**“Studies in Galatians. Chapter 1:6-10” The Signs of the Times, 24, 48.**

E. J. Waggoner

**Only One Gospel**

Having in our minds the opening words of the Epistle to the Galatians, we will proceed directly to the subject matter of it. The apostle at once comes to the point, saying:— {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 755.1}

“I marvel that ye are so quickly removing 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, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.” Galatians 1:6-12. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 755.2}

A careful consideration of exactly what is said in these first verses in Galatians, will save the student much trouble and confusion later on. It is here that we learn the subject of the epistle. We saw last week that the introduction, the salutation, embraced the whole Gospel; surely such an introduction could lead to nothing else but a setting forth of the Gospel. In the verses that constitute this week’s lesson, we find this emphasized. Let us study them closely. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 755.3}

Who Calls Men? —“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” 1 Corinthians 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 Thessalonians 5:23, 24. It is God who calls men. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 755.4}

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 once to the subject, and present it in as clear and direct terms as possible. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 755.5}

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. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 755.6}

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 Isaiah 66:5; John 9:22, 33, 34; 15:18-21; 16:1-3; 2 Timothy 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. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 755.7}

Another Gospel. -The Gospel is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” Romans 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 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. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 755.8}

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. 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. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 755.9}

“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 (Galatians 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. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 755.10}

But why should one be accursed for preaching a different gospel?-Because he is the means of fastening others in the curse “Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way.” Deuteronomy 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 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. And here, again, we see the gravity of the situation that called forth this epistle. The Galatians brethren, having been led astray by accursed teachers, were themselves in danger of damnation. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 756.1}

“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 (Revelation 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 Corinthians 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.” Isaiah 8:20. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 756.2}

Not Men-Pleasers. —The apostle Paul exhorts servants to be obedient to their “masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but with singleness of heart, fearing God.” Colossians 3:22. How much more then should it apply to those who are preaching the Gospel! So Paul declares that he is not seeking to persuade, to conciliate, to gain the favor of, or to please men, but God. The Lord alone is his Master. “We are ambassadors for Christ,” and this is true of every Christian to the extent of the ability that God has given him. The position of an ambassador was thus very concisely put by a daily paper, in connection with a circumstance that occurred about two years ago:— {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 756.3}

The fundamental basis of the influence and authority of any ambassador is the universal knowledge that he personally is absolutely beyond the reach of praise or blame, of loss or gain, of reward or punishment, in the foreign country where he represents his own. To his sovereign alone, through an official channel, and to no other human being, may a diplomatist look for recompense or fear rebuke. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 756.4}

This is pre-eminently true of Christ’s ambassador. To Him, and to *no human being*, are they answerable. To please Him is their sole business. As soon as they seek to please men, they cease to serve Him. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 756.5}

Unbounded Freedom. —“He that is called in the Lord, being a servant is the Lord’s freeman.” 1 Corinthians 7:22. Paul, “an ambassador in bonds” desired the prayers of his brethren, that utterance might be given him, that he might open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel. Ephesians 6:19, 20. He who recognizes his relation to Christ as ambassador, is absolutely free. He need fear no man. Nay, it is impossible for him to fear man, since he knows the infinite power that sustains him. He can proclaim the Gospel as boldly before kings as before peasants. How can he fear kings, when he serves the King of kings? And if he does present his message in the presence of God and the angels, how can he fear the face of any man? Such holy boldness is worth untold worlds. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 756.6}

Not of Man.-Paul declared that he did not receive the Gospel from any man, but that it came to him directly from Christ. In the account of his conversion (Acts 9:1-22; 22:10), we see that a man was sent to Paul with a message from the Lord; nevertheless, it is true that Paul did not receive the Gospel from man. If he had, then he would have been a servant of men. But as he was sent, not by any man, but Jesus Christ and God, who raised him from the dead (Galatians 1:1), so he carried only the message which the Lord Himself gave him. Note how he repeats that what he tells he received of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 11:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:15. “The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 14:37. That was the secret of his boldness he had if he had received it from man. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 756.7}

We may have this same confidence, and indeed must have it if we are Christ’s servants. If we receive the Gospel from men, then we are not sure of our ground. Not but what God employs human agents, for the Gospel is committed to men, but, no matter whose form we see, no matter what man God uses, we must recognize God’s voice, and receive the message fresh from Him, else we have no assurance of it correctness. We need not depend on any man or any church to substantiate the Word of God, or for our knowledge that this or that is or is not His Word. “Ye know all things.” “These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But 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 it truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.” 1 John 2:20, 26, 27. Even tho a man has truth, and if he has received it through some man as the instrument of the Spirit, if he traces his reception of it to that man, or his mind runs to that man and to what he said, as assurance for what he holds, he has not yet the truth as he ought to have it. When a man recognizes the voice of God in a truth that he hears, and receives it as coming directly from the Lord, then it is his own, and he knows it for a certainty. He is then free from men. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 756.8}

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. So we read: “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” 1 John 3:20. The mystery of the Gospel is Christ in the believer, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:25-27. Thus it is that every Christian not only may but must be as sure of the Gospel which he believes, and which he makes know to others, as the apostle Paul was. Thank God that He has not left us to follow “cunningly-devised fables.” E. J. WAGGONER. {SITI December 1, 1898, p. 756.9}

**“Studies in Galatians. Chapter 1:13-24” The Signs of the Times, 24, 49.**

E. J. Waggoner

**A Zealous Persecutor Arrested**

The two lessons already studied, embracing Galatians 1:1-12 have shown us the subject of the epistle and the gravity of the situation that called it forth. The epistle itself, we have seen, deals with nothing less than the whole Gospel, perfect and complete, namely, Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Redeemer, “mighty to save” from the evil of this present world. That which called for a clear, forcible, and direct statement of the Gospel, was the fact that some were perverting it, doing the accursed work of leading the Galatians brethren away from God and Christ, and causing them to rest in a false hope of salvation, which could end only in their destruction. As a contrast to the false gospel which the Galatians were receiving from men, the apostle assures them that the Gospel which he preached did not come from men, but that he received it by the direct revelation of Jesus Christ. As proof of the statement that he was not indebted to any man for the Gospel, he proceeds, in the verses which follow, to give an outline of his history before and after he became a Christian. Read them in connection with the preceding portion of the chapter:— {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 770.1}

“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 heathen; 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 1:13-24. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 770.2}

“Concerning Zeal, Persecuting the Church.” -This is what Paul said of himself, in his Epistle to the Philippians. Philippians 3:6. How great his zeal was he himself tells. He says that he persecuted 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. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 770.3}

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 willfully stifling the voice of conscience. On the contrary, he was 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. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 770.4}

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” (Philippians 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 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. Philippians 3:7, 8. What caused this great change?-Nothing less than the power of the everlasting love and patient forbearance of God. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 770.5}

“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.” Romans 1:1. So here he says that God “separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace.” Galatians 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, 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. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.1}

But how long before this had Saul been chosen to be the messenger of the Lord?-He himself tells us that he was separated from his mother’s womb. From his birth Saul had been “separated unto the Gospel of God.” This was no new thing. The work of Samson and of John the Baptist was laid out for them before they were born. See Judges 13:2-14; Luke 1:13-17. Jeremiah was chosen before his birth to be a prophet of God. Jeremiah 1:4, 5. Pharaoh, the haughty, defiant king of Egypt, had also been chosen to make the name of God known throughout all the earth (Exodus 9:15, 16, R.V.), but he refused to do it as the acknowledged servant of the Lord, and so the work had been accomplished through his obstinacy. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.2}

These things but remind us that chance does not rule in this 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 Thessalonians 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 Timothy 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; Romans 1:20), would fain have man, His highest 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. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.3}

The Revelation of Christ. —“When it pleased God.... to reveal His Son in me.” Note the exact words. The apostle does not say that it pleased God to reveal His Son *to* him but *in* Him. There is a great truth in this, which stands out very plainly in connection with some other texts. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.4}

Read the whole of Deuteronomy 30. There we see that two things were placed before the people for them to choose between, namely, life and good, and death and evil. This, together with the fact that they were exhorted to keep the commandments of God, shows that they had not yet attained to righteousness. Then in verses 11-14 we read that the commandment is not far off so as to make it necessary for some one to bring it to them, in order that they might do it; “but *the Word* is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and *in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.*” {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.5}

We see, therefore, that the Word is in the hearts of men before they do it, and that it is there in order that they may do it. But what is the Word?-Read John 1:1-14, where we learn that the Word is God. “And the Word was made flesh.” That this is what is meant in the passage just quoted in Deuteronomy, is seen from Romans 10:6-9, where it is quoted, and the Word is plainly declared to be Christ. Christ, then, dwells in the heart, in the flesh, of every man, and has come thus near to all men in order that they may be made the righteousness of God. Most men are ignorant of this divine presence, and live as tho God were not, and that they were their own creators and preservers. But when the Spirit of truth brings a man to the knowledge of the truth, then Christ dwells in his heart, not as hitherto, unappreciated and unrecognized, but “*by faith*.” Ephesians 3:17. Then is Christ *revealed in him*, and he fulfils the divine purpose of showing “forth the excellencies of Him that called him out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9. Only by such a revelation of Christ in a man can he preach Him among the heathen with that revelation, his whole life is a Gospel sermon, even tho he does not utter discourses. So we see that the work of the human preacher is exactly the same as that of the heavens: to declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1-5) and it is to be done in the same manner. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.6}

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. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.7}

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 and blood gain the day against the Spirit and the Word. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.8}

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.” Proverbs 3:5. “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.” Proverbs 28:26. When God speaks, our part of wisdom is to obey at once, without ... even of one’s own heart. The Lord’s name is “Counsellor.” (Isaiah 9:6) and He is “Wonderful in counsel.” Hear Him. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.9}

Paul’s Visit to Arabia. -In the record of Paul’s conversion, in Acts 9, we are told that as soon as he was baptized, he began to preach in the synagogs, “proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him, but, being let down over the wall by night in a basket, he escaped them, and came to Jerusalem.” Verses 22-26. If we had no other record than this, we should not know but that Paul spent all the time in Damascus until he returned to Jerusalem; but in Galatians 1:17-18 we learn how long a time those “many days” cover, and that in the three years Paul visited Arabia. Returning to Damascus from Arabia, he continued preaching, until his earnestness and power called down on him the wrath of the Jews, and he was obliged to flee for his life. Yet in all this three years’ preaching, Paul never saw any other apostle. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.10}

Paul’s Miraculous Conversion. -There is no question that Paul’s conversion was a miracle; but so is every conversion. Men seem to think that Paul’s conversion had something more of the miraculous in it than ordinary conversions; but the fact is that exactly the same elements entered into Paul’s conversion as in all other conversions. It was more than ordinarily striking, to be sure; because Paul was a more than ordinarily hard case to deal with, and was called to, as he was fitted for an extraordinary work. Paul saw the Lord, and thereby learned his own wretched condition; this at once humbled him, and he accepted the Lord. That was the whole of it, and it is the same thing that occurs in every conversion, although not necessarily with the same outward manifestations. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.11}

“But 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 different from that of a new convert who has never read or studied the Bible. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 771.12}

The Persecutor Preaching. -Compare the statements in Galatians 1:18-22 with Acts 9:26-20; 22:17-21. Circumstances rendered it impossible that Paul should get any teaching from the Jewish Christians. It was not necessary, to be sure, and it was so ordered that all could see that he was taught of God, and not of man. So for years after his conversion he was “unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ; but they had heard only. That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed,” or, “of which he made havoc.” And they glorified God in him. That is what God designs shall be done in each one of us. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 772.1}

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. E. J. WAGGONER. {SITI December 8, 1898, p. 772.2}

**“Studies in Galatians. Chapter 2:1-10” The Signs of the Times, 24, 50.**

E. J. Waggoner

**The Truth of the Gospel**

Before beginning the study of the second chapter of Galatians, read the first chapter again carefully. One must necessarily understand and have in mind the contents of chapter 1 in order to understand chapter 2, since the second is but a continuation of the first. There is no break in the narrative in passing from the first to the second chapter. We may summarize the first chapter thus:— {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 787.1}

The salutation, in which the whole Gospel is included. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 787.2}

The reason for writing the epistle, which is found in the statement of the condition of the Galatians, namely, that they were departing from God to a perverted gospel, being led astray by some accursed teachers. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 787.3}

There is but one Gospel, namely, that which Paul preached. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 787.4}

That Gospel was given him, not by any man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ in him. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 787.5}

Lastly, a brief summary of Paul’s former life, his conversion, and his experience during the first seventeen years of his Christian life, chiefly with reference to the fact that he was not in connection with any of the brethren, by whom he could have been biased. He was near to Damascus when the Lord met him; he conferred not with flesh and blood, but went into Arabia and returned to Damascus, and after three years went up to Jerusalem, where he stayed fifteen days, afterwards going into Syria and Cilicia, without getting acquainted with the churches in Judea. And so he continues the narrative:— {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 787.6}

“Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me. And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain. But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised; and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage; to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you. But from those who were reputed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person)-they, I say, who were of repute, imparted nothing to me; but contrariwise, when they saw that I had been intrusted with the Gospel of uncircumcision, even as Peter with the Gospel of the circumcision (for He that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also unto the Gentiles); and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision; only they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do.” Galatians 2:1-10. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 787.7}

Another Visit to Jerusalem. —“Fourteen years after,” following the natural course of the narrative, means fourteen years after the visit recorded in Galatians 1:18, which was three years after the apostle Paul’s conversion. The second visit, therefore, was seventeen years after his conversion, or about the year 51 A.D., which coincides with the time of the conference in Jerusalem, which is recorded in Acts 15. It is with that conference, and the things that led to it, and grew out of it, that the second chapter of Galatians deals. In reading this chapter, therefore, the fifteenth of Acts must be understood and borne in mind. Our study this week will thus necessarily be largely in Acts 15, of which Galatians 2 is merely an adjunct. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 787.8}

The New Gospel. -In the first chapter of Galatians (verses 6, 7) we are told that some were troubling the brethren, by perverting the Gospel of Christ, presenting a false gospel, and pretending that it was the true Gospel. In Acts 15:1 we read that “certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye can not be saved.” This, we see, was the other gospel, which was not another, since there is only one, but which was being palmed off upon the brethren as the true Gospel. That these men who brought this teaching professed to be preaching the Gospel, is evident from the fact that they professed to tell the people what they must do to be saved. Paul and Barnabas would not give any place to the new preaching, but withstood it, in order, as Paul tells the Galatians, “that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.” Galatians 2:5. Paul and Barnabas had “no small dissension and disputation with them.” Acts 15:2. So we see that the controversy was no insignificant one, but was between the real Gospel and a counterfeit. The question was a vital one for the new believers, and has no less interest for us. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 787.9}

A Denial of Christ. -A glance at the experience of the church at Antioch, to whom this new gospel was brought, will show that it did in the most direct manner deny the power of Christ to save. The Gospel was first brought to them by brethren who had been scattered by the persecution that arose on the death of Stephen. These brethren came to Antioch “preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.” Acts 11:19-21. Then the apostles sent Barnabas to assist in the work; and he, “when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord.” Verses 22-24. Then Barnabas found Saul, and together they labored with the church in Antioch for more than a year. Verses 25, 26. There were in the church prophets and teachers, and as they ministered unto the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost spoke to them, telling them to separate Barnabas and Saul to the work to which He had called them. Acts 13:1-3. So we see that the church there had had much experience in the things of God. They were acquainted with the Lord and with the voice of the Holy Spirit, who witnessed that they were children of God. And now after all this, these men said to them, “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye can not be saved.” That was as much as to say, All your faith in Christ, and all the witness of the Spirit, are nothing without the sign of circumcision. The sign of circumcision, without faith, was exalted above faith in Christ without any outward sign. The new gospel was a most direct assault upon the Gospel, and a flat denial of Christ. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 787.10}

“False Brethren.” -It is no wonder that Paul styles those who presented this teaching, “false brethren,” who had, as the Danish strongly expresses it, “sneaked in.” Galatians 2:4. To the Galatians he said of them, “There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.” Galatians 1:7. The apostles and elders, in their letter to the churches, said of those men, “Certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls.” Acts 15:24. And they further added that they “gave no commandment” to them. Verse 24, R.V. That is to say, these teachers were “false brethren,” who were not recognized by the apostles as teachers, who were speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves. There have been many such since that time. So vicious was their work that the apostle said, “Let them be accursed.” They were deliberately seeking to undermine the Gospel of Christ, and thus to destroy the souls of the believers. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 788.1}

“The Sign of Circumcision.” -These false brethren had said, “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye can not be saved.” Literally, “You have not power to be saved.” This put all the power of salvation in the outward sign of circumcision. Paul declares, “In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.” Galatians 5:6. Circumcision has no power, ad uncircumcision has no power, but faith alone, working by love, is mighty to save. That which the false brethren wished to enforce was not real circumcision, for that is not outward, but in the heart, and consists solely in obedience to God’s law through faith. See Romans 2:25-29; 4:7-11. Abraham was righteous by faith alone, was in fact, really circumcised in heart “with the circumcision made without hands,” by the Spirit, before he received the outward mark, which was not real circumcision, but only served as a sign, a reminder to him that circumcision consists in worshiping God in the spirit, and having no confidence in the flesh. Romans 4:2-11; Colossians 2:10, 11; Philippians 3:3. So these Christians of Antioch, who had been converted from heathenism, just as Abraham was, and had received the Lord Jesus, were circumcised with the true circumcision. The “false brethren” wished them to give up the reality for the empty sign. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 788.2}

“The Flesh Profiteth Nothing.” -Jesus said, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63. The people of Antioch and Galatia had trusted in Christ for salvation; now there were some who sought to induce them to trust in the flesh. They did not tell them that they were at liberty to sin. Oh, no; they told them that they must keep the law! Yes, they must do it themselves; they must make themselves righteous without Jesus Christ. For circumcision stood for the keeping of the law. Now the real circumcision was the law written in the heart by the Spirit; but these “false brethren” wished the believers to trust in the outward form of circumcision, as a substitute for the Spirit’s work; so that the thing which was given as a sign of righteousness by faith, became only a sign of self-righteousness. The false brethren would have them circumcised for righteousness and salvation; but Peter said, “Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we believe to be saved.” Just as Paul wrote, “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Romans 10:10. “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Romans 14:23. Therefore, all the efforts of men to keep the law of God by their own power, no matter how earnest and sincere they may be, can never result in anything but imperfection-sin. “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Isaiah 64:6. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 788.3}

“A Yoke of Bondage.” -When the question came up in Jerusalem, Peter said to those who would have men seek to be justified by their own works, instead of by faith in Christ, “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” Acts 15:10. This yoke was a yoke of bondage, as is shown by Paul’s words, that the “false brethren” sneaked in “to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.” Galatians 2:4. Christ gives freedom from sin. His life is “the perfect law of liberty.” “By the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20), but not freedom from it. “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12), just because it gives the knowledge of sin by condemning it. It is a signpost, which points out the way, but does not carry us. It can tell us that we are out of the way; but Jesus Christ alone can make us walk in it; for He is the way. Sin is bondage. Proverbs 5:22. Only those who keep the commandments of God are at liberty (Psalm 119:45); and the commandments can be kept only by faith in Christ (Romans 8:3, 4). Therefore, whoever induces people to trust in the law for righteousness, without Christ, simply puts a yoke upon them, and fastens them in bondage. When a man has been convicted by the law as a transgressor, and cast into prison, he can not be delivered from his chains by the law which holds him there. But that is no fault of the law: just because it is a good law, it can not say that a guilty man is innocent. So these Galatian brethren were brought into bondage by men who were foolishly and vainly seeking to exalt the law of God by denying Him who gave it, and in whom alone its righteousness is found. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 788.4}

Why Paul Went Up to Jerusalem. -The record in Acts says that it was determined at Antioch that Paul and Barnabas and some others should go up to Jerusalem about this matter. But Paul declares that he went up “by revelation.” Galatians 2:2. Paul did not go up simply on their recommendation, but the same Spirit moved both him and them. He did not go up to learn the truth of the Gospel, but to maintain it. He went, not to find out what the Gospel really is, but to communicate the Gospel which he had preached among the heathen. Those who were chief in the conference imparted nothing to him. He had not been preaching for seventeen years that of which he stood in doubt. He knew whom he believed. He knew whom he believed. He had not received the Gospel from any man, and he did not need to have any man’s testimony that it was genuine. When God has spoken, an endorsement by man is an impertinence. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 788.5}

The Gospel Not Magic. -The great lesson taught by this experience, to which Paul referred the Galatians, is that there is nothing in this world that can confer grace and righteousness upon men, and that there is nothing in the world that any man can do, that will bring salvation. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and not the power of man. Any teaching that leads men to trust in any object, whether it be an image, a picture, or anything else, or to trust for salvation in any work or effort of their own, even though that effort be directed toward the most praiseworthy object, is a perversion of the truth of the Gospel,-a false gospel. There are in the church of Christ no “sacraments” that by some sort of magical working confer special grace on the receiver; but there are things that a man who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who is thereby justified and saved, may do as an expression of his faith. The only thing in the world that has any efficacy in the way of salvation, is the life of God in Christ. “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:8-10. E. J. WAGGONER. {SITI December 15, 1898, p. 788.6}

**“Studies in Galatians. Chapter 2:6-16” The Signs of the Times, 24, 51.**

E. J. Waggoner

**“Justified by the Faith of Christ”**

Our last lesson covered the first ten verses of the second chapter of Galatians, but we did not particularly study the last portion of the section. Accordingly we shall begin our study this week with the sixth verse, in order to keep the connection. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 803.1}

“But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me; but contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as [the gospel] of the circumcision was unto Peter (for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles); and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 803.2}

“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Galatians 2:6-16. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 803.3}

No Monopoly of Truth. —“Whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me; God accepteth no man’s person.” There is no man or body of men on earth, that has a monopoly of truth,—a corner, so to speak, so that whoever wishes it must come to him. Truth is independent of men. Truth is of God, for Christ, who is the shining of His glory, and the very impress of His substance (Hebrews 1:3), is the truth (John 14:6). Whoever gets the truth, must get it from God, and not from any man, just as Paul received the Gospel. God may and does use men as instruments, or channels, but He alone is the Giver. Every man on earth may be the possessor of just as much of the truth as he is willing to use, and no more. See John 7:17; 12:35, 36. He who would act the pope, thinking to hold a monopoly of the truth, and compel people to come to him for it, dealing it out here, and withholding it there, loses all the truth that he ever had, if he ever really had any. Truth and popery can not exist together; no pope, or man with a popish disposition, has the truth. As soon as a man receives the truth, he ceases to be a pope. If the pope of Rome should get converted, and become a disciple of Christ, that very hour he would vacate the papal seat. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 803.4}

The Biggest Not Always the Best. -Just as there is no man who has a monopoly of truth, so there are no places to which men must necessarily go in order to find it. The brethren in Antioch did not need to go to Jerusalem to learn the truth, or to find out if what they had was the genuine article. The fact that truth was first proclaimed in a certain place, does not prove that it can be found only there, or that it can be found there at all. In fact, the last places in the world to go to with the expectation of finding or learning truth, are the cities where the Gospel was preached in the first centuries after Christ, as Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria, etc. Paul did not go up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before him, but began at once to preach. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 803.5}

The Papacy arose in part in this way: It was assumed that the places where the apostles, or some of them, had preached must have the truth in its purity, and that all men must take it from there. It was also assumed that the people of a city must know more of it than the people in the country or in a village. So, from all bishops being on an equality, as at the beginning, it soon came to pass that the “country bishops” (*chorepiscopoi*) were rated as secondary to those who officiated in the cities. Then, when that spirit crept in, of course the next step was necessarily a strife among the city bishops to see which one should be greatest; and the unholy struggle went on until Rome gained the coveted place of power. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 804.1}

But Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a place that was “little among the thousands of Judah” (Micah 5:2), and nearly all His life He lived in Nazareth, a little town of so poor repute that a man in whom there was no guile said, “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” John 1:45-47. Afterward Jesus took up His abode in the wealthy city of Capernaum, but was always known as “Jesus of Nazareth.” It is no farther to heaven from the smallest village or even the smallest lonely cabin on the plain, than it is from the largest city, or bishop’s palace. And God, “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy,” dwells with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit. Isaiah 57:15. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 804.2}

It Is God That Works. —“He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.” The Word of God is living and active. Hebrews 4:12, R.V. Whatever activity there is in the work of the Gospel, if there is any work done, is all of God. Jesus “went about doing good; ... for God was with Him.” Acts 10:38. He Himself said, “I can of Mine own self do nothing.” John 5:30. “The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.” John 14:10. So Peter spoke of Him as “a Man approved of God... by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him.” Acts 2:22. The disciple is not greater than his Lord. Paul and Barnabas, therefore, at the meeting in Jerusalem, told “what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.” Acts 15:12. Paul declared that he labored to “present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; ...striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.” Colossians 1:28, 29. This same power it is the privilege of the humblest believer to possess, “for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 804.3}

Recognizing the Gift. -The brethren in Jerusalem showed their connection with God by recognizing the grace that was given to Paul and Barnabas. When Barnabas first went to Antioch, and saw the grace of God that was working there, he was glad, “and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 11:21-24. The other apostles perceived that God had chosen Paul for a special work among the Gentiles; and, although his manner of working was different from theirs, for God had given him special gifts for his special work, they freely gave to him the right hand of fellowship, only requesting that he would remember the poor among his own nation; and this he had already shown his willingness to do. Acts 11:27-30. So Paul and Barnabas returned to their work. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 804.4}

Withstanding Peter. —“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.” We need not magnify nor dwell upon the mistakes of Peter or any other good man, because that is not profitable for us; but we must note this overwhelming proof that Peter was never considered the “prince of the apostles,” and that he never was, and never considered himself to be, pope. Fancy any priest, bishop, or cardinal, withstanding Leo XIII. to the face in a public assembly. He would be considered extremely fortunate if the papal guards allowed him to escape with his life for thus presuming to oppose the self-styled “vicar of the Son of God.” But Peter made a mistake, and that upon a vital matter of doctrine, because he was not infallible, and he meekly accepted the rebuke that Paul gave him, like the sincere, humble Christian that he was. Infallibility is not the portion of any man; and the greatest man in the church of Christ has no lordship over the weakest. “One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.” {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 804.5}

Making a Difference. —“When Peter was at the conference in Jerusalem, he told the facts about the receiving of the Gospel by the Gentiles, through his preaching, saying, “God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” Acts 15:8, 9. God put no difference between Jews and Gentiles in the matter of the purification of the heart, because, knowing the hearts, He knew that “there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” so that there is no other way than for all to be “justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:22-24. But after having been shown this fact by the Lord; after having preached to the Gentiles, and after having witnessed the gift of the Holy Ghost to them, the same as to Jewish believers; after having eaten with those Gentile converts, and faithfully defending his course; after having given a clear testimony in conference, that God made no difference between Jews and Gentiles; and even immediately after himself making no difference, Peter suddenly, as soon as some came who he thought would not approve of such freedom, began to make a difference. “He withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.” This was, as Paul says, dissimulation, and was not only wrong in itself, but was calculated to confuse and mislead the disciples. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 804.6}

Contrary to the Truth of the Gospel. -A wave of fear seems to have passed over the Jewish believers, for “the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.” This in itself was, of course, not walking “uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel;” but the mere fact of dissembling was not the whole of the offense against the truth of the Gospel. Under the circumstances it was a public denial of Christ, just as much as that of which Peter had once before, through sudden fear, been guilty. We have all been too often guilty of the same sin to permit us to sit in judgment; we can only note the fact and the natural consequence, as a warning to ourselves. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 804.7}

See how the action of Peter and the others was a virtual, although unintentional, denial of Christ. There had just been a great controversy over the question of circumcision. It was a question of justification and salvation,-whether men were saved by faith alone in Christ, or by outward forms. Clear testimony had been borne that salvation is by faith alone: and now, while the controversy is still alive, while the “false brethren” are still propagating their errors, these loyal brethren suddenly discriminated against the Gentile believers, because they were uncircumcised, in effect saying to them, “Except ye be circumcised, ye can not be saved.” Their actions said, “We also are in doubt about the power of faith in Christ alone to save men; we really believe that salvation depends on circumcision and the works of the law.” Such a denial of the truth of the Gospel Paul could not endure, and he at once struck directly at the root of the matter. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 804.8}

“Sinners of the Gentiles,” and Sinners of the Jews. —“If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Paul said to Peter, “We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.” Did he mean that they, being Jews, were, therefore, not sinners?—By no means, for he immediately adds that they had believed on Jesus Christ for justification. They were sinners of the Jews, and not sinners of the Gentiles; but whatever things they had to boast of as Jews, all had to be counted loss for the sake of Christ. Nothing availed them anything except faith in Christ; and since this was so, it was evident that the Gentile sinners could be saved directly by faith in Christ, without going through the dead forms which had been of no service to the Jews. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 804.9}

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” 1 Timothy 1:15. “All have sinned,” and stand alike guilty before God; but all, of whatever race or class, can accept this saying, “This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” A circumcised sinner is no better than an uncircumcised one; a sinner who stands as a church-member, is no better than one who is outside. The sinner who has gone through the form of baptism is not better than the sinner who has never made any profession of religion. Sin is sin, and sinners are sinners, whether in the church or out; but, thank God, Christ is the propitiation for our sins, as well as for the sins of the whole world. There is hope for the unfaithful professor of religion, as well as for the sinner who has never named the name of Christ. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 804.10}

“Justified.” —“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law.... we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified,” said the apostle. The meaning of the word “justified” is made righteous. In an accommodated sense we use the term “justified” of a man who has not done wrong in a thing whereof he is accused. But, strictly speaking, such an one needs no justification, since he is already just; his righteous deed justified him. He was justified in his deed. But since all have sinned, there are none just or righteous before God; therefore they need to be justified, or made righteous, which God does. Now the law of God is righteousness. See Romans 7:12; 9:30, 31; Psalm 119:172. Therefore Paul did not disparage the law, although he declared that no man could be made righteous by the law, meaning, of course, the law written on stones or in a book. No; so highly did he appreciate the law, that he believed in Christ for the righteousness which the law demands but can not give. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:3, 4. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 804.11}

“The Faith of Christ.” -Much is lost, in reading the Scriptures, by not noting exactly what they say. Here we have literally, “the faith of Christ,” just as in Revelation 14:12 we have “the faith of Jesus.” He is the Author and Finisher of faith. Hebrews 12:2. God has “dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Romans 12:3), in giving Christ to every man. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17), and Christ is the Word. All things are of God. It is He who gives repentance and forgiveness of sins. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 805.1}

There is, therefore, no opportunity for any one to plead that his faith is weak. He may not have accepted and made use of the gift, but there is no such thing as “weak faith.” A man may be “weak in faith,” that is, may be afraid to depend on faith, but faith itself is as strong as the Word of God. There is no faith but the faith of Christ; everything else professing to be faith is a spurious article. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 805.2}

Here is comfort. Whoever will accept the faith of Jesus, has that which is as sure to work righteousness in him, and to save him, as the victory of Christ over sin and death is assured. He gives to us His own tried and approved faith. It has not a flaw, and we need not fear to use it: it will not fail us in any contest. “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8. We are saved by nothing less than God’s unchangeable Word, and by Christ’s own personal confidence in that Word. We are not exhorted to try to do as well as He did, or to try to exercise as much faith as He had, but simply to take His faith, and let it work by love, and purify the heart. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 805.3}

Believing Is Receiving.—“As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:12. That is, as many as believed on His name received Him. To believe on His name is to believe that He is the Son of God; to believe that He is the Son of God, means to believe that He is come in the flesh, in human flesh, in our flesh, for His name is “God with us;” so to believe on His name means simply to believe that He dwells personally in every man,—in all flesh. We do not make it so by believing it; it is so, whether we believe it or not; we simply accept the fact, which all nature reveals to us. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 805.4}

It follows, then, as a matter of course that, believing in Christ, we are justified by the faith of Christ, since we have Him personally dwelling in us, exercising His own faith. All power in heaven and earth is in His hands, and, recognizing this, we simply allow Him to exercise His own power in His own way. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 805.5}

Personal Experience. -The reader will now see the object of Paul’s narrative. Instead of beginning with abstract argument, to convince the Galatians of their error, he began with telling his own personal experience. That led him to tell what he said on another occasion, when some had erred concerning the faith. But all the time he is dealing with facts. He is telling what he knows, and the burden of the whole is personal acquaintance with Christ. The Gospel is no dead thing, no abstract doctrine, no “works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves” (Titus 3:5, R.V.), but a personal, acceptance of the personal Christ, who alone has power to work salvation. Christ as a living Saviour, always and everywhere present, always active and mighty to save, is the theme of the apostle’s letter from first to last, but especially in the portion now before us, and that which follows. E. J. WAGGONER. {SITI December 22, 1898, p. 805.6}