

HAVE I BECOME YOUR ENEMY?

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“Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?”

Galatians 4:15, 16

Paul reminds the Galatian believers of their initial fondness of him and his gospel ministry. They must have received the gospel message and the gift of salvation with such joy. The man of God was respected, appreciated, and loved. They would have done anything for the apostle Paul. He testifies in our text, “ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.” They would have sacrificed one of their most precious gifts, the ability to see, in order to help the preacher.

These were indeed a most blessed people. How quickly things can change. That “blessedness” had now turned to resistance. Paul asks them, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” They had turned on the man of God because of the truth he had given to them. How is it possible that people who had so esteemed the beloved apostle were now so much in opposition to his ministry?

We have seen this same change of opinion and sentiment repeated many times over the years. Anyone who has been in the gospel ministry for any length of time has experienced the pain of seeing former supporters become critics. It would be easy to understand if the preacher had become heretical in his message and was preaching a false gospel. Or, if the man of God had fallen into immorality or vice, it could be understood that his followers would lose their respect and devotion. However, this

was not so in the case of Paul and the Galatians. Nor is it usually the case in our day, though it occasionally happens.

Very often the thing that causes former followers to become foes is similar, if not identical, to the circumstances in our Scripture. People love and appreciate the message and the messenger until something is preached or taught that they will not accept, even if it is the truth. Often the flesh does not want to submit to truth. Most of us have personally seen many people lose their love for the pastor and the church because they were not open to seeing some truth of the Scripture, or were not willing to honor the authority of the Word of God. We should make error our enemy, not the one who brings us the truth.