and ruin. You are foolish indeed if you think you can stagger some other way into the presence of God. Do you think that God will so dishonor His Son that He will accept some other way to Him? Did Jesus Christ die in vain? If Buddha or Joseph Smith or Gandhi or Mohammed knew the way to heaven, then Christ is dead in vain.
 - ii. Every thing is a lie that does not honor Jesus Christ as the eternal Word of God. If Christianity is a lie; if it is a hoax, then there is nothing that can be believed. What a miserable world we live in, if Christianity is a myth. What a conspiracy that would be. What an awful world, if Christ is a lie. But not only is the Gospel of Christ not a lie and a made-up tale by Christian conspirators, it is the foundation upon which all truth rests.
 - iii. Everything that does not derive from Jesus Christ and His Gospel is dead, for He is the life. Without me, ye can do nothing, He said. Dead men worship dead gods with a dead faith resulting in dead works. There is no deadness like idolatry. It is dead no matter how loud you play the guitars or how energetically you beat the drums. Hollow preachers need loud instruments so that the people will not notice how dead they are. Modernists and revivalists coined the phrase “dead orthodoxy” to take the heat off themselves for their heresies. They whipped up a lot of excitement, took people away from the creeds and the discipline of the church and from Christ. Life is found in the church only if Christ is found, and He is found only in the ministry of the word and the sacraments. If you do not find Him there you will not find Him in the energy of the band.
- b. Christ is displayed in the faithful preaching of the Gospel. Paul is not talking about crucifixes and sculpture and paintings here. He is talking about the Gospel that was preached to them. Galatians 1: 6-9
 - 6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:
 - 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.
 - 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.
 - 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.
- c. Christ was evidently portrayed: “Painted” in a figurative sense. Literally, this word means “Previously written,” as would be the case in a sign or a placard. This had been done in the preaching—the Gospel sets forth Christ. Preachers must be careful to do that—they are to display Christ. When the church is called the pillar and ground of the truth, this is the sense: they display Christ and His truth before the world. They display Christ clearly and plainly.
- d. He was crucified among them. This also is figurative. Paul's preaching was of the power of the Gospel and brought them to a realization of the truth, as if Christ had actually died in their midst—this was powerfully impressed on their minds.
- e. See Numbers 21:9: Christ is “Placarded” among them, and that should keep all manner of evil away. It was a custom in pagan lands to “placard” a charm on the wall, to keep away in influence of an “evil eye” or an evil spell. Paul may have been using such a figure here—Christ crucified is the cure for all manner of evil.
- f. It was madness and folly for them to be carried away. They had Christ, slain for them. There is an important parallel in Colossians 1:9-21, The fullness is in Christ. The “more abundantly” is in

Christ. Don't go off seeking it somewhere else. You won't find what you need. You may find what you are looking for, but it will not be what you need.

- III. Christ crucified: here is the cure for you. This is Paul's theme in Galatians: if you hold to this you will be delivered from all kinds of intoxication and drunkenness.
- a. Why was He crucified? because of my sins: I must consent to this truth. I must see myself as a miserable sinner, unable to escape the wrath of God. There isn't anything I can do to save myself. If my works could ever be any value to bring me peace with God, then Christ is dead in vain. All those who seek to add works in any way, are enemies of the cross of Christ. Did God send His Son into the world to suffer the horrors of the cross, when men could have done something for themselves? The cross puts you in touch with the reality concerning yourself.
 - b. But He rose from the dead. There is newness of life in the Gospel of Christ. “Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” There is a power in the resurrection of Christ that gives me newness of life. This is by the mystery of the Gospel; the mystery of Christ who lives in me through the Gospel.
 - c. Jesus Christ Crucified is the true bread that came down from heaven: we feed on Him in the Gospel, and feeding on Him, I have life for my soul. This life does not derive from the law or from my good works, but from the Spirit that is given me in the Gospel. This we believe, and this we preach.

May God bless you.