



"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"

Categories : [Contemporary Issues](#), [Holy Fathers](#)

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There may be something rather intriguing in this Epistle of Holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians which starts off with what may look a very clear passage that may seem to be very straightforward and leaving little room for interpretation:

5:1 "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"

Ask any of the theological scholars today and most will tell you that this will refer to our civic (social) duty to stand up for our God given liberties. Examining everything happening in the world today, the world does indeed seem to want us to only look upon the earthly things and meanings, and if we do fall into this trap then we shall indeed fail. After all is this not the very essence of the Heresy of Social Gospel which is trying to pervert the meaning of the word of God towards a strictly worldly (social) interpretation?

What we are hoping to raise awareness of in our short dissertation is exactly to look at this Epistle and understand it in a deeper, spiritual sense. The deeper meaning of this epistle is a little more subtle and harder to grasp, and it has nothing to do with the physical but with spiritual freedom.

Let us start with this quote:

5:18 "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

This paragraph may sound extraordinary and unconceivable to someone who sees the organization of the Church today in a strictly worldly sense. Is the apostle here hinting that one has the freedom to disregard the law (the canon) if he liveth in the Spirit?

One of the written canons of those times was related to circumcision, and the Apostle is clearly taking the opportunity to respond to some dispute that seemed to have arisen surrounding it in his letter, making the case that we ought to be very careful that we do not **kill the spirit of the law by the letter of the law**. When looked in this light, it becomes clear that the liberty the apostle is speaking of by no means refers to physical freedom, but is a warning of not looking at the law



strictly from a worldly point of view, thus ignoring the danger of falling into spiritual bondage!

The Apostle even goes and makes the case against one of the canons of those days, that which required every male child be circumcised, if that canon is used against the Spirit of the Law:

5:3-4 "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

Particularly relevant is to correctly understanding this today, when the world is concerning itself with following the law only in a worldly way, which will inevitably lead to the spiritual bondage of Antichrist.

Fr Seraphim Rose of blessed memory warned about it this way:

"We are absolutely resolved, in all obedience to the Church and **lawful ecclesiastical authority**, not to become a part of any such mockery. We pray that our firmness will not lead to any scandal, and that we can proceed according to the letter as well as the spirit of all the Church's canons. But we know also that the canons were made for man, and not man for the canons, that above the canons is the spirit that inspired them, and that to preserve this spirit we are prepared even to go against the letter of separate canons, if these are enforced in order to crush our spirit. In actual fact, no one would dream of trying to enforce the letter of every canon today, for then there would be no Orthodox Christians left at all!"

<http://orthodoxaustralia.org/2016/05/03/letters-of-fr-seraphim-rose-077-mar-24april-6-1971/>

Other references:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5&version=KJV>