

CHAPTER I.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, THE REAL GOSPEL.

"PAUL, an apostle (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father; to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

"I marvel that ye are so quickly removed from Him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel; only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema. For am I now persuading men, or God? or am I seeking to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.

"For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the Gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, {10} nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it; and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus.

"Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now touching the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ; but they only heard say, He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc; and they glorified God in me." Galatians 1, R.V.

An Apostolic Salutation.

The first five verses form a greeting such as, with the exception of the first verses of the book of Romans, is not to be found elsewhere in the Bible, and, consequently, nowhere else

in the world. {11} It contains the whole Gospel. If there were no other portion of Scripture accessible, this contains sufficient to save the world. If we would study this small portion as diligently, and prize it as highly, as if there were no more, we should find our faith and hope and love infinitely strengthened, and our knowledge of the rest of the Bible much increased. In reading it, let the Galatians sink out of sight, and let each one consider it the voice of God, through His apostle, speaking to him to-day.

A Good Commission.

An apostle is one who is sent. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ, and of God, the Father, who raised Him from the dead. He had good backing. A messenger's confidence is in proportion to the authority of the one who sends him, and to his confidence in that authority and power. Paul knew that he was sent by the Lord, and he knew that the power of God is the power that raises from the dead. Now "he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." John 3:34. Thus it was that Paul spoke with authority, and the words which he spoke were the commandments of God. 1 Cor. 14:37. So in reading this epistle, or any other in the Bible, we have not to make allowance for the writer's personal peculiarities and prejudices. It is true that each writer retains his own individuality, since God chooses different men to do different work solely on account of their different personality; but it is God's Word in all, and nothing need be taken off from the authority of the message, and set down to the score of prejudice or early education. {12}

It is well to remember that not only the apostles, but every one in the church, is commissioned to "speak as the oracles of God." 1 Peter 4:11. All who are in Christ are new creatures, having been reconciled to God by Jesus Christ; and all who have been reconciled are given the word and ministry of reconciliation, so that they are ambassadors for Christ, as though God by them, even as by Christ, was beseeching men to be reconciled to Himself. 2 Cor. 5:17-20. This is a wonderful support against discouragement and against fear to speak God's message. The ambassadors of earthly governments have authority proportionate to the power of the king or ruler whom they represent; but Christians represent the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Apostles Are of God.

"God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings," etc. 1 Cor. 12:28. Let it be borne in mind that all these are set in the church by God Himself. No other can do it. It is impossible for men to make a true apostle or prophet. There are certain people in the world who say to others, Why do you not have apostles and prophets, etc., in the church? ignoring the fact that God has them in His church until this day, although they are often unrecognized, even as the apostleship of Paul and the others was often denied. Then there are some combinations of people who claim to have all these among them. Reading that God has set them in the church, they see that the true church of God ought to have apostles, prophets, etc.

Accordingly {13} they appoint some to be apostles, others to be prophets, and others to be teachers, and then they point to these as evidence that they are the true church of God.

The fact is, however, that this is the strongest possible proof that they are not the church of God. If they were the church of God, apostles and prophets would be set among them by God Himself; but the fact that they themselves are obliged to make apostles and prophets, shows that they have none in fact. They are simply setting up a dummy to hide the absence of the reality; but the presence of the sham only emphasizes the absence of the real.

Not of Men.

All Gospel teaching is based upon and derives its authority from the fact of the Divinity of Christ. The apostles and prophets were so fully imbued with this truth that it appears everywhere in their writings. In the very first verse of this epistle we find it in the statement that Paul was not an apostle of men, nor by any man, but by Jesus Christ, who is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), "the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance" (Heb. 1:1-3, R.V.); He was in the beginning with God, and was God, before the world was. John 1:1; 17:5. "He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." Col.1:17, R.V.

The Father and the Son.

"Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead," are associated on equal terms. "I and My Father are One." John 10:30. They both sit upon one throne. Heb. 1:3; 8:1; Rev. 3:21. The counsel of peace is between {14} them both. Zech. 6:12, 13. Jesus was the Son of God all His life, although He was of the seed of David according to the flesh; but it was by the resurrection from the dead, which was accomplished by the power of the Spirit of holiness, that His Sonship was demonstrated to all. Rom. 1:3, 4. This epistle has the same authority as Paul's apostleship: it is from Him who has power to raise the dead, and from Him who was raised from the dead.

The Churches of Galatia.

Galatia was a province in Asia Minor, so called from the fact that it was inhabited by Gauls,—people who came from the country now known as France. They settled in the territory which took its name from them (Gaul-atia—Galatia), in the third century before Christ. They were, of course, pagans, their religion being quite similar to that of the Druids, of Britain. Paul was the one who first preached Christianity to them, as we read in Acts 16:6; 18:23. The country of Galatia also included Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, which were visited by Paul, with Barnabas, on his first missionary journey. Acts 14.

Grace and Peace Be to You.

This is the word of the Lord, let it be remembered, and therefore means more than man's word. The Lord does not deal in empty compliments. His word is substantial; it carries with

it the thing which it names. God's word creates, and here we have the very form of the creative word. {15}

God said, "Let there be light; and there was light," and so on through the whole creation, "He spake, and it was." So here, "Let there be grace and peace to you," and so it is. "The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men." Titus 2:11. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." John 14:27. "Peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord." Isa. 57:19. God has sent grace and peace, bringing righteousness and salvation to all men—even to you, whoever you are, and to me. When you read this third verse of the first chapter of Galatians, do not read it as a sort of complimentary phrase,—as a mere passing salutation to open the real matter at hand,—but as the creative word that brings to you personally all the blessings of the peace of God, that passeth all understanding. It is to us the same word that Jesus spoke to the woman: "Thy sins are forgiven." "Go in peace." Luke 7:48-50. Peace is given to you; therefore, "let the peace of God rule in your hearts."

The Gift of Christ.

This grace and peace come from Christ, "who gave Himself for our sins." "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. 4:7. But this grace is "the grace that is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. 2:1. Therefore we know that Christ Himself is given to every one of us. The fact that men live is an evidence that Christ has been given to them, for Christ is "the life," and the life is the light of men, and this life-light "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." {16} John 1:4, 9; 14:6. In Christ all things consist (Col. 1:17), and thus it is that since God "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," He can not do otherwise than, with Him, freely "give us all things." Rom. 8:32. "His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." 2 Peter 1:3. The whole universe is given to us in Christ, and the fullness of the power that is in it is ours for the overcoming of sin. God counts each soul of as much value as all creation. Christ has, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9), so that every man in the world has received the "unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15). "The grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many," even to all; for "as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. 5:15, 18.

Christ Not Divided.

The question is asked, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you?" (1 Cor. 1:13), the answer obviously being in the negative. In that Christ is given to every man, each person gets the whole of Him. The love of God embraces the whole world, but it also singles out each individual. A mother's love is not divided up among her children, so that each one receives only a third, a fourth, or a fifth of it; each one is the object of all her affection. How much more so with the God whose love is more perfect than any mother's, and who Himself is

love! {17} Isa. 49:15. Christ is the light of the world, the Sun of Righteousness. But light is not divided among a crowd of people. If a room full of people be brilliantly lighted, each individual gets the benefit of all the light, just as much as though he were alone in the room. So the life of Christ lights every man that comes into the world, and in every believing heart Christ dwells in all His fullness. Sow a seed in the ground, and you get many seeds, each one having as much life as the one sown. So Christ, the true Seed, whence everything of worth comes, gives to all the whole of His life.

Our Sins Purchased.

Christ "gave Himself for our sins." That is to say, He bought them, and paid the price for them. This is a simple statement of fact; the language used is that commonly employed in referring to purchases. "How much did you give for it?" or, "How much do you want for it?" are frequent questions. When we hear a man say that he gave so much for a certain thing, what do we at once know?—We know that that thing belongs to him, because he has bought it. So when the Holy Spirit tells us that Christ gave Himself for our sins, of what should we be equally sure?—That He has bought our sins, and that they belong to Him, and not to us. They are ours no longer, and we have no right to them. Every time we sin we are robbing the Lord, for we must remember that Christ has purchased not merely the specific acts of sin that we have committed, and that are in the past, but the sins that are in us, and which break forth. In this faith there is righteousness. {18}

He Has Bought Us, Too.

This follows from the fact that He has purchased our sins, to deliver us from ourselves. Our sins are part of ourselves; nay, they are the whole of us, for our natural lives are nothing but sin. Therefore, Christ could not buy our sins without buying us also. Of this fact we have many plain statements. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity." Titus 2:14. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price." 1 Cor. 6:19. "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ." 1 Peter 1:18, 19, R.V.

"Accepted in the Beloved."

How often the Gospel worker hears some one say, "I am so sinful that I am afraid the Lord will not accept me;" and even people who have long professed to be Christians, often mournfully wish that they could be sure of their acceptance with God. Now the Lord has given no ground for any such doubts. The question of acceptance is forever settled by what we have just read. Christ has bought us, together with all our sins, and has paid the price. That shows that He has accepted us. Why does a man go to the shop and buy an article?—Because he wants it. If he has paid the price for it, having examined it so as to know what he was buying, does the merchant worry lest he will not accept it?—Not at all; the merchant knows that it is his business to get {19} the goods to the purchaser as soon as possible.

If he does not deliver the goods to the purchaser, he is guilty of fraud. The buyer will not indifferently say, "Well, I have done my part, and if he doesn't care to do his, he need not—that's all; he may keep the things if he wants to." No; he will visit the shop, and say, "Why have you not given me what belongs to me?" He will take vigorous measures to come into possession of his property. Even so it is not a matter of indifference to Jesus whether we surrender ourselves to Him or not. He longs with an infinite yearning for the souls that He has purchased with His own blood. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10. God has "chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world," and so "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:4-6.

"This Present Evil World."

Christ gave Himself for our sins, "that He might deliver us from this present evil world." He will take from us that which He bought, which is our sinfulness. In so doing, He delivers us from this "present evil world." That shows us that "this present evil world" is nothing but our own sinful selves. It is "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." 1 John 2:16. We ourselves make all the evil there is in the world. It is man that has made the world evil. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5:12. We need not try to throw the blame {20} upon somebody else; we ourselves provide all the evil that can possibly injure us.

The story is told of a man whose besetting sin was a violent temper. He would frequently become very angry, but he laid all the blame upon the people with whom he lived, who were so exasperating. Nobody, he declared, could do right among such people. So he resolved, as many others have done, to "leave the world," and become a hermit. He chose a cave in the forest for his dwelling-place, far from any other human habitation. In the morning he took his jug to a spring near by to get water for his morning meal. The rock was moss-grown, and the continual flow of water had made it very slippery. As he set his jug down under the stream, it slid away. He put it back, and again it was driven away. Two or three times was this repeated, and each time the replacing of the jug was done with increasing energy. Finally the hermit's patience was utterly exhausted, and exclaiming, "I'll see if you'll not stay!" he picked the vessel up and set it down with such vehemence that it was broken to pieces. There was nobody to blame but himself, and he had the good sense to see that it was not the world around him but the world inside of him that made him sin. Doubtless very many can recognize some experience of their own in this little story.

Luther, in his monk's cell, whither he had gone to escape from the world, found his sins more grievous than ever. Wherever we go, we carry the world with us; we have it in our hearts and on our backs,—a heavy, crushing load. We find that when we would {21} do good, "evil is present" with us. Rom. 7:21. It is present, always, "this present evil world," until, goaded to despair, we cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Even Christ found His greatest temptations in the desert, far away from human habitations. All these things teach us that hermits and monks are not in God's plan.

God's people are the salt of the earth; and salt, no matter how good it is, is of no use if shut up in a box; it must be mingled with that which is to be preserved.

Deliverance.

That which God has promised, He is "able also to perform." He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Eph. 3:20. He "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24. He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us, and He did not die in vain. Deliverance is ours. Christ was sent "to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." Isa. 42:7. Accordingly He cries out to the captives, "Liberty!" To them that are bound He proclaims that the prison doors are open. Isa. 61:1. To all the prisoners, He says, "Go forth." Isa. 49:9. Each soul may say, if he will, "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid; Thou hast loosed my bonds." Ps. 116:16. The thing is true, whether we believe it or not. We are the Lord's servants, even though we stubbornly refuse to serve; for He has bought us; and, having bought us, He {22} has broken every bond that hindered us from serving Him. If we but believe, we have the victory that has overcome the world. 1 John 5:4, R.V.; John 16:33. The message to us is that our "warfare is accomplished," our "iniquity is pardoned." Isa. 40:2. We have but to shout, as Israel did before Jericho, to see that God has given to us the victory. God "hath visited and redeemed His people." Luke 1:68. Out of Zion has come the Deliverer, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Rom. 11:26. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!"

The Will of God.

All this deliverance is "according to the will of our God and Father." The will of God is our sanctification. 1 Thess. 4:3. He willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Tim. 2:4. And He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." Eph. 1:11. "What! do you mean to teach universal salvation?" We mean to teach just what the Word of God teaches,—that "the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men." Titus 2:11, R.V. God has wrought out salvation for every man, and has given it to him; but the majority spurn it, and throw it away. The Judgment will reveal the fact that full and complete salvation was given to every man, and {23} that the lost have deliberately thrown away their birthright possession. Thus every mouth will be stopped.

The will of God is, therefore, something to rejoice in, and not something to be accepted with a wry face, and merely endured. Even though it involves suffering, it is for our good, and is designed to work "for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Rom. 8:28;

2 Cor. 4:17. In the law His will is revealed (Rom. 2:18), and we should, therefore, study it, saying with Christ, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God." Ps. 40:8.

Here is the comfort of knowing the will of God. He wills our deliverance from the bondage of sin; therefore, we can pray with the utmost confidence, and with thanksgiving; for "this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." 1 John 5:14, 15. Blessed assurance! Let us ever with glad and humble hearts pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

To God Be the Glory.

Not simply, "To Him be glory," as in the common version, but "To whom be the glory," as in the Revision. "Thine is the kingdom; and the power, and the glory." All glory is God's, whether men acknowledge it or not. To give Him the glory is not to impart anything to Him, but to recognize a fact. We give Him the glory by acknowledging that His is the power. "It is He that hath made us, {24} and not we ourselves." Ps. 100:3. Power and glory are the same, as we learn from Eph. 1:19, 20, which tells us that Christ was raised from the dead by the exceeding greatness of God's power, and from Rom. 6:4, where we learn that "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." Also when Jesus by His wondrous power had turned water to wine, we are told that in the performance of the miracle, He "manifested forth His glory." John 2:11. So when we say that to God is the glory, we are saying that the power is all from Him. We do not save ourselves, for we are "without strength." But God is the Almighty, and He can and does save. If we confess that all glory belongs to God, we shall not be indulging in vainglorious imaginations or boastings, and then will God be glorified in us. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:16.

The last proclamation of "the everlasting Gospel,"—that which announces the hour of God's Judgment come,—has for its burden, "Fear God, and give glory to Him;" "and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. 14:6, 7. Thus we see that the Epistle to the Galatians, which says, "To Him be the glory," is the setting forth of the everlasting Gospel. And it is emphatically a message for the last days. Let us study it, and heed it, that we may help to hasten the time when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Hab. 2:14. {25}

A Critical Case.

The abruptness with which the apostle plunges into the midst of his subject shows how urgent was the matter that called forth his epistle. His spirit seemed to be on fire, and, seizing his pen, he wrote as only one can write who feels upon his heart the burden of souls about to rush to destruction.

Who Calls Men?

"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Cor. 1:9. "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus," etc. 1 Peter 5:10. "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39. Those that are near, and those that are afar off, include all that are in the world; therefore, God calls everybody. Not all come, however. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thess. 5:23, 24. It is God who calls men.

Separating from God.

Since the Galatian brethren were separating from Him that had called them, and as God is the one who graciously calls men, it is evident that they were separating from God. Thus we see that it was no slight thing that called forth this epistle. Paul's brethren were in mortal danger, and he could not spend time on compliments, but must needs get at {26} once to the subject, and present it in as clear and direct terms as possible.

It may be well in passing to note an opinion that sometimes obtains, namely, that Paul referred to himself as the one who had called the Galatian brethren, and from whom they were removing. A little thought should convince anybody of the fallacy of this idea. First, consider the positive evidence, a little of which is already noted, that it is God who calls. Remember also that it was Paul himself who said that the apostasy would be the result of men's seeking to draw away disciples after themselves (Acts 20:30); he, as the servant of Christ, would be the last man to draw people to himself. It is true that God uses agents, of whom Paul was one, to call men, but it is God, nevertheless, that calls. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself;" we are ambassadors for Christ, so that now it is God beseeching men by us instead of by Christ, to be reconciled to Himself. There may be many mouths, but there is only one voice.

It is a small matter to be joined to or separated from men, but a matter of vital importance to be joined to God. Many seem to think that if they are only "members in good standing" in this or that church, they are secure. But the only thing worth considering is, Am I joined to the Lord, and walking in His truth? If one is joined to the Lord, he will very soon find his place among God's people, for those who are not God's people will not have a zealous, consistent follower of God among them very long. See Isa. 66:5; John 9:22, 33, 34; 15:18-21; {27} 16:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-5, 12. When Barnabas went to Antioch, he exhorted the brethren that with purpose of heart they would "cleave unto the Lord." Acts 11:22, 23. That was all that was necessary. If we do that, we shall certainly be with God's own people.

Without God.

Those who were departing from God were "without God in the world," just to the extent that they were removed from Him. But those who are in that condition are Gentiles, or

heathen. Eph. 2:11, 12. It is evident, therefore, that the Galatian brethren were relapsing into heathenism. It could not be otherwise; for whenever any Christian loses his hold upon God, he inevitably and even unconsciously drops back into the old life from which he had been saved. Each backslider will take up the particular habits to which he was formerly a slave. No more hopeless condition can exist in the world than to be without God.

Another Gospel.

The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. 1:16. God Himself is the power, so that separation from God means separation from the Gospel of Christ, who is the power of God. Nothing can be called a gospel unless it professes to give salvation. That which professes to offer nothing but death, can not be called a gospel. "Gospel" means "joyful news," "good tidings," and a promise of death does not answer that description. In order for any false doctrine to pass as the Gospel, it must pretend to be the way of life; otherwise it could not {28} deceive men. It is evident, therefore, that the Galatians were being seduced from God, by something that promised them life and salvation, but by a power other than that of God, namely, their own power. This other gospel was solely a human gospel. The question consequently would be, Which is the true Gospel? Is it the one that Paul preached? or the one the other men set forth? Therefore, we see that this epistle must be an emphatic presentation of the true Gospel as distinguished from every false gospel.

No Other Gospel.

Just as Jesus Christ is the only power of God, and there is no other name than that of Jesus, given among men, whereby salvation can be obtained, so there can be only one Gospel. "Power belongeth unto God," and to Him alone. See Ps. 62:9-11. A sham is nothing. A mask is not a man. So this other gospel, to which the Galatian brethren were being enticed, was only a perverted gospel, a counterfeit, a sham, and no real gospel at all. Some versions give verses 6 and 7 thus: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed . . . unto another gospel, although there is not any other." Since there is no other gospel now, there never could have been any other, for God changes not. So the Gospel which Paul preached to the Galatians, as well as to the Corinthians,—"Jesus Christ and Him crucified,"—was the Gospel that was preached by Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah. "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43. {29}

"Accursed."

If any man, or even an angel from heaven, should preach any other gospel than that which Paul preached, he would bring himself under a curse. There are not two standards of right and wrong. That which will bring a curse to-day would have produced the same result five thousand years ago. Thus we find that the way of salvation has been exactly the same in every age. The Gospel was preached to Abraham (Gal. 3:8), angels being sent to him; and the

prophets preached the Gospel (1 Peter 1:11, 12). But if the Gospel preached by them had been different from that preached by Paul, they would have been accursed.

Why should one be accursed for preaching a different gospel?—Because he is the means of fastening others in the curse, by leading them to trust for their salvation in that which professes to be power, but which is nothing. Since the Galatians were removing from God, it is evident that they were trusting to supposed human power—their own power—for salvation. But no man can save another (Ps. 49:6, 7), therefore, "cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Jer. 17:5. The one who leads men into the curse must, of course, himself be accursed.

"Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way." Deut. 27:18. If this be so of the one who causes a physically blind man to stumble, how much more must it apply to one who causes a soul to stumble to its eternal ruin! To delude people with a false hope of salvation,—to cause them to put {30} their trust in that which can by no means deliver them,—what could possibly be more wicked? It is to lead people to build their house over the bottomless pit. Well might the apostle deliberately reiterate his anathema. Here, again, we see the gravity of the situation that called forth this epistle.

"An Angel from Heaven."

But is there any danger, any possibility, that an angel from heaven would preach any other than the one, true Gospel?—Most assuredly, although it would not be an angel recently come from heaven. We read of "the angels that sinned" (2 Peter 2:4), and "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation" (Jude 6), and that the habitation from which they were cast was heaven (Rev. 12:7-9). Now "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." 2 Cor. 11:14, 15. It is they who come professing to be the spirits of the departed, and to bring messages fresh from the realms above (where the departed are not), and preaching invariably "another gospel" than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Beware of them. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." 1 John 4:1. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8:20. No one need be deceived, so long as he has God's Word. Nay, it is impossible for anybody to be deceived while he holds to the Word of God. That is a light to the way. {31}

Not Men-Pleasers.

It is admitted by churchmen that in the first three centuries the church became leavened with paganism, and that, in spite of reformations, much of paganism still remains. Now this was the result of trying to please men. The bishops thought that they could gain influence over the heathen by relaxing some of the strictness of the principles of the Gospel, which they did, and the result was the corruption of the church. Self-love is always at the bottom of efforts to conciliate and please men. The bishops desired (often, perhaps, without being conscious of it) to draw away disciples after themselves. Acts 20:30. In order to gain the favor

of the people, they had to compromise and pervert the truth. This was what was being done in Galatia; men were perverting the Gospel of Christ. But Paul was not of that class; he was seeking to please God, and not men. He was the servant of God, and God was the only one whom he needed to please. He who seeks to please men, is the servant of men, and not of God.

This principle is true in every grade of service. The house-servants or the shop assistants who labor only to please men, will not be faithful servants, for they will do good work only where it will be seen, but will slight any task that can not come under the eye of their employers. So Paul exhorts: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward {32} of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." Col. 3:22-24. He who cares for nothing else but to serve and please God, will render the best service to men.

This is a thing that needs to be impressed upon all. Christian workers especially need it. There is a tendency to dull the edge of truth, lest we should lose the favor of some wealthy or influential person. How many have stifled conviction, fearing the loss of money or position! Let every one of us remember this: "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." But this does not mean that we shall be stern and uncourteous. It does not mean that we willingly offend any. God is good to all. He is kind to the unthankful and the unholy. Jesus went about doing good, speaking words of love and comfort. We are to be soul-winners, and so must have a winning manner; but we are to win souls to God, and, therefore, must exhibit only the attractiveness of the loving, crucified One. We serve Christ by allowing His Spirit to control us.

"Who best bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best."

"Not of Man."

Note how this epistle emphasizes the fact that the Gospel is divine, not human. In the first verse the apostle states that he was not sent by man, nor to represent any man. Again he says that he is not anxious to please men, but only Christ; and now it is made very clear that the message he bore was wholly from heaven. By birth and education he was opposed to the Gospel, {33} and when he was converted it was by a voice from heaven. Read the accounts of his conversion in Acts 9:1-22; 22:3-16; 26:9-20. The Lord Himself appeared to him in the way as he was breathing threatening and slaughter against the saints of God.

There are no two persons whose experience in conversion is the same, yet the general principles are the same in all. In effect, every person must be converted just as Paul was. The experience will seldom be so striking, but if it is genuine, it must be a revelation from heaven as surely as Paul's was. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." Isa. 54:13; John 6:45. "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me." "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man

teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." 1 John 2:27.

Do not make the mistake of supposing that this does away with the necessity for any human agency in the Gospel. If it did, then the apostles would have been self-condemned, because they were preachers of the Gospel. God has set apostles, prophets, teachers, etc., in the church (1 Cor. 12:28); but it is the Spirit of God that works in all these. "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." John 3:34. Therefore, no matter by whom anybody first hears the truth, he is to receive it as coming direct from heaven. The Holy Spirit enables those who wish to do God's will to tell what is truth as soon as they see or hear it, and they accept it, not on the {34} authority of the man through whom it came to them, but on the authority of the God of truth. We may be as sure of the truth which we hold and teach as the apostle Paul was. But whenever anybody cites the name of some highly-esteemed preacher or doctor of divinity, to justify his belief, or to give it more weight with some person whom he would convince, you may be sure that he himself does not know the truth of what he professes. It may be the truth, but he does not know for himself that it is true. It is everybody's privilege to know the truth (John 8:31, 32); and when one holds a truth directly from God, ten thousand times ten thousand great names in its favor do not add a feather's weight to its authority; nor is his confidence in the least shaken if every great man on earth should oppose it. It is a grand thing to be built on the Rock.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Note that it is not simply a revelation from Jesus Christ, but the "revelation of Jesus Christ." It was not simply that Christ told Paul something, but that Christ Himself revealed Himself to Paul, and in him, and He is the truth. That this is what is meant here may be seen from verse 16, where we read that God revealed His Son in Paul, that he might preach Him among the heathen. The mystery of the Gospel is Christ in the believer, the hope of glory. Col. 1:25-27. The Holy Spirit is Christ's personal representative. Christ sends Him, that He may abide with us forever. The world receives Him not, because it sees Him not; "but ye know Him," says Christ; "for He {35} dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14:16, 17. Only so can the truth of God be known and be made known. Christ does not stand afar off and lay down right principles for us to follow; but He impresses Himself upon us, takes possession of us, as we yield to Him, and makes manifest His life in our mortal flesh. 2 Cor. 4:11. Without this life shining forth, there can be no preaching of the Gospel. Note that Jesus was revealed in Paul, in order that Paul might preach Him among the heathen. He was not to preach about Christ, but to preach, to present, Christ Himself. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." 2 Cor. 4:5.

God is waiting and anxious to reveal Christ in every man. We read of men "who hold down the truth in unrighteousness," and that "that which may be known of God is manifest in them," even as in everything that God has made His "everlasting power and Divinity" are clearly seen. Rom. 1:18-20, R.V. Now Christ is the truth (John 14:6), and He is the power of

God (1 Cor. 1:24), and the Divinity of God (John 1:1). Therefore, Christ is the truth that the wicked are holding down. He is the Divine Word of God, present in men, that they may do it. Deut. 30:14; Rom. 10:6-8. That Christ is in all men is evident from the fact that they live; but He is so held back and kept down that it is difficult to discern Him. Nay, in most men the opposite character is revealed, the mere fact of living and breathing being in many cases the only evidence that Christ is there. Yet He is there, patiently waiting to be revealed,—longing for the time to come when the {36} Word of God may have free course and be glorified, and the perfect life of Jesus of Nazareth be manifested in mortal flesh. This may take place in "whosoever will," no matter how sinful and degraded he is now. It pleases God to do it now; cease, then, to resist.

Personal History.

From the twelfth verse of the first chapter till the middle of the second, we have a narrative of personal history, told for a definite purpose. In Paul's experience we see the truth of the Gospel, and how it has nothing to gain from men, but everything to give. The apostle shows that all his early life was against his being influenced by the Gospel, for he studied that which was opposed to it, and he bitterly opposed it. Then he was converted when there was no Christian near him, and he had next to no association with Christians for years afterward. All this of which the Galatians had been previously informed, it was necessary to repeat in order that it might be clear to all that Paul was not bringing them another human invention.

Note, in passing, the word "conversation," which occurs several times in the Bible in a sense that is not now common. Compare the Revised Version, and we find that it means "manner of life." Paul's "conversation in time past" was his early life. See the old and the Revised Version of 1 Peter 1:18.

"Concerning Zeal, Persecuting the Church."

This is what Paul said of himself, in his Epistle to the Philippians. Phil. 3:6. How great his zeal was he himself tells. He says that he persecuted {37} the church of God "beyond measure," and "wasted it," or, as in the Revision, "made havoc of it." See also Acts 8:3. Before Agrippa he said: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Acts 26:9-11. In an address to the Jews in Jerusalem, who knew his life, he said, "I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women." Acts 22:4. This he did because, as the previous verse says, he was "zealous toward God." So full of this sort of zeal was he that he breathed nothing but "threatenings and slaughter." Acts 9:1.

It seems almost incredible that any one professing to worship the true God, can have such false ideas of Him as to suppose that He is pleased with that kind of service; yet Saul of

Tarsus, one of the most bitter and relentless persecutors of Christians that ever lived, could say years afterward, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." Acts 23:1. Although kicking against the pricks (Acts 9:5), and endeavoring to silence the growing conviction that would force itself upon him as he witnessed the patience of the Christians, and heard their dying testimonies to the truth, Saul was not wilfully stifling the voice of conscience. On the contrary, he was {38} striving to preserve a good conscience, and so deeply had he been indoctrinated with the Pharisaic traditions, that he felt sure that these inconvenient prickings must be the suggestions of an evil spirit, which he was in duty bound to suppress. So the prickings of the Spirit of God had for a time only led him to redouble his zeal against the Christians. Of all persons in the world, Saul, the self-righteous Pharisee, had no bias in favor of Christianity. Yet his misdirected zeal was a "zeal for God," and this fact made him good material for a Christian worker.

Paul's Profiting.

Paul "profited," made advancement, "in the Jews' religion," above many of his equals, that is, those of his own age, among his countrymen. He had possessed every advantage that was possible to a Jewish youth. "An Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. 3:5), he was nevertheless a free-born Roman citizen (Acts 22:26-28). Naturally quick and intelligent, he had enjoyed the instruction of Gamaliel, one of the wisest doctors of the law, and had been "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." Acts 22:3. After the "straitest sect" among the Jews, he lived a Pharisee, and was "a Pharisee of the Pharisees," so that he was "more exceedingly zealous of the traditions" of the fathers than any others of his class. Grown to manhood, he had become a member of the great council among the Jews,—the Sanhedrim,—as is shown by the fact that he gave his vote (Acts 26:10, R.V.) when Christians were condemned to death. Added to this, he possessed the confidence of the high priest, who readily gave him {39} letters of introduction to the rulers of all the synagogues throughout the land, with authority to seize and bind any whom he found guilty of "heresy." He was, indeed, a rising young man, on whom the rulers of the Jews looked with pride and hope, believing that he would contribute much to the restoration of the Jewish nation and religion to their former greatness. There had been a promising future before Saul, from a worldly point of view; but what things were gain to him, those he counted loss for Christ, for whose sake he suffered the loss of all things. Phil. 3:7, 8.

The Traditions of the Fathers, not the Religion of Christ.

Paul says, "I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers." It is easy to see that "the Jews' religion" was not the religion of God and Jesus Christ, but was human tradition. People make a great mistake in considering "Judaism" as the religion of the Old Testament. The Old Testament no more teaches Judaism than the New Testament teaches Roman Catholicism. The religion of the Old Testament is the religion of Jesus Christ. It was His Spirit that was in the prophets, moving them to present the same Gospel that the

apostles afterwards preached. 1 Peter 1:10-12. When Paul was "in the Jews' religion" he did not believe the Old Testament, which he read and heard read daily, because he did not understand it; if he had, he would have believed on Christ. "For they that dwell at {40} Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him." Acts 13:27.

The traditions of the fathers led to transgression of the commandments of God. Matt. 15:3. God said of the Jewish people (as a whole): "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Verses 8, 9. On the Sabbath days the rulers read in the synagogues from the Scriptures, and for this instruction there was no reproof. Jesus said: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not." Matt. 23:2, 3. Jesus had no word of condemnation for Moses and his writings. He said to the Jews, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me." John 5:46. Everything, therefore, which the scribes read and commanded from his writings was to be followed; but the example of the readers was to be shunned, for they did not obey the Scriptures. Christ said of them, "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." Matt. 23:4. These were not the commandments of God, for "His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3); and the burdens were not of Christ, for His burden is light (Matt. 11:30).

We hear much about the "Judaizing teachers," {41} who sought to pervert the Galatians, and we know that they who were teaching "another gospel" were Jews; but we must not fall into the error of supposing that these "Judaizing teachers" were presenting the Bible, or any part of it, to the new converts, or trying to get them to follow the Scriptures written by Moses. Far from it; they were leading them away from the Bible, and substituting for its teaching the commandments of men. This was what roused the spirit of Paul. The "Jews' religion" was an entirely different thing from the religion of God, as taught in the law, the prophets, and the psalms.

"Separated unto the Gospel of God."

These are the words with which Paul described himself in the Epistle to the Romans: "Called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God." Rom. 1:1. So here he says that God "separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace." Gal. 1:15. That God chose Saul to be an apostle, before Saul himself had any thought that he should ever be even a Christian, is evident from the sacred narrative. On his way to Damascus, whither, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter," he was proceeding with full authority to seize, bind, and drag to prison all Christians, both men and women, Saul was suddenly arrested, not by human hands, but by the overpowering glory of the Lord. Three days afterward the Lord said to Ananias, when sending him to give Saul his sight, "He is a chosen vessel unto

Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles." Acts 9:15. God arrested Saul in his mad career of persecution, {42} because He had chosen him to be an apostle. So we see that the pricks against which Saul had been kicking were the strivings of the Spirit to turn him to the work to which he had been called.

But how long before this had Saul been chosen to be the messenger of the Lord?—He himself tells us that he was "separated,"—"set apart,"—from his birth. He is not the first one of whom we read that from birth he was chosen to his life-work. Recall the case of Samson. Judges 13:2-14. John the Baptist was named, and his character and life-work were described, months before he was born. The Lord said to Jeremiah: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Jer. 1:5. The heathen king Cyrus was named more than a hundred years before he was born, and his part in the work of God was laid out for him. Isa. 44:28; 45:1-4.

These are not isolated cases, but are recorded for the purpose of showing us that God rules in the world. It is as true of all men as it was of the Thessalonians, that "God hath from the beginning chosen" them "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." 2 Thess. 2:13. It rests with every one to make that calling and election sure. And he who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3, 4, R.V.), has also appointed "to every man his work" (Mark 13:34). He who leaves not Himself without witness even in the inanimate creation (Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:20), would fain have man, His highest {43} earthly creation, willingly give such witness to Him as can be given only by human intelligence. All men are chosen to be witnesses for God, and to each is his labor appointed. All through life the Spirit is striving with every man, to induce him to allow himself to be used for the work to which God has called him. Only the Judgment Day will reveal what wonderful opportunities men have recklessly flung away. Saul, the violent persecutor, became the mighty apostle. Who can imagine how much good might have been done by the men whose great power over their fellows has been exerted only for evil, if they had yielded to the influence of the Spirit? Not every one can be a Paul; but the thought that each one, according to the ability that God has given him, is chosen and called of God to witness for Him, will, when once grasped, give to life a new meaning.

The knowledge of this truth will not only make life more real for us, leading us to seek to know the will of God for us individually, and to submit wholly to Him, that He may use us to do the work for which He has designed us, but it will tend to make us more considerate of others, and not to despise the least. What a wonderful, a joyous, and yet a solemn thought, as we see men moving about, that to each one of them God has given a work of his own to do. They are all servants of the Most High God, each one assigned to special service. It is a wondrous privilege, and a wondrous responsibility. How few are doing the work God would have them do! We should be extremely careful not to hinder any person in the slightest degree from doing his heaven-appointed task. {44}

Another thing that we should remember is that it is God who gives to every man his work. Each one is to receive his orders from God, and not from men. Therefore, we should beware of dictating to men concerning their duty. God can make it plain to them, as well as to us; and if they will not hear Him, they will not be likely to hear us, even if we could direct them in the right way. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23), much less to direct the steps of some other man.

Conferring with Flesh and Blood.

"Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." This statement is made for the purpose of showing that the apostle did not receive the Gospel from any human being. He saw Christ, and accepted Him, then he went to Arabia, and came back to Damascus, and not till three years after his conversion did he go up to Jerusalem, where he stayed only fifteen days, and saw only two of the apostles. Moreover, the brethren were afraid of him, and would not at first believe that he was a disciple; so it is evident that he did not receive the Gospel from any man.

But there is much to learn from Paul's not conferring with flesh and blood. To be sure, he had no need to, since he had the Lord's own word; but such a course as his is by no means common. For instance, a man reads a thing in the Bible, and then must ask some other man's opinion before he dare believe it. If none of his friends believe it, he is fearful of accepting it. If his pastor, or some commentary, explains the text away, then away it goes; flesh {45} and blood gain the day against the Spirit and the Word.

Or, it may be that the commandment is so plain that there is no reasonable excuse for asking anybody what it means. Then the question is, Can I afford to do it? Will it not cost too much sacrifice? The most dangerous flesh and blood that one can confer with is one's own. It is not enough to be independent of others; in matters of truth one needs to be independent of one's self. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." Prov. 3:5. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Prov. 28:26.

A pope is one who presumes to occupy the place in counsel which rightfully belongs to God alone. The man who makes himself pope, by following his own counsel, is just as bad as the man who dictates to another, and is more likely to be led astray than is the man who follows some pope other than himself. If one is to follow a pope at all, it would be more consistent to accept the pope of Rome, because he has had more experience in popery than any other. But none is necessary, since we have the Word of God. When God speaks, the part of wisdom is to obey at once, without taking counsel even of one's own heart. The Lord's name is "Counselor" (Isa. 9:6), and He is "wonderful in counsel." Hear Him! "He will be our Guide forevermore."

"Immediately."

Note that word. Paul did not stop to parley. He lost no time. He thought he was serving God when he was persecuting the church, and the minute {46} he found out his mistake he turned about. When he saw Jesus of Nazareth, he recognized Him as his Lord, and

immediately cried out, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He was ready to be set to work in the right way, and that immediately. It is an example well worth consideration. Would that everybody might truthfully say, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments." Ps. 119:60. "I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart." Verse 32.

Gentiles—Heathen.

Paul tells us that Christ was revealed in him, that he might preach Him among the heathen. In the Revision we have the word "Gentiles" used instead of "heathen." There is no difference. The two words are used interchangeably in the English Bible, for wherever they occur, they are translated from only one Greek word, or, if it be in the Old Testament, the corresponding Hebrew word. Let us note a few instances.

In 1 Cor. 12:2 we read, "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led." This is from the ordinary word for "heathen," and the text itself shows that Gentiles are idol-worshippers—heathen. Take notice that the Corinthians "were Gentiles;" they ceased to be such on becoming Christians.

Eph. 2:11, 12: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the common- {47} wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Surely, to be a Gentile is to be in a most unenviable condition.

We are told that "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." Acts 15:14. And James referred to the believers in Antioch and elsewhere as those who "from among the Gentiles are turned to God." God's people are taken out from among the Gentiles, but on being taken out, they cease to be Gentiles. Abraham, the father of Israel, was taken from among the heathen (Josh. 24:2), so that all Israel are taken from among the Gentiles. Thus it is that "all Israel shall be saved" by the coming in of the fullness of the Gentiles. Rom. 11:25, 26.

In Ps. 2:1-3 we might lawfully read, "Why do the Gentiles rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed [that is, against Christ, for Christ means "anointed"], saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." How often we see this fulfilled in the cases of individuals, who, with a triumphant air, exclaim: "Show me a place where the Gentiles are commanded to keep the ten commandments!" meaning that they are Gentiles, and thinking thus to cast away from themselves the laws of God. It is no honorable class in which they place themselves. It is true that the Gentiles are not commanded to keep the commandments, as Gentiles, for that would be impossible; as soon as {48} they accept Christ, and the law of the Spirit of life in Him, they cease to be Gentiles. How solicitous God is to save people from their Gentile

state, is shown by His sending the apostle Paul (to say nothing of Christ) to bring them to Himself.

A Prophet to the Gentiles.

In this connection it is worth while to note that God was as anxious for the conversion of the Gentiles three thousand years ago as He is to-day. The Gospel was preached to them before the first advent of Christ, as well as it was afterwards. Paul was not the first one who preached to the Gentiles after Christ, although he was sent specially to them. He was known as the apostle to the Gentiles, yet everywhere he went he preached to the Jews first, and as long as they would hear him. So it was before Christ. By many agencies God made Himself known among all nations, yet Jeremiah was specially chosen as the prophet to the Gentiles, or heathen. In Jer. 1:5, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations," the Hebrew word from which the word "nations" is translated is the very same that is regularly translated "heathen." "Why do the heathen rage?" Ps. 2:1. "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war," etc. "Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen." Joel 3:9-11. The words "heathen" and "Gentile" in these texts are the same as the word "nations," in Jer. 1:5. This can be seen by comparing the old with the Revised Version. So the Lord said to Jeremiah, "I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee, a prophet unto the Gentiles." Let no {49} one say that God ever at any time confined His truth to any one people, whether Jew or Gentile. "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." Rom. 10:12.

The New Convert Preaching.

As soon as Paul was converted, "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues." Acts 9:20. Was it not marvelous that he should at once be able to preach so powerfully?—Indeed it was, as it is marvelous that any man can preach Christ. That anybody should be able to preach Christ in very truth, involves no less a mystery than Christ manifest in the flesh. But do not let anybody suppose that Paul got his knowledge instantaneously, without any study. Remember that he had all his life been a diligent student of the Scriptures. It was not an uncommon thing for a rabbi to be able to repeat the greater portion or the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures from memory, and we may be sure that Paul, who had made more advancement than any others of his age, was as familiar with the words of the Bible as a bright schoolboy is with the multiplication table. But his mind was blinded by the traditions of the fathers, which had been drilled into him at the same time. The blindness which came upon him when the light shone round him on the way to Damascus, was but a picture of the blindness of his mind; and the seeming scales that fell from his eyes when Ananias spoke to him, indicated the shining forth of the Word within him, and the scattering of the darkness of tradition. Paul's case was very dif- {50} ferent from that of a new convert who has never read or studied the Bible. Such an one can, indeed, tell what Christ has done for him, and may thereby do much good; but he needs much study of the Scriptures to make him able to show men the way of life perfectly, and lead them in the way of righteousness.

Paul in Arabia.

Many have thought that it was while Paul was in Arabia that he had his wonderful revelations, and was taken up into heaven, where he heard "unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter." This may well be, although it is by no means probable that his visions of heavenly things were confined to that time. All his life through the apostle was in close communion with heaven, and we may be sure that "the heavenly vision" was never hidden from his sight. So, also, we may be sure that, since preaching was his life-work, he did not spend all the months he was in Arabia in study and contemplation. He had been so severe a persecutor, and had received so richly of God's grace, that he counted all the time lost in which he could not reveal that grace to others, feeling, "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel." He preached in the synagogues in Damascus, as soon as he was converted, before he went into Arabia; so it is but natural to conclude that he preached the Gospel to the Arabs. He could preach there without the opposition that he always received when among the Jews, and, therefore, his labors would not so much interfere with his meditation on the new worlds that had just opened before him. {51}

The Persecutor Preaching.

Wonderful, indeed, it was to hear that "he that once persecuted us, now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc." In view of the case of Saul of Tarsus, let no one look on any opposer of the Gospel as incorrigible. Those who make opposition are to be instructed with meekness, for who knows but that God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth? One might have said of Paul, He has had the light as clearly as any man can have it. He has had every opportunity; he has not only heard the inspired testimony of Stephen, but he has heard the dying confessions of many martyrs; he is a hardened wretch, from whom it is useless to expect any good. Yet that same Saul became the greatest preacher of the Gospel, even as he had been the most bitter persecutor. Is there a malignant opposer of the truth? Do not strive with him, and do not reproach him. Let him have all the bitterness and strife to himself, while you hold yourself to the Word of God and to prayer. It may not be long till God, who is now blasphemed, will be glorified in him.

Glorifying God.

"And they glorified God in me." How different Paul's case was from that of those to whom he said, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you" (Rom. 2:24)! Every one who professes to be a follower of God should be a means of bringing glory to His name, yet many cause it to be blasphemed; and to have the name of God blasphemed through us is as bad as to be ourselves open {52} blasphemers. How can we cause His name to be glorified?—"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:16.

RECAPITULATION.

THE GLAD TIDINGS — GALATIANS, CHAPTER ONE.

Let us now take a brief glance at the chapter as a whole.

The greeting, embracing the first five verses, tells us the name and calling of the writer of the epistle, and his authority. It incidentally notes the fact that Christ is Divine. A benediction is pronounced, from God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Son. Christ gave Himself for our sins,—purchased them,—thus to deliver us from this present evil world. Our sins constitute this present evil world. Our sins belong to Christ, not to us; so by the power of His death and resurrection, in which He gave Himself for our sins, we may be kept from them. It is the will of God to save us, so that there can be no doubt as to our acceptance. To God belongs the glory, because His is the kingdom and the power.

The next two verses show us the condition of the churches in Galatia at the time the epistle was written, and thus make known to us why it was written. They were departing from God, being led astray by some who were perverting the Gospel of Christ, preaching a pretended gospel instead of the one only Gospel, which is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes. The marvel of the thing is the same as that expressed in Jer. 2:12, 13: "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For My {53} people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Then in the next two verses (8, 9) we find a curse pronounced on any one, even though it were the apostle himself, or an angel from heaven, who should presume to teach any other gospel than that he had preached. This shows the seriousness of the situation. The Galatian brethren were being placed under the curse by the accursed preachers who preached a false gospel.

Following this, in verses 10-12, the apostle shows himself to be the servant of Christ, because he was seeking to please God only, and not men. The preachers who perverted the souls of men, would preach smooth things,—things in harmony with human nature,—to draw away disciples after them; Paul preached only the plain truth of God, which he received not through any man, but direct from heaven.

Lastly we have the beginning of a little narrative of personal experience, which is continued more than half way through the second chapter. In this Paul refers to his life before his conversion, when he persecuted the church; mentions his conversion, which was the revelation of Christ in him; tells why he was called, and how promptly he responded to the call; and lastly shows how he had no opportunity to get the Gospel from apostles and brethren who were believers before him, even if he had wished to, since he had no connection with them for years after his conversion. The force of this will appear more plainly as we proceed. {54}