

The Apostle Paul and His Missionary Labors



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BEFORE we write of the Apostle Paul and his missionary labors, a few introductory remarks will be timely.

We do well to grasp the wonder of the Bible. Many of us have been taught it at our mother's knee, and been accustomed to it from our earliest days, but by our very familiarity with the Scriptures we are apt to miss the unrivalled wonder of the Book of books.

It is the oldest history book in the world. Nothing is known so full, so clear, so informative, bearing upon its pages the verisimilitude of truth. Ancient secular histories stand in vivid contrast to the Bible. In them it is hard to distinguish between truth and fiction, between fact and fable. The reader feels he is looking through a mist at figures exaggerated in size, partly human, partly superhuman. The mind is left in complete suspense as to what to believe, and what not to believe. This is not so with the Bible. The histories of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David are all human and true to life. We can walk with Abraham through strange lands; sympathize with Joseph in prison and rejoice in his exaltation; behold Moses come down from the Holy Mount with shining face; see David sling his stone at the giant and see the giant fall. There is nothing like this in the writings of the ancients. Can we not discern the hand of God, not

only in the writing of the Holy Scriptures, but also in their miraculous preservation to this day? God chose a nation, the children of Israel, and "unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3: 2). And well have they kept that trust, though the record is anything but to their credit as a nation.

When we come to the New Testament, apart from our blessed Lord, the greatest and most remarkable figure is that of the Apostle Paul. All that Paul was, both as a man and as a servant of the Lord, was to the glory of God, and not to his own glory. The greater we see the Apostle Paul to be, the more our discovery redounds to the glory of God. We do not desire to extol a man, but to praise God, who could take a man of like passions to ourselves, convert him, energize him, and use him in such a signal fashion. The perusal of the Acts of the Apostles and of the Pauline Epistles leaves on our minds such a vivid sense of the magnificence of this truly great servant of the Lord, that we find it difficult to convey adequately our impressions to others.

Perhaps a few preliminary remarks will help us to realize what was involved in the missionary labors of Paul on the side of arduous toil. Here is a man who renounced the joys of marriage, the distinction of fatherhood, the comfort of a settled home, the amenities of ordinary life, for the service of the Lord. In a Bible reading recently, one present said he thought there was a danger of our having too much imagination. We felt inclined to rejoin that there was also a real danger in having too little. If only our imagination is bounded by *fact*, wholesome imagination is

a great help in realizing facts. In reading these records, let the reader seek to realize the hundreds and thousands of miles the Apostle traversed by sea, on foot, on beast or by carriage. Sometimes the journey would be under the sweltering heat of the summer's sun; sometimes amid snow and ice and biting winds, blizzards, mountain passes rendered impassable for weeks at a time. The roads at best were poor, often mere bridle-paths, or non-existent. The country was beset with robbers and bandits, who held life cheap. The traveller entered into strange cities and towns. Accommodation was generally difficult, and often very inadequate and uncomfortable. And how were his needs replenished? That was at once a problem and a miracle.

As to sea travel, sailing vessels were all that the Apostle Paul knew. They generally hugged the coasts for safety in case a storm should arise, so that they might make for some harbor, and there abide till the storm should abate. There were times when they had to cross the open sea for hundreds of miles. They generally waited for favorable winds and weather, and then ran the risk of shipwreck, or foundering at sea, if a tempest should arise.

Paul was a modest man, and not given to boasting. However he was driven to recount his labors in his second Epistle to the Corinthian Church. He speaks of "labors more abundant." They were amazing in their distances by land and sea, the dangers he ran, the physical endurance he needed, as well as the determined will to carry out the commission given him of the Lord. "In stripes above measure." "In prisons

more frequent," and prisons in those days were dark, noisome and verminous. The inner prison and feet fast in the stocks, and bleeding back at Philippi, was a terrible ordeal. Think of the indignity of a man of Paul's position and attainments being stripped, the horrible lashes falling on his bare back, till it was a mass of lacerated and bleeding flesh. Not once, but five times received he forty stripes save one of the Jews. Thrice was he beaten with rods. What a condition his body must have been in! No wonder he could say to the Galatian saints, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks [the brands] of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6: 17). Once he was stoned. Thrice he suffered shipwreck, not counting the one occurring on his journey to Rome as a prisoner. Once he was a night and a day in the deep. He was in perils by sea, of robbers, of the Jews again and again and again, of the Gentiles often, in the city, in the wilderness, among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. What a list!

Will the reader use a little discreet imagination, and put himself in the Apostle's shoes, and seek to visualize what he endured year after year, from being a young man till he was "Paul the aged" (Phile. 9), ending with martyrdom. He filled up that which was behind of the sufferings of Christ in his flesh for the sake of Christ's body, which is the Church (Col. 1: 24).

We make bold to say that no servant of Christ ever had such a record as the Apostle Paul. One marvels

at the energizing grace of the Spirit of God that led him to such unending toil, and to endure such privations and face such dangers, undaunted by incessant persecution, and to glory in his infirmities to the very end, when he had martyrdom staring him in the face under Nero, the cruellest of Roman Emperors, that monster of iniquity, of lust and self-indulgence, the murderer of his own wife and mother. From his prison in Rome at the very end of his life Paul could write, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4: 4). What a testimony! What a triumph!

Thank God for the Apostle Paul, his work, his indomitable spirit, his triumph over every untoward circumstance! At this very time he is forming the lives of all true believers, and wielding an influence far beyond that of the greatest living potentate. Like Abel, "he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11: 4). This is all to the glory of God.

We shall see how everything in Paul's life was planned and worked out by divine wisdom. It is only as we read the record carefully that this is apparent. Saul* tells us himself how he was separated from his mother's womb and called by God's grace, that God's Son might be revealed in him, and that he should carry the gospel of the grace of God to the Gentiles. He was specially chosen of the Lord to be

* The Apostle Paul is invariably called Saul till we come to Acts 13: 9. "Then Saul (who is also called Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost set eyes on him." Till that point is reached in our narrative we shall use the name Saul.

His servant, and this was marked in his very birth. He was born in Tarsus, in the province of Cilicia, in what we now call Asia Minor. We gather that his father was a man of some position, for he was a Roman citizen, which carried the same citizenship for his son. He could tell the Chief Captain at Jerusalem that he was freeborn, and not like the Captain, who bought the privilege and prestige of being a Roman citizen by the payment of a great sum. That his father could send his son to Jerusalem to be brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, strengthens the supposition that his family was of some standing something like a family in the present day who can afford to send their sons to be educated at some University. Of the Jewish apostles it could be recorded that they were "ignorant and unlearned men," but this could not be said of Saul of Tarsus. He was learned. Evidently Gamaliel was a very prominent professor or rabbi, for there is a saying in the Talmud, "Since Rabban Gamaliel died, the glory of the law has ceased."

That Saul acquired the art of tent-making does not signify that he was under the necessity of making his living by so doing. It was the custom of the better class Jews to teach their sons some trade, in case of emergency in difficult and changing times.

Saul being born in Tarsus would be perfectly familiar with the Greek language, the language of culture and travel. Brought up in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel, who "taught him according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers," he would be equally familiar with the Hebrew language. Further, in view

of his becoming the Apostle of the Gentiles, it was well that he was born amid Greek environment, and could lay claim to being "a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city" (Acts 21: 39). Thus we see how the circumstances of his birth in a Gentile city, and up-bringing in a Jewish city, and thus becoming bilingual, were all designed in view of his future career as a servant of God.

Further, we may ask, Why did God allow Saul to grow up to be a fierce persecutor of the saints? Why was he not converted like Timothy, who from a child knew the Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation? We see two reasons why this was allowed. *First*, Saul, when he was converted, would be able to understand what it was that fed the persecuting hate of the Jews, for he had felt it himself. He could put himself into the shoes of the fanatical Jews who continually persecuted him, following him from city to city, for was he not guilty of the very same conduct? Would this not help the Apostle to know exactly what the persecutors were feeling, and, seeing he had done the same, to understand, and feel for them and bear with the indignities put upon him?

Second, we read that consequent on the great persecution against the Church at Jerusalem, in which Saul was a leader, that the saints, with the exception of the Apostles, were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, and went everywhere preaching the Word. So Saul was with others, in his unconverted days, actually causing the opposite of what he intended, *viz.*: that the Word of God

should be proclaimed over a large area of country, and thus centres were being prepared where the Lord had worked through these scattered disciples, and which Saul visited later on when he was converted, thus finding spheres of service to the Lord ready to his hand. Can we not see in all this the over-shadowing hand of God, preparing His servant for the work, and the work for His servant?

* * * *

We come now to the beginning of Saul's young manhood. Evidently thus early he had impressed his fellow-countrymen with his forcible character, his determined will, his power for leadership and action. How far might not such a man go! He was a thorough-going champion of the Jewish faith, and fully supported the nation in their fanatical rejection of Jesus of Nazareth.

We read that Saul "made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8: 3). Terrible as his actions were, fierce and fanatical as was his ill-conceived zeal, he was honestly sincere in his wrongdoing. In later years he could describe himself as "a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious," but he obtained mercy because he did it "ignorantly and in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1: 13). He speaks of himself as "being exceedingly mad" against the saints of God, and that he "persecuted them unto strange [that is, *foreign*] cities" (Acts 26: 11). It was, indeed, a terrible time for the infant Church, when Saul was rag-

ing against them, casting the believers into noisome prisons, and even giving consent to their death, as in the case of Stephen. Little did the panic-stricken saints anticipate that this very Saul was to be a chosen vessel of the Lord, and one who would suffer for the testimony, just in the same way as he was causing them to suffer, but so it was.

The amazing miracle of Saul's conversion drew nigh. Conversion is a miracle in every case of its happening, and it is vital to every one of us that it should happen. The circumstances may not be so dramatic as was the case with Saul of Tarsus, but in essence they are ever the same. How thankful we may be that this grace has been given to us, who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Saul's conversion came about in this way. He approached the high priest at Jerusalem, and asked for letters to the synagogues of Damascus, authorizing him that if he found "any of this way," whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Armed with these letters, he and his companions in this terrible work set out for Damascus, a matter of some 150 miles. The country was rough and inhabited by wild and lawless people. Banditry was rife. The journey was arduous indeed, and one of danger and difficulty.

With impatient steps he drew near to Damascus, "the Pearl of the East," as it was proudly called. With eager exultation he would rejoice when the city came into view, and he realized how near he was to the prey he sought, and that he would soon be able to wipe out the hated Christian faith in that city. Man proposes, *but God*—DISPOSES.

At noontide, when the sun was shining at its height, suddenly there shone a light from heaven. Twice did the Apostle Paul narrate the wonderful happenings of that hour—once before the chief Captain of Jerusalem, and the multitude of fanatical Jews who were thirsting for his blood (Acts 22: 6); and secondly before King Agrippa, when he described the light as being “*above the brightness of the sun*” (Acts 26:13).

What a moment in his mad career! What a sharp, sudden, and unexpected pull-up! He was indeed the chief of sinners, little though he thought it up to that moment. When he learned the real truth about his condition, he could write to Timothy, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; OF WHOM I AM CHIEF” (1 Tim. 1: 15).

We might think that the chief of sinners would be found among the ranks of the grossly evil and vile. In this connection we might think of the dying thief, or Judas Iscariot, or Simon Magus, or Mary Magdalene, out of whom were cast seven devils, so terrible was her condition. But no; here is a man of irreproachable conduct. As “touching the righteousness which is in the law [he] was blameless” (Phil. 3: 6). And yet writing under divine inspiration, he could declare himself to be the chief of sinners. It looks as if we must look for the chief of sinners, not among murderers and thieves, not in prisons and jails, but in places of reputed sanctity. We find him in Saul of Tarsus, who set himself in fanatical zeal, with all the influence of his powerful personality, against God’s Christ. Thank God, the chief of sinners is in glory,

the great trophy of God's grace. He could write, "In me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. 1: 16).

Thank God for the light that shone that day on the arch-rebel on the Damascus road. Saul was struck to the earth by the blinding light. He heard a voice from heaven saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" There was no mistaking that voice. How could Saul persecute Someone in heaven? What did it mean? Did it flash upon Saul's consciousness that in persecuting the defenceless men and women of "this way," and haling them to prison, that they were after all the Lord's so intimately that in persecuting them, he was persecuting *Christ HIMSELF*? He had believed with all the ardor of his being up to that moment, that Jesus was an impostor, and that therefore he would be doing God service in crushing the imposture in its early stages. He thought that the One who died on the cross had not risen from the dead, that His disciples had deceived the people by saying that He had, that Jesus was not the promised Messiah prophesied in the Scripture, and the sooner this deceit was stamped off the face of the earth the better. So he threw the whole ardor of his earnest nature into the terrible work of persecution.

But there was no mistaking that voice and that question, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" Such was the majesty of the voice, the compelling power of the question, that it may have flashed in a moment across the soul of Saul that Jesus was the promised Messiah of the prophetic page of the Old Testament

writings, that He was indeed the Son of God, that His death was an atoning death, that He was risen from the dead, ascended triumphant over sin and death and hell, living and glorified in God's presence on high. It may not have resolved itself into all these details, but the fact remains, he had heard the voice of the risen Son of God, and in a moment his whole inner man was revolutionized. Saul of Tarsus, the arch-persecutor of the Church of God, was converted. One of the very greatest events in this world's history took place that day on the road to Damascus all those centuries ago.

He cried out, "Who art Thou, LORD?" The voice replied, "I am JESUS, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," using the illustration of an ox kicking in vain against the goad of its master, and all its struggles in this direction only increasing its distress. So it was with Saul of Tarsus.

What a revolution in his soul! He arose from the earth. Blinded physically by the dazzling light, which indeed opened the eyes of his inmost soul, he was led by the hand into Damascus, and for three days and three nights he neither ate nor drank. What thoughts must have surged through his soul in those days and nights. Just in proportion as he realized the amazing grace of God in stopping him in his mad career, just as he realized the mighty change that had been wrought in his soul, just in that proportion that he viewed with an unutterable loathing his blasphemous conduct in persecuting the Church of God; in short, persecuting the very One who had saved him from

his sin, just in that proportion would gratitude to God fill his inmost soul. From the very depths of repentance and humiliation he arose to be the great proclaimer of the faith he once destroyed.

Once he was assured that Christ was risen from the dead, he was assured of everything that mattered. How true this is. Prove the resurrection of Christ, and you prove Christianity. This is what Lord Lyttleton (1709-1773) wrote, "The conversion and apostleship of St. Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation."

George Lyttleton was a member of a very distinguished family and able lawyer, a member of parliament, a one-time chancellor of the exchequer. A peerage was conferred upon him for his services to his country. He was a theist, that is, he believed in the existence of an almighty God, but did not believe in any Divine revelation. Therefore he rejected Christ and the Bible. He conceived the idea of writing to prove that the Bible was an imposture, and that the Christian religion should be swept out of the land. He chose for his subject the conversion of St. Paul.

Like many hostile critics of the Bible he criticized that of which he knew but little. In order to get material for his exposure of Christianity, he had to read the Bible, and weigh the evidence contained therein with the penetrating mind of the trained lawyer. The result of his enquiries turned out very differently from what he expected. He found the evidence sustained the truth of the narrative of the Apostle Paul's conversion, and that conversion carried

with it the truth of the resurrection of the Saviour of mankind. He produced a treatise of seventy-eight compact pages, coming to the conclusion we have stated. This treatise can be seen today in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Of it Dr. Samuel Johnson remarked, that it is a treatise "to which infidelity had never been able to fabricate a specious answer."

The great testimony of the Apostles was to the *resurrection* of Christ. They "preached through Jesus the *resurrection*" (Acts 4: 2). "With great power gave the apostles witness of the *resurrection* of the Lord Jesus" (ver. 33). "He preached unto them Jesus and the *resurrection*" (Acts 17:18). Writing to the Church at Rome he told them that the Lord Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the *resurrection* of the dead" (Rom. 1: 3).

Saul was ever conscious of the depths of his terrible sin in persecuting the Church of God. He cried out, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. 15: 9). Doubtless he had the same thing in mind, when he declared that he was "less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3: 8). That was from the standpoint of his unconverted days, but when his apostleship was called in question, and it was a matter of what the Lord had appointed him to, he could declare, "I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 15: 5).

To return to the story of Saul's conversion. There was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. In a vision the Lord instructed him to go to a street called

Straight, to the house of Judas, and enquire for one called Saul of Tarsus, for, "Behold, he prayeth." He was informed that Saul had seen in a vision Ananias coming in, putting his hand upon him, and recovering his sight.

Ananias shrank from the commission, and told the Lord that he had heard from many of the evil Saul had done in Jerusalem, and how he was come to Damascus with authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on the name of the Lord.

The Lord, however bade Ananias carry out the commission, for Saul was a chosen vessel to bear the name of the Lord to the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. Will the reader notice particularly that the name of the Gentiles comes *first* in regard to the testimony that Saul should render? He was called to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

Thus encouraged Ananias went to the house of Judas, and putting his hands on the blind man, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9: 17). How strangely and yet how blessedly would the word, "*brother*," fall upon Saul's ears.

Immediately the scales fell from his eyes. He saw, he arose, he was baptized. The name of the One he had persecuted was named upon him. What can God not do? The man who had struck terror in the hearts of God's people was at once turned into the fervent servant of Christ. That indomitable will characterizing

him in his persecuting days was now turned into the service of the Lord.

It was not long before Saul was on active service. We read that he straightway preached Christ in the synagogues that He is the Son of God. We read that he increased in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt in Damascus, proving that the Lord was indeed the very Christ. It is interesting to notice in dealing with Jews today how we turn to the very same Old Testament scriptures that Saul used in his day.

Such a champion for the faith could not fail to produce violent opposition. We read of no servant of Christ so followed by bitter persecution as the Apostle to the Gentiles. There must have been a virility, a vigor, a power in his testimony that could not be gainsaid. So the enemy would not brook this, and opposition quickly asserted itself. The fanaticism of the Jews burst forth. They took counsel to kill him. Had not Saul witnessed the slaying of Stephen? Now *his* turn had come. His past experience would enable him to gauge the feelings of the opposers, to bear the ensuing persecution with courage, and believe that as God had blessed him, so He might bless his enemies.

The Jews watched the gates of the city day and night to slay Saul. The brethren lowered him over the wall in a basket, and so he escaped.

It is a little difficult to know for certain the movements of Saul at this juncture. The narrative in the Acts of the Apostles gives his journey to Jerusalem at this time, whereas in the Epistle to the Galatians the Apostle is careful to tell us he did not go from Damascus to Jerusalem, but went into Arabia. We

are not told how long he was there, but, returning to Damascus, after three years he visited Jerusalem. It may be that he went to Jerusalem on the first occasion, not as an apostle, but as a new convert. When he went the first time, and essayed to join himself to the disciples, there was a good deal of doubt as to him. They were all afraid of him, and could not believe that he was a disciple.

When he went to Jerusalem, as told us by him in his Galatian epistle, he makes it clear that he did not get his apostleship by the laying on of hands, or as being bestowed in any way by the apostles at Jerusalem. He is careful to tell us that he stayed but fifteen days with the Apostle Peter, and saw no other Apostle but James, the Lord's brother. So jealous was the Apostle Paul of his apostleship to the Gentiles.

However that may be, on reaching Jerusalem on the first occasion, he made the acquaintance of one destined to be a fellow-laborer with him in many a city—Barnabas, a native of Cyprus, a disciple of note at Jerusalem. He it was, who having land, sold it, and laid the money at the apostles' feet (Acts 4: 37). His original name was Joses, but he was surnamed Barnabas, which means "son of consolation." This is very significant, as evidence of a nice Christian character. Barnabas took Saul by the hand and introduced him to the brethren, narrating the story of his conversion. Thus introduced, he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed with the Grecians.*

* The word, *Grecians*, signifies Jews living in Greece and foreign parts. The word, *Greeks*, is used to designate the native inhabitants of Greece.

Never was there a conversion, we are bold to say, resulting in such widespread blessing, as that of Saul of Tarsus. Devoted, continually taking his life in his hands, he labored summer and winter, traversing many countries and lands. Strenuous before conversion, he was more so after conversion, for he had a greater urge in the terror of the Lord on the one hand, and the constraining love of Christ on the other. He was an evangelist of evangelists. He cried, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9: 16). His proud declaration was, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1: 16). He was appointed of the Lord to be a minister of the gospel. He was also a minister of the Church. It was his part, as he said, to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. 1: 24). Christ on earth could not suffer for His Church, for it was not yet formed. When formed on the Day of Pentecost the enmity of Satan was directed against it and especially against the Apostle Paul, for he was ordained to bring out the truth of the Church, and by his oral and written ministry to be the founder and moulder under God's hand of the churches. Where are there any writings in detail about the Church outside those of Paul? Our narrative as it unwinds, will tell what he suffered in his flesh for the Church's sake. When he narrates all the perils he passed through, which we have already referred to, he adds, "Besides those things that are

without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11: 28). This was an immense privilege but it carried with it a corresponding weight of responsibility.

That Paul was the minister of the gospel and also of the Church, shows that these ministries are not in competition with each other, but are blessedly complementary. There has ever been an attempt of the enemy to pit the evangelist against the teacher. This should not be, and should be very jealously guarded against. Where would the Church be, if there were no gospel? Where would a family be, if there were no births? The gospel first and then the Church. Converts first, and then saints and assemblies. The evangelist is a gift from the great Head in heaven to men, as also are the pastor and the teacher. The teacher should prize and encourage the evangelist; the evangelist should be devoutly thankful for the pastor and teacher, who will take his converts, and build them up on their most holy faith (Jude 20).

Paul was chosen to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. He magnified his office and was deeply appreciative of the signal honor conferred upon him. Lastly he was chosen of the Lord to write no less than fourteen epistles (if we include the Epistle to the Hebrews); that is to say, a larger contribution came from his pen than from all the rest of the writers of the epistles of the New Testament. Surely we can say that Paul has molded the lives of millions of Christians from his day to this,—nay, we should rather say the Holy Spirit through Paul has done this.

To return to our narrative. We have seen already how the persecuting zeal of Saul of Tarsus in the end only furthered the work of the Lord. Persecution was so hot in Jerusalem that in terror the disciples were scattered abroad. They went everywhere preaching the Word. These witnesses travelled as far as Phenice, the country north of the land of Israel; to Antioch in Syria, a most important place; and to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean, still called by that name, some 150 miles from the mainland. They confined their testimony to the Jews only, of whom a great number believed and turned to the Lord. We shall see how all this was preparing the ground for the future labors of Saul.

Tidings of this cheering nature came to the ears of the Church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch to help in the good work. Finding much interest there, he bethought himself of the young convert, who had so boldly testified for the Lord in Jerusalem. Just as he helped Saul to the confidence of his brethren on arriving as a young convert at Jerusalem, now he is instrumental in bringing Saul to the work of the Lord in Antioch. He evidently had been struck by his gift and zeal.

So Barnabas travelled to Tarsus, whither the Jerusalem brethren had sent Saul when the Jews plotted to slay him as the result of his bold testimony. The journey by land was a toilsome one of about 150 miles. Finding Saul at Tarsus, Barnabas brought him to Antioch, where they labored for a whole year, assembling themselves with the Church, and teaching much people.

It was at this time that the people of God were first called "Christians." Hitherto their enemies had found it difficult to designate the followers of the Lord by a definite name. There were the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Herodians, Epicureans and Stoics. These were well defined religious or political parties, whose teaching and ritual and practices were well known. But who were these new people, going about teaching strange doctrines? It remained for the heathen of Antioch about the year A.D. 44 to give the believers the name of Christians. That name was recognized by the Spirit of God, for the Apostle Peter wrote in his inspired epistle, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed" (1 Pet. 4:16). Fitting indeed was it that the name of Christ should be named upon them, that they were distinguished as those who followed Christ.

At this time a prophet, Agabus by name, stood up, and prophesied by the Spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world, which came to pass in the reign of Claudius Cæsar. The Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us this terrible famine occurred in the fourth year of his reign, and records that the price of food became enormous, and numbers perished of hunger and disease.

The Grecians, that is, the Christian Jews, in those parts made a collection to send relief to their brethren in Judea, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

This task performed, Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch. From henceforth in the sacred narrative this city is mentioned more often than Jerusalem.

We hear very little indeed of the labors of the Jewish Apostles—indeed, not a single line of the most of them—and very little of Jerusalem from this time onward. The interest now lies in Antioch, and the work branching out from thence to other lands. We can see clearly how the Lord was shaping the service of Saul.

It must be specially noted that Barnabas and Saul on leaving Jerusalem for Antioch brought with them a young man to be their attendant and helper, John, surnamed Mark, by name. His mother, Mary, lived in Jerusalem, and it was at her house that the prayer meeting for the release of the Apostle Peter from prison was held. He was the Mark who wrote the Gospel bearing his name. The reason why we make a special note of this will be seen later on.

The position of Antioch should be noted. It was in Syria some 350 miles north from Jerusalem and therefore outside the range of the immediate influence of Jewish Apostles. Seeing Saul was the Apostle of the Gentiles, we can see the wisdom of Antioch coming before God for blessing, and forming a kind of headquarters for His servant. Geographically Antioch was in a strategic position. It was not far from the seaport of Seleucia, a distance of 16 miles, the port that Saul used more than once or twice on his journeys. Antioch was on the river Orontes, which flows into the sea at Seleucia, so that there was transit to that port either by land or water. Through its port it was in communication with all the trade of the Mediterranean, whilst its hinterland was conveniently situated for the caravans of Mesopotamia and Arabia. It was

a magnificent city, almost an oriental Rome. From every point of view it was better for Saul to make his headquarters there rather than at Jerusalem.

It has ever been the tendency of religious bodies to have some ecclesiastical headquarters on earth. There was the danger of Jerusalem becoming so with all its prestige of God's worship for centuries in connection with the Temple, and the place where His blessed Son was crucified, buried and rose again. There were all the elements of elevating Jerusalem into an ecclesiastical center. A city where sacred sites were abundant might easily be the origin of gross superstition, as is really the case at this present time.

The Church's only legitimate headquarters is where her Head is, at the right hand of God. To a *Person* and not to a place, to the Lord, and not to any ecclesiastical centre on earth, must the saints look for direction. In the transference of interest from Jerusalem to Antioch we see the overruling hand of God in regard to His servant, but Antioch was only a convenient centre from which to travel.

At Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers, and we are given a list of them—Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod Antipas, and Saul. Please note that Barnabas heads the list, and Saul is mentioned last, probably because he was a young man and had only lately come among them.

As they were ministering to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate unto Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13: 2).

Many have thought of the Holy Spirit merely as an influence, and not as a Person, co-equal with the Father and the Son in the unity of the Godhead. But the allusions to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures show clearly that He speaks and acts only as a Divine Person can speak and act. The present occasion bears this out. An influence cannot say, "Separate ME Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." This is the language of a Divine Person, using the diction of sovereignty, which only a Divine Person is qualified to employ in virtue of an omnipotent and wholly wise will.

Whilst it is true that nowhere in Scripture is it asserted in so many words that the Holy Spirit is God, yet the way in which the names of the Father Son and Spirit are linked together, shows plainly the truth of the Deity of the Spirit with that of the Father and the Son. Believers are baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28: 19). Could that formula be employed if it were not that the Spirit is God, as the Father is God and the Son is God? Then there is the charming benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13: 14). One well-known passage we refer to, 1 Cor. 12: 11, where absolute sovereignty, an attribute only proper to Deity, is predicated of the Holy Spirit, "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally AS HE WILL." This is language only proper to God Himself. There is also one very striking passage where the fullest intimation of the

Holy Trinity to be found in the Old Testament is given: "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was there am I [a Divine Person]: and now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent Me" (Isaiah 48: 16). (1) The Lord God, (2) His Spirit, (3) Me, three Persons in the Holy Trinity. How often the Lord when on earth spoke of Himself as *the SENT One*.

The elders of the Antiochan Church receiving these instructions concerning Barnabas and Saul fasted and prayed, laid their hands on them as token of full fellowship, sending them forth on their blessed errand, fraught with so much blessing to so many lands.

* * * * *

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

The Holy Spirit guiding Barnabas and Saul, and taking John Mark with them, they travelled to the near-by port of Seleucia, and sailed for Cyprus, some 150 miles away, landing at Salamis. There Paul's first mission began. There they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. Journeying through the island they came to Paphos, a distance of about 100 miles from Salamis.

The Deputy of the Island, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man, hearing of their visit sent for them, desiring to hear their message. He evidently became deeply interested, and then the enemy stirred up opposition. For a man of the Deputy's position to be converted

to God was too good an advertisement for the Christian faith to be allowed to pass without a challenge.

A renegade Jew, Bar-jesus, surnamed Elymas (an Arabic name, meaning "the wise," or "the occult"), a false prophet, was the tool Satan used. This sorcerer would feel that his own craft was in danger, and he therefore sought to turn the Deputy from the faith.

Evidently Saul and Bar-jesus faced each other in the presence of Sergius Paulus. Saul,* full of the Holy Ghost, fastened his eyes on Bar-jesus. Note too that it was Paul, the younger man, and not Barnabas, who took the lead here. He addresses this wretched dupe of the Devil, "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season" (Acts 13: 11).

Immediately there fell as it were a mist on the eyes of the sorcerer, and he sought for someone to lead him by the hand. It seemed fitting that the man who tried to hinder the light entering the soul of the Deputy, should be deprived of his sight for a season.

This opposition instead of hindering the work of the Lord, only helped it on. The Deputy was so struck by what he saw, and the power of the Word,

* At this point in the narrative we get Saul's alternative name mentioned. Henceforth he is known as Paul. We read, "Then Saul (who also is called Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him" (Acts 13: 9).

that he believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

The Bible warns us solemnly against spiritism. It was, we believe, responsible for the awful condition that necessitated the flood in the days of Noah. King Saul in his day consulted a witch with a familiar spirit, in modern language, a spiritist with a control. The Gospels are full of allusions to unclean spirits. We read of our Lord healing men and women so possessed. Mary Magdalene was possessed by seven evil spirits, and the Lord delivered her. Her deep affection for Him ever after was most marked. Spiritism is very much on the increase these days. We need to observe the warnings of Scripture against its snares.

Loosing from Salamis the trio sailed for Perga in Pamphylia, in what we call Asia Minor, a distance of about 180 miles. Arriving at Perga we read that "John departing from them returned to Jerusalem" (Acts 13:13). Tersely, without comment, the bare fact is stated. Was John Mark not of tough enough fibre to stand the rough journeys and experiences of our evangelists? Was his spiritual zeal easily quenched? Thank God, we shall hear of his restoration to the work of the Lord.

Departing from Perga the two evangelists journeyed to Antioch in Pisidia, a distance of over 100 miles. This was all strange country in the way of gospel effort. Their first step was to attend the synagogue service. After the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue invited the strangers, if they had any word of exhortation, to say on.

Paul, not Barnabas, the older man, responded to the invitation. Evidently he was a born leader, a missionary who never missed an opportunity. Eager was he to preach the gospel in such circumstances.

He very briefly sketched the history of the Jewish nation—their sojourn in the land of Egypt; their time in the wilderness; their judges in the land for 400 years up to the time of Samuel; their desiring a king and the removal of King Saul to make room for King David. Then he narrated how God had promised that of the seed of David there should come a Saviour, and that this was accomplished in the raising up of the Lord Jesus. He told them of His death at the hands of Pilate, of His resurrection, and at last he came to the definite offer of the gospel. We can imagine how the glorious words would ring out, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13: 38, 39). This was indeed gospel, a gospel never heard before, an amazing offer of forgiveness of sins through the Lord Jesus Christ. When the congregation broke up, many of the Jews and proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas. Hitherto in the narrative the names of these servants of Christ appear invariably as Barnabas and Saul. Then we get to the point where Saul is henceforth known as Paul, and from now on when the names come together, always, with one exception, they are, Paul and Barnabas.

The Gentiles now come forward, and beg the evan-

gelists that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath day. This is an intensely important moment in the history of Paul, and of Christianity at large. Hitherto Paul had gone to the synagogues, and spoken to his fellow-countrymen. Now the Gentiles for the first time hold out beseeching hands, and ask that they may hear the story of redeeming love. In this way we see how the Lord was opening up Paul's way to carry out the commission that was given him when converted.

Next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the Word. This filled the Jews with envy, such is the littleness of fallen human nature. The Jews refused the message, they would not let the Gentiles have it. In such matters the dog-in-the-manger attitude is deplorable. Do we not see it sometimes even in Christian circles? Paul had the unhappy experience when in prison of knowing that there were brethren preaching the gospel out of envy and strife, supposing to add affliction to the bonds of this devoted servant of Christ. And we have known servants of the Lord, jealous of a younger man with more gift, seeking to hinder him in his work. This ought not to be. The Apostle's example is a worthy one. He rejoiced that Christ was preached, even when out of contention. He deplored the contention, but rejoiced that the name of the Lord was named.

When the Jews spoke against the things that they heard from the lips of Paul, contradicting and blaspheming what they heard, Paul and Barnabas, waxing bold, told them, that as they deemed themselves unworthy of everlasting life, and had refused the mes-

sage of the gospel, they would carry that message to the Gentiles.

“LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES”

(Acts 13: 46) was indeed a challenge of a new nature. It was destined to set the tide of things from Jerusalem, the land of Israel, the synagogue, the law, and all that system of things, and be the beginning of the evangelization of the world, irrespective of country or antecedents. It was indeed the beginning of the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, written over five-and-a-half centuries before. We read, “For so hath the Lord commanded us saying, I have set Thee to be a light *to the GENTILES*, that Thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:47).

What a moment in the history of the world! We speak of epochal days in the history of the nations—Julius Cæsar crossing the Rubicon; the Huns and Goths overrunning Italy and overthrowing the mighty Roman Empire; the destruction of the Spanish Armada, saving the cause of Protestantism; the battle of Waterloo that rescued Europe from the domination of Napoleon—these were deeply important happenings, but they pale into utter insignificance before this event. “*Lo, we turn TO THE GENTILES*” was the *Magna Carta* of the gospel of the grace of God.

It is doctrinally stated in Romans 11. Paul magnified his office of being the Apostle of the Gentiles. Israel rejected Christ, now “blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom. 11: 25). The words, “*Lo, we turn*

TO THE GENTILES," might well stand out in letters of fire on the sacred page. When the Gentiles heard these words they glorified the Word of the Lord, and many believed. In those days Antioch in Pisidia had a strategic position, just as Antioch in Syria had, as we have already seen. Antioch in Pisidia lay in the heart of what we call Asia Minor, at that time the gateway between the Land of Israel, and the great countries of Greece, Italy, etc. Eastward it looked to Iconium and the country behind the Taurus mountain range; westward it looked to Ephesus, Sardis, Smyrna, and the cities dotting the province of Asia. In this region conquering armies, trading caravans, Persians, Romans, Turks, had travelled for centuries. It was a fit place for the Apostle to lift up his eyes, and look out on the Gentile fields, "white already to harvest."

Throughout this region the gospel was published. This was too much for the enemy. So the Jews stirred up "devout and honorable women and the chief men of the city," and raised up persecution against these servants of the Lord, and expelled them out of their coasts. The Devil does not always rely in such matters upon the rabble of the slums or "lewd fellows of the baser sort." He does use these latter, but the most powerful opposition comes from people of exalted position and religious devotees, who know not the grace of God in their hearts. There is no opposition so bitter and fanatical as *religious* opposition. It was the chief priests and rulers that encompassed the death of our Lord. Paul would understand this, for was he not the arch-persecutor when he was a

Pharisee of the Pharisees, and as "touching the righteousness of the law blameless?"

So the evangelists departed and passed on to Iconium, some 60 miles eastward. Arriving there they gave testimony in the synagogue, and a great number of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. This is the second time the Gentiles are mentioned prominently. Things were shaping for the unique testimony of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, yet for a long time the Lord supported His servants in their testimony, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. Thus did God support His servants. At last it came to their ears that a plot was afoot to stone them. Being warned of this, they fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and there they preached the gospel.

At Lystra they found a man crippled from birth, who never had walked. Paul as he discoursed, fastened his eyes upon him, perceiving that he had faith to be healed. Evidently the power of the Word through Paul awakened a faith in this man's heart that there was nothing too hard for the Lord. With a loud voice Paul cried out, "Stand upright on thy feet." The command carried with it the Divine enabling, and the man who had never walked from his birth, leaped up and walked.

When the heathen witnessed this miracle they cried out in the Lycaonian language that the gods had come down to them in the likeness of men. In their excitement they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul,

Mercurius, as being the chief speaker, Mercury being the god of eloquence.

The heathen priest of Jupiter brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and would have done sacrifice to the servants of the Lord. Paul and Barnabas were terribly distressed at this turn of events, rent their clothes, and cried out that they were men of like passions to themselves, that they proclaimed the LIVING God, who made heaven and earth and sea, who cared for His creatures by giving rain and fruitful seasons. Their desire was that they should forsake such vanities as worshiping gods of man's making. With difficulty they restrained the people from sacrificing to them. How soon the attitude of men can change! One day wishing to offer sacrifice to Barnabas and Paul as gods; a day or two passed by, and these same people allowed stranger Jews to stone Paul and drag him out of the city, where he was left, as they supposed he was dead.

What happened was this. Their Jewish persecutors followed them from Iconium, distant about 30 miles, and from Antioch, distant about 100 miles. Does it not show the malignity that men are capable of, that they would travel such distances to oppose the Word of God? Once these persecutors arrived in Lystra, they persuaded the people that Paul was not fit to live. So they stoned him. He would remember, surely the day when he helped to stone Stephen. Look at the insensible body of the Apostle as it lay on the ground, blood streaming from many a wound. Paul could not forget that day. "Once I was stoned"

(2 Cor. 11: 25), was his comment to the Corinthian church.

It is remarkable that nothing is said about Barnabas at this juncture. Evidently Paul was a man who carried an arresting personality. His testimony must have been so powerful that on it concentrated all the hate of the enemy.

To the astonishment of the disciples, who stood round the prostrate and battered figure, Paul rose up, and walked into the city. He was no coward. Yet he was wise in leaving the next day with Barnabas, allowing the storm to die down.

After a time in Derbe, where the Lord evidently blessed their labors, they retraced their steps, and visited Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, the very cities where they had met with such violent opposition. They confirmed the faith of the brethren, exhorting them to steadfastness in the faith, and telling them it would be through much tribulation they would enter into the kingdom of God.

They ordained elders or bishops in every church, commending them to the Lord. Thus the work was consolidated as Paul's first missionary journey was drawing to a close.

These ordained elders were elder brethren of maturity and spiritual judgment, men of blameless lives. From Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus we learn that the ordaining of elders or bishops was apostolic, though Paul specially empowered Titus to ordain elders in the assemblies of Crete, and gave instruc-

tions to Timothy as to their character. In these epistles are set forth the moral qualifications that should mark the elder or bishop, without making any provision for their official ordination after the apostolic age. It appears in the break-up of Christendom the power of ordination was not handed on from generation to generation, but the *moral* qualifications being so carefully enumerated would show that the Lord would raise up godly elder brethren, to naturally care for the saints, and thus unofficially perform the work of the bishop or elder, and deacon.

It should be stated that there were more bishops, or elders, than one in an assembly. The number would be regulated by the size of the assembly, and the number of elder mature brothers marked by the moral qualifications enumerated in Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus. The office was strictly local.

The word "bishop" simply means an overseer, one who takes a godly care of the saints as led of the Lord, not for "filthy lucre," nor as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. (See 1 Peter 5: 2, 3). The late Dean Alford made a striking remark when he said that the bishops of today were one thing, and the bishops of the Bible quite another, and we do well to bear this in mind. The same can be said of deacons, for that is the ordinary word for a servant, and has no ecclesiastical coloring. Passing through Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas reached Perga, where they preached the Word and thence went to the near-by port of Attalia, and sailed for Antioch, the place from whence they had started and had been

commended to the grace of God on their setting out.
Thus ended Paul's first missionary journey.

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Arrived at Antioch, they gathered the church together, and rehearsed all that God had done with them. One special word they emphasized, that God had opened the door *to the GENTILES*. It is, indeed, deeply interesting to us that the work of the Lord had gone beyond the Jews, and had reached out to the Gentiles. In the mind and heart of God this was ever so, for His covenant with Abraham was, "In thy seed shall ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH be blessed" (Gen. 22:18).

For a long time Paul and Barnabas abode in Antioch. No doubt it would be a welcome cessation to the arduous toil that Paul had endured, and the very turbulent times of persecution he had passed through.

The enemy, however, is never asleep and is ever strenuous in his opposition. This time his opposition took a different form. The danger was now *inside* the assembly. With the subtilty of the serpent the attack was made. Certain men came down from Judea, teaching the brethren that except they were circumcized after the manner of Moses they could not be saved. This was indeed a serious matter, for it was putting the believers under law, and would be the destruction of the very foundations of the gospel of God. The gravity of the position is realized when we peruse the Apostle Paul's letter to the Galatian assemblies at a *later* date. In it he combats the

same evil teaching. He does not mince his words. He speaks of the saints who had imbibed the heretical instruction of Judaizing teachers, being removed from Him, who had called them, unto another gospel. He tells them, that even if an angel from heaven, or even himself, should preach any other gospel than that which he had preached unto them, let him be accursed. So solemnly did he feel about the matter that he repeated the solemn curse. Could anything be more solemn, more weighty than the words, "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, *let him be ACCURSED?*" (Gal. 1: 9). He asks the question, Who had bewitched them? He begs them earnestly to refuse the entanglement of the bondage of the law.

Paul and Barnabas at Antioch were not slow to resist this Judaizing attempt. It led to much dissension and disputation, so much so, that it was determined to send Paul and Barnabas with certain others to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders about this matter. The gravity of the attack is thus seen.

On their way to Jerusalem Saul and Barnabas passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles, and occasioning great joy among the brethren. Arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the Church and the apostles and elders, and recounted to them all things that God had done unto them.

It was not long before the evil teaching cropped up. Certain believers, who had been Pharisees before conversion, and who evidently were not free of the bond-

age of the law in their spirits, rose up, and pressed that it was needful to circumcize the believers, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. This brought the apostles and elders to consider the matter.

Thus came about the great conference of Jerusalem. There was decided the question whether the believers should be put under law or not. This question has come up in many subtle forms all down the centuries. The very foundations of the gospel were at stake. The occasion was historic.

The Apostle Peter, the chief of the Apostles at Jerusalem, stood up. His word would carry great weight. But before we proceed, we must take a retrospect, and show what led up to this point.

Up to the time of Paul's conversion, the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles practically centres around Peter. He was the spokesman on the Day of Pentecost. It was Peter and John who had to do with the cripple whom they cured at the Gate Beautiful of the Temple. It was Peter and John who were summoned to appear before the high priests, rulers, scribes and elders, and who witnessed a bold confession before them. It was at the feet of Peter that Ananias and Sapphira fell dead on telling a lie to the Holy Ghost. It was Peter and John who were sent down to Samaria, consequent on the success of Philip's evangelization of that city. It was Peter (and this is the great point at which we are arriving) who was the instrument used in the conversion of the Gentile centurion, Cornelius, and his friends. This event is given in great detail, and marked a real departure in the ways of God. We can see the wisdom of God in the

instrument that was chosen on this occasion. One of the most irrefragable proofs of Holy Scripture is that it is wise *before* the events. This is most marked.

Peter, with all the narrowing influence of his early exclusive teaching as a Jew, needed a striking vision to render him willing to preach the gospel outside the limits of Judaism. It was surely an event of very great importance that the gospel should be preached to Gentiles as Gentiles. It was the wisdom of God to employ the chiefest of the *Jewish* apostles for this service. He did not use the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Cornelius, instructed by a vision, sends for Peter. Peter was prepared to respond as the result of the vision to him of the great sheet let down from heaven, and the voice of the Spirit telling him to accompany the messengers of Cornelius, nothing doubting. Hear his own words: "Ye know that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying" (Acts 10: 28, 29). So he gladly preached the gospel to Cornelius and his friends. As they drank in the Word of the Lord, and believed, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, and they spoke with tongues, a Gentile edition of the Day of Pentecost. It is no wonder that Peter should say, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10: 47). He then commanded them to be baptized. Thus Peter, to whom had been committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and who used them first on the Day of Pentecost

for the Jew, when about 3,000 were baptized, used them a second time to admit the Gentile to that which professes the name of Christ on earth. Not that baptism is essential to salvation but it is a salutary and divine ordinance to which every believer should surely submit. So Peter, with this background behind him, was in a special way entitled to stand up at the Jerusalem Conference, and tell how the Lord had chosen that by his mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the Lord, and believe. And how manifestly God had put His seal on this service by giving there and then the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues to these Gentile believers. He asked the question why should they tempt God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.

His next sentence must have struck his Jewish hearers, converted as they were, and part of the Jerusalem assembly. He said, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ WE [*Jewish believers*] shall be saved even as THEY [*Gentile believers*]" (Acts 15: 11). They could have understood the Gentiles being saved even as the Jews, but Peter put it the other way. The Jews were saved on the same ground as the Gentiles. Of course both ways of putting it would be correct, but the way Peter put it is noticeable. How well Peter had learned his lesson when the Lord gave him the vision of the great sheet let down from heaven, preparing him to throw aside his narrowness to the winds, and preach the gospel as freely to the Gentiles as to the Jews. Peter had to learn to pronounce the great gospel word, WHOSOEVER. He

said, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His [*the Lord Jesus Christ's*] name WHO-SOEVER believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10: 43). What a magnificent statement!

When Peter sat down, Barnabas and Paul rose up, and narrated how God had signally blessed the Gentiles through their missionary labors. It was a thrilling tale they had to tell. Who could withstand the grace of God, so manifestly with His servants in so many places?

Then James got up, not James the brother of John, who had been killed by Herod, but James the Lord's brother, who is referred to as such in Gal. 1: 19. He was immensely respected, and was known for his great austerity of life. He was opposed to anything like looseness, and his judgment would carry peculiar weight. No doubt the conference would be rightly affected by Peter's address, and the thrilling story by Barnabas and Paul of their missionary labors. James now clinches the matter by quoting their Old Testament Scriptures. These were the words he quoted, "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, AND ALL THE GENTILES, upon whom My name is called, to take out of them a people for My name." This he quoted from the prophet Amos, supporting with Scripture authority what had gone before.

So James announced his judgment, that they should not trouble these who from among the Gentiles had turned to God, save that they should abstain from pol-

lution of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled and from blood. This carried the conviction and support of the conference.

The battle was fought and won. The enemy was defeated. "Ye are not under law, but under grace" (Rom. 6: 14), was said to believers, and is the *Magna Carta* of their liberty in Christ. For what does it mean to be *under law*? It means MERITING *life before God by keeping the law*. When God gave the law He said, "Ye shall keep My statutes and My judgments: which if a man do [*not do his best or try to do, but DO, without one lapse, or without any diminution*] he shall live in them: I am the Lord" (Lev. 18: 5). That is to say, if a man PERFECTLY and ABSOLUTELY kept the law, he would not forfeit his *natural* life, he would live for ever on the earth. Has any man ever done this? It is plain that if any man is to be blessed it cannot be by keeping the law. We cannot by any effort of our own become our own saviour. Salvation must be by grace and through the precious blood of Christ.

It is not that the Christian is to be lawless. The Apostle Paul could say, "Being not without law to God, but *under the law to CHRIST*" (1 Cor. 9: 21). "The righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, *but after the SPIRIT*" (Rom. 8: 4). It is the new nature, inspired by the Spirit of God, and thus strengthened, that enables Christians to keep the law on its moral side without being under it as a means of life. Therefore to seek to put the believer under the law was the very destruction of Christianity.

The time had now come for Barnabas and Paul to return to Antioch. It pleased the Apostles and elders with the whole of the Jerusalem Church to send men of their own company to return with them, Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, "chief men among the brethren," being chosen.

When Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by these Jerusalem brethren, arrived at Antioch, they brought a letter from the Jerusalem Church, telling what judgment had been arrived at. When this was read, it gave real satisfaction and comfort. We rejoice to see how this serious assault of the enemy was completely frustrated.

Judas and Silas stayed on for some time, being prophets, and exhorting the brethren, and confirming them in the grace of God. When the time came for them to retrace their steps to Jerusalem, Silas determined to stay on.

After some time Paul proposed to Barnabas that they should re-visit the cities where they had preached, and see how the churches fared. Barnabas determined to take John Mark with them. Paul did not think this a wise course, seeing John had departed from the work of the Lord at Pamphylia shortly after he had begun to travel with them. We are told that "the contention was so sharp between them, that they parted asunder one from the other" (Acts 15:39). This was indeed a sad finish to what was apparently a happy and useful partnership in the work of the Lord.

Barnabas took John and sailed with him to Cyprus. Barnabas was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, evidently

an earnest, gifted man, He was devoted and not self-seeking, for we read that having land he sold it, and placed the proceeds at the apostles' feet. His name, Barnabas, means "the son of consolation," showing that he was a sympathetic brother to whom saints would turn for comfort and advice. Was it that he felt out-distanced by the more highly gifted Paul? He first introduced Paul to the saints at Jerusalem, he also first introduced him to the work of the Lord at Antioch; but Paul soon took the lead, both in ministry and in receiving the full brunt of persecution. Was the link between these two beloved men weakened by jealousy on the part of Barnabas? Reading between the lines it looks like it.

We read that John Mark was his sister's son. Perhaps relationship made Barnabas partial to his nephew. Natural affection is surely right, and to be without it is a sign of the last times. But we may learn a salutary lesson here, not to allow natural affection to sway our spiritual judgment, nor to influence us in our actions in the things of God. That Paul felt this is seen in his solemn instruction to Timothy, "I charge you before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and before the holy angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one above another, *doing nothing by partiality*" (1 Tim. 5: 21).

Barnabas went to his native land, and we hear no more of him. It seems a sad ending to the life of a prominent and gifted servant of the Lord. Thank God, it will be our happiness to record the recovery of John Mark, not only to Paul, but also to association with him in service, and apparently he was with him

to the last in Rome when Paul was a prisoner, expecting martyrdom. It is to be noted that it was Paul who was used to his recovery, and not his uncle, who took him off to Cyprus.

Paul chose Silas, lately brought into prominence through the Jerusalem Conference, and by his accompanying Barnabas and Paul to Antioch, and electing to remain on when his companion Judas returned to Jerusalem.

The brethren commended them to the grace of God. This is, alas, not said in the case of Barnabas and John Mark. It is good that it is recorded of Paul and Silas.

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THE APOSTLE PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Thus commended, Paul and Silas travelled through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. We see how the Apostle Paul's labors persistently take him away from Jerusalem and Judea into the direction of Gentile lands. Further afield they go, to Derbe and Lystra, scenes full of happy and unhappy memories. There they come across a young disciple named Timotheus, or Timothy. He was well reported of by the brethren of Lystra and Iconium. Evidently there was something in this young man which drew Paul to him, and he would have him accompany them on their travels. He was the offspring of a mixed marriage. His father was a Greek, his mother, a Jewess; and he was uncircumcized. This was well-known in those quarters, and might have caused un-

pleasantness. So to remove this as a cause of offence, he circumcized him, so that there might be no hindrance to the work. Being the son of a Jewess, in the ordinary way Timothy would have been circumcized, as a national custom, when eight days old. Hence the action of Paul.

But when circumcision was demanded as a necessity for salvation, there was no yielding in the matter. When he and Barnabas on another occasion were in Jerusalem, they had with them Titus, a full-blooded Greek. To circumcize him would have been to submit to the behests of these Judaizing teachers. In the case of Timothy he belonged on the maternal side to a race that nationally practised circumcision. The case of the pure Gentile Greek was different. So we read, "Neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcized" (Gal. 2: 3).

Taking Timothy with them Paul and Silas went throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia. The Holy Spirit forbade them to go into Asia, a province in the west of what we call Asia Minor, afterwards the country where Paul expended a good deal of arduous labor for the Lord. Turning aside they travelled to Mysia, a province to the north of Asia. Endeavoring to pass into Bithynia, to the east of Mysia, we read "the Spirit suffered them not."

How baffling it was, forbidden in one direction, suffered not in another direction. What were they to do? Where were they to go?

Good it is that the Holy Spirit can not only guide where His servants are to labor, but He can also forbid and hinder, if they endeavor to go where they are

not sent. We find that the Holy Spirit had fresh plans for His servants. When in Troas, possibly in great perplexity and exercise before the Lord as to where he should go, Paul had a vision, a God-given vision. If you will look at Mysia on your map, you will find it close to the Dardanelles, that narrow strip of water separating Asia from Europe. The vision was of a man of Macedonia, praying him, "Come over into Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16: 10). We see now the reason why the Holy Spirit checked Paul moving in other directions. Here was the solution of all his perplexity. Paul might never have thought of leaving Asia, and going into Europe.

This was indeed a step fraught with mighty consequences. He was being beckoned into distant and unknown lands, further and further way from Jerusalem. Was he not told at his conversion that he was commissioned to go unto the Gentiles, to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light? And here manifestly were things shaping for the fuller carrying out of this great commission.

Assuredly gathering that the vision was of the Lord, Paul and his companions took ship from Troas. The next day they reached Samothracia, one of the numerous islands in the Aegean Sea in the neighborhood of the Dardanelles, made famous in the great war. It is a locality, however, made far, far more famous through the missionary journeys of the great Apostle Paul. For was this not a journey to Europe, to bring the glorious gospel of redeeming love to that continent and to the Gentile world at large? It is in-

deed thrilling to see how the gospel first reached Europe.

The next day our travellers reached Neapolis, a sea passage from Troas of over 120 miles. From thence they journeyed by land to Philippi, a city of considerable importance and a Roman colony. On the Sabbath day Paul and his companions went out of the city by a riverside, where prayer was wont to be made. The work in Europe began with a prayer-meeting, and a talk with a few women at the riverside.

Those women that particular Sabbath morning may have chanced to have lifted up their eyes, and seen three men approaching them. Little did they know what a wonderful moment it was in their lives, and in the history of Europe, and of the whole world. Searching after God, connected with a dead and lifeless ritual, belonging to a nation which had rejected Christ, making their religion meaningless and antagonistic, little did they think that these men were bringing the wonderful revelation of God in Christ to them. Surely it was a historic occasion.

One woman is specially singled out for notice, Lydia, a seller of purple, a native of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God. The Lord opened her heart, and she attended to the things that Paul spoke. She and her household were baptized, and she opened her house to Paul and received him as an honored guest.

These facts are interesting. This is the first time we read of a *Christian* household. In Scripture we have the house of Chloe, the household of Stephanas,

the house of Onesiphorus. In Acts 16 in Paul's first days in Europe the house of Lydia was blessed; in the same chapter we read that Paul and Silas said to the jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved *and thy house*." How good it is that God links up Christian households for blessing with their head. It does not mean that the children of Christian parents do not need conversion exactly as much, and as really, as the open sinner. They do. Conversion is not hereditary, but it is a great blessing to have been reared in the gracious atmosphere of a godly home. We have here the first mention in the Scriptures of Christian hospitality. The Apostle Paul exhorted much as to this happy ministry. He spoke of "Gaius, mine host, and of the whole Church" (Rom. 16: 23). The beloved Apostle John writing thirty years later addressed an epistle to the well beloved Gaius, to whom he bore witness of his love to the brethren and to strangers. Was this the same Gaius? We like to think so, and that he continued in well-doing for many years in this happy service. "Given to hospitality," is one of the happy traits of the house of God enumerated in Romans 12. One of the marks of a bishop or overseer is, that he is "given to hospitality" (1 Tim. 2: 2). "A lover of hospitality" is one of the traits of a bishop given in Titus 1: 8. The Apostle Peter was of the same mind as his brother apostles when he exhorted, "Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Pet. 4: 9).

We need not exhort those who have tasted the sweetness and profit of using their homes for the Lord, ministering gracious hospitality in the Lord's

name, but we do earnestly exhort young married people not to neglect the carrying out of these exhortations, or miss the blessing that accompanies the doing of them.

Again the Devil stirred up opposition under the guise of co-operation in the work of the Lord. Again and again this attempt has been made. When the children of Israel were rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem in the times of Zerubbabel, the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin came forward, and offered to help, saying, "Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do."

Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, the high priest, and the chief of the fathers of Israel answered in unequivocal words, "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel" (Ezra 4 : 3). Then these would-be helpers came out in their true colors, for we read that they "weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building."

It is ever so. The enemy will begin by suggesting co-operation. Fatal offer! We know that the spirit of evil and the Spirit of God cannot work together. So we read, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" (2 Cor. 6: 14, 15).

In this present case the attack took the form of a young woman possessed by an evil spirit, a slave who brought much gain to her masters by her soothsaying,

following Paul and Silas, and crying, "These be the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation" (Acts 16: 17). Did Paul and Silas accept this flattering advertisement? If they had, there would have been an outward link formed between light and darkness, and good and evil. There can be no real link formed. She persisted for many days in this way. Paul was grieved in his spirit and at last commanded the evil spirit to come out of her. The Devil was behind all this in his subtilty.

Once the young woman was rid of the evil spirit, she was not able to make money for her masters. The demoniacal power was gone. The late Dr. Nevius, for forty years a missionary in China, spoke of his experience, how he came across young women, possessed of evil spirits, speaking with tongues and healing by supernatural means, and how, if such became converted, their power of doing these things, and thereby of making large sums of money, was gone, showing clearly that the miraculous power was demoniacal. It was so in this case.

When her employers saw that the hopes of making gain through this spiritist medium was gone, they determined to vent their rage on the servants of the Lord. They said nothing about the young woman, or the real reason of their anger, but catching Paul and Silas, dragged them to the market-place and brought them before the magistrates, charging them with troubling the city, and teaching customs which were not lawful to them, being Romans.

The multitude rose up against them, the magistrates rent their clothes, and commanded them to be

put in prison. The jailer, receiving orders to keep his prisoners safely, certainly carried out his instructions to the full.

Not content with putting them into the inner prison, he placed their feet fast in the stocks. Their backs lacerated and bleeding, themselves weakened from loss of blood, in a horrible Eastern first century prison, most probably without the light of day, over-run with vermin, sanitary arrangements conspicuous by their utter absence, with their feet fast in the stocks, they were condemned to one position, allowing neither comfort, rest nor sleep.

How the Devil must have triumphed as he thought he had brought the career of these devoted servants of Christ to an abrupt close. His triumphing was premature as it ever must be. In this case it turned out to his utter discomfiture, and to the furtherance of the work of the Lord. The unexpected happened. The voice of prayer and singing, coming from the hearts and lips of Paul and Silas, was heard at midnight. Were there ever such prisoners? More than conquerors they were indeed. Suddenly there was a great earthquake. The very foundations of the prison were shaken, all the doors were flung open, bands were loosed. There was nothing to prevent the prisoners from escaping. The jailer knew this, and in his terror determined to take his own life. He drew his sword to strike the fatal blow, when the voice of Paul was heard, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here" (Acts 16: 28).

What passed through the jailer's mind we can only gather from his actions. He called for a light, and

sprang in trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, brought them out, and asked the question of all questions, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Something far more than physical danger was involved in this question. Surely in the terror of the moment, he looked into eternity. He might have wondred what would have happened to his soul, if he had carried out his intention and struck the fatal blow. Anyhow, he asked the most important question that a man or woman can ever ask. Woe betide the man or woman who never feels the need of asking that question or its equivalent.

What answer did the jailer get? It was this, concise and plain, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house" (Acts 16: 31). Paul and Silas spoke the Word of the Lord to the inmates of his house. He and his believed on the Lord, and were baptized straightway. Brought into the jailer's house, the bleeding backs of the preachers were washed, and food was set before them. Joy filled the hearts. The jailer and his household rejoiced. Little did the enemy expect that a brutal jailer and his family should thus be blessed of God!

This wonderful interposition of God on behalf of His servants was not lost on the magistrates. They gave orders that Paul and Silas should be released. The jailer brought the message. Paul replied that they were Romans, had been beaten openly, and uncondemned cast into prison. Let the magistrates undo their wrong, and come themselves and fetch them out. Hearing this the magistrates were alarmed, and came and besought Paul and Silas to depart from

the city. So they departed from the prison, went into Lydia's house, comforted the brethren and departed.

It is interesting to mark the contrast between these two converts at Philippi. Lydia, seeking God, her heart opening out like a flower to the sun, as she heard and received the teaching of Paul. The jailer, brutal and callous, aroused at midnight by the terrible earthquake, and brought suddenly face to face with eternal realities, was most unexpectedly, and to the utter surprise of himself, soundly converted to God. In one respect Lydia and the jailer are alike, Lydia invites Paul into her house; the jailer brought Paul into his house and set food before him. So quickly did the love of the Spirit act in both of their hearts.

Departing from Philippi, passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul and Silas arrived at Thessalonica, the Salonica of the present day, made famous in the great war. Paul immediately went into their synagogue, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures. He proved to them how Christ, as foretold in their own Scriptures, must needs die and rise from the dead. He proved to them that all these prophecies were fulfilled in Christ, and that He was, indeed their promised Messiah.

Some of the Jews believed, but the blessing was far larger among the Gentiles. A great multitude of the devout Greeks believed, and of the chief women not a few. This success was too much for the enemy to stand, especially the blessing going out to the Gentiles.

The unbelieving Jews moved with envy got hold of men of the lewd and baser sort, gathered a company

together, and set the city in an uproar, assaulting the house of Jason, one of the believers, and a kinsman of Paul (*see* Rom. 16: 21). Evidently Paul was staying with this relative, so they endeavored to bring forth him and his companions. Failing in their purpose, they drew Jason and some of the brethren unto the rulers, and cried out that the men who were turning the world upside down had come there also, and that Jason had received them. They were charged with acting contrary to Cæsar, affirming there is another king, even Jesus. However, there was not enough to warrant the detention of Jason and the others, so they took security of them, and let them go.

Evidently things were looking serious, so the brethren sent off Paul and his companions under cover of night to Berea. There they found a delightful change from Thessalonica. Instead of being met with bigotry and persecution, they found in the frequenters of the synagogue a readiness to hear the Word of God. They were not prepared to receive all they were told by Paul, without daily searching to see if what he ministered was consistent with the Scriptures.

How happy it is when ministry sends the hearers to the Word of God, and all is tested by this infallible standard.

The result of the visit to Berea was cheering. Many believed, of honorable women among the Greeks, and of men not a few.

When the Jews of Thessalonica heard of the success in Berea, they followed Paul to that town, distant about fifty miles, and stirred up the people. The Devil ever defeats himself for he only drove the ser-

vants of Christ to other places, where they spread the gospel.

In this case the brethren sent Paul away to go as it were to the sea. Silas and Timotheus stayed on in Berea. More than one accompanied Paul to Athens, distant over 200 miles, and on their return they brought an injunction for Silas and Timotheus to join him with all speed. As Paul waited for his fellow-laborers his spirit was stirred as he saw the city where he now found himself wholly given over to idolatry. He disputed with the Jews in the synagogue, with "devout" persons, men and women with desires after God, happily to be found in all nations, and in the market-place, the Agora, daily with all who met him.

There were two systems of heathen philosophies in Athens that are prominent in the narrative. There were the Stoics and the Epicureans. The former were pantheists, and advocated austerity of life, untouched by human passion. It brought no real comfort to its adherents. It made man his own saviour, so the preaching by Paul of a Saviour from the penalty and power of sin was contrary to their ideas. When Paul preached Jesus and the resurrection they might well exclaim, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods" (Acts 17: 18). The Epicureans were atheists, believing that the world was caused by a fortuitous concourse of atoms, the precursors of Darwin and Huxley. Their philosophy led to gross sensuality. Their motto was, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." They might well ask, "What will this babbler say?"

Met by philosophers of these two schools, Paul was

taken to Areopagus, or Mars' Hill. Areopagus was named after Ares, the god of war. The place was most impressive. There were magnificent temples, statues, altars, in profusion on every hand. It was there that the Athenians and the strangers gathered together to spend their time for nothing else than to tell or hear some new thing. Here was an opportunity to hear something very new and very different from anything they had ever heard before.

In our English Bibles we read that Paul began his address by telling the Athenians that they were too "superstitious." To our ears this might sound tactless, and likely to raise up prejudice at the very start. What Paul did say was that he perceived they were *very reverent to demons*, to strange gods. This would describe their belief without offence. Then he told them that he had seen an altar inscribed "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." In the multitude of altars erected to gods without number, they feared in their superstition that they might have missed one out. So they raised an altar thus inscribed to appease his wrath at being forgotten.

Paul boldly took this as his text and said, "Whom therefore, ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you" (Acts 17: 23).

He then proclaimed that God is the Creator of all things, dwelling not in temples made with hands. We can imagine how Paul with a sweep of his hand might point to the magnificent temples within sight which made Athens famous in the whole world. He told them that neither was God worshipped by man's hands, such as by the making of idols, seeing He made

all things, and giveth life and breath and sustenance to all His creatures. God, he declared, made of one blood all the nations of the earth, and appointed the bounds of their habitation. Men might seek after God and find Him not far off, for in Him we move and live and have our being.

Here Paul most skilfully quoted one of their own poets, Aretas by name. Ovid declared that his astronomical poems were so celebrated that his fame would endure so long as the sun and moon existed. Strange that Aretas should be forgotten save for this chance quotation that Paul made in his speech before the learned of Athens. The quotation was, "For we are also His offspring." Little did these dilettante Athenians surmise that this stranger's quotation would rescue from oblivion the memory of their celebrated poet.

Paul thus showed them from their own poet that God was not to be worshipped by idols made of gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art or man's device. He then came to the height and purpose of his address, that God winked at or overlooked, the times of man's ignorance, but now commanded men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance in that He hath raised Him from the dead.

On hearing this bold testimony, which if believed would have overthrown their dark heathen beliefs, and brought in the light of the knowledge of God in Christ, some burst into mockery. Whoever heard of the

resurrection? They scoffed at the very thought. Others somewhat interested said they would hear him again of that matter. But, thank God, several were convinced as Paul spoke, and believed, among them was Dionysius, a member of the Court of Areopagus, a distinguished man, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

After these things Paul departed from Athens and journeyed to Corinth, distant about sixty miles. The change was great from the beautiful city of Athens with its striking buildings, its philosophies and learning, to Corinth, the big bustling commercial capital of those parts. It was known for its flagrant vice. Many a country youth, who was drawn into that city, was said to be *Corinthianized*.

Arriving there he found a Jew, Aquila by name, who with his wife, Priscilla, had lately come from Italy, for the Emperor Claudius had commanded all Jews to leave that country. Evidently there was strong anti-semitism in those days, the recrudescence of which in these days in so-called Christian lands has so terribly shocked every right-minded person. Aquila and Priscilla were tent-makers, and Paul, having learned that trade, was content to stay with them, and share their labors. There is nothing demeaning in honest manual toil, and Paul did not mind what he did in that way, so long as it furthered the work of the Lord. He said to the Ephesian elders when he took his touching farewell of them, "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me" (Acts 20: 34). Again he wrote, "For ye remember, breth-

ren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God" (1 Thess. 2: 9). We know not which to admire most, the flaming zeal of the evangelist as he proclaimed the gospel in imposing surroundings at Athens, or the humble servant of Christ, toiling strenuously to provide bare necessities, while he preached the gospel of redeeming love, at Corinth.

On Sabbath days Paul reasoned in the synagogues, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. On the arrival of Silas* and Timotheus he took more aggressive ground. Pressed in his spirit, he testified to the Jews that Jesus was indeed their Messiah. This brought forth opposition and blasphemy, so much so that Paul shook his garment, and said unto them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I *will go to the GENTILES*" (Acts 18: 6).

It was a remarkable moment in the history of Paul. He was commissioned to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. Little by little he was pushed out of the synagogues by fanatical persecution. Geographically Paul was led of the Spirit to visit heathen lands far away from Jerusalem, places where Jews were strangers, and whose only gathering-point was the synagogue. Now Paul makes a very definite statement that henceforth he will go to the Gentiles with the gospel. Only

* This is the last mention of Silas in connection with Paul. 1 Peter 5: 12 makes it look as if he were later associated with the Apostle Peter.

once or twice after this do we read of his going to a synagogue, and when he went to Jerusalem in spite of the Spirit warning him not to go, and visited the Temple, he got into trouble.

Declaring that henceforth he would go to the Gentiles, Paul repaired to the house of Justus, whose house was hard by the synagogue. However, though Paul was driven out of the synagogue, we read that Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house, and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. So greatly was God's servant cheered.

A vision was given to Paul in which he was assured that there were many in the city yet to be blessed, and that no one should hurt him. So encouraged, he remained a year and six months, doing the work of the Lord.

While engaged in this blessed work, the Jews rose up against Paul. Their charge was that he was persuading men to worship God contrary to the law. He was brought before Gallio, the Deputy of Achaia. Paul, about to speak for himself, was peremptorily stopped by Gallio exclaiming that if it was a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, he was willing to hear the charges; but if it was a matter of words and names, and of the laws of the Jews, he would be no judge of such matters.

So Gallio drove the Jews from the judgment-seat, whereupon the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-

seat. Gallio cared for none of these things. Please note, that the vision came true; Paul suffered no hurt.

Spite of this upset Paul stayed on in Corinth quite a while. He then took leave of his brethren, and sailed for Syria, taking with him, his friends, Priscilla and Aquila. We are at this point told that Paul shaved his head at Cenchrea, for he had a vow.

Two things strike us here. One is that Priscilla's name should come before her husband's, an unusual thing at that time of the world's history and in that part of the world. We note the same order in Romans 16: 3, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my life laid down their own necks." We can only come to the conclusion that the wife was spiritually more devoted, and the leader in the things of the Lord.

The second thing we notice is that Paul should have shaved his head, and taken upon himself a vow. This, taken in conjunction with his soon after telling the Ephesian believers that he must push on to Jerusalem to keep the feast that was coming on, is, to say the least, unexpected from the writer of the Epistle to the Galatians.

Paul now reached Ephesus, and there he parted with Priscilla and Aquila. He stayed but a few days. Evidently he was well received in the synagogue, the Jews requesting him to tarry awhile with them; but he did not consent, saying he must go to Jerusalem to keep the coming feast, but promising them a return visit, subject to God's will.

He then sailed from Ephesus and landed at Cæsa-rea, a sea voyage of about 650 miles. *So ended Paul's*

second missionary journey, fraught with so much blessing to many parts.

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Landing at Cæsarea he went up and saluted the Church, and then went down to Antioch, distant 500 miles. After spending some time in his familiar quarters at Antioch, he started on his third missionary journey.

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

The intrepid earnest spirit of the Apostle urged him forward. Travelling and preaching must have become second nature by now. So we find Paul going over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening the disciples. The pioneer work of the evangelist had opened out the work in those parts; now he acts as the pastor and teacher.

Meanwhile we must notice the name of Apollos just here. When Paul left Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus they found a Jew from Alexandria, Apollos by name, a man eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, but knowing only the baptism of John. This was the baptism unto repentance, and did not carry the hearers as far as the emancipating power of the gospel of the grace of God. This man was fervent in spirit, and spoke boldly in the synagogue. Aquila and Priscilla heard him, and perceiving that he lacked teaching, took him into their home, and expounded unto him the way of the Lord more perfectly. Note when

it comes to teaching, Aquila's name is put before his wife's. Paul writing to Timothy under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost wrote, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2: 12). This evidently refers to public teaching, and godly women have paid heed to its authority. In this case the instruction given to Apollos was in the privacy of their own home, and Aquila took the lead here. Happy it is that Priscilla was his helpmeet in this blessed work. Apollos thus helped, passed on to Corinth and there helped others, whilst Paul reached Ephesus which he had just left. Paul, it appears, came across disciples to whom Apollos had probably been used, and had baptized unto John's baptism. He asked them the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Evidently Paul now saw they were lacking the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the great mark of the fulness of the gospel. They answered, "No, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts 19: 2).

Paul then asked them, "Unto what then were you baptised?" They replied, "Unto John's baptism."

Paul then explained that this was a baptism unto repentance, John the Baptist telling the people, "that they should believe on Him, that should come after him, even on Christ Jesus."

It is interesting that Ephesians 1: 13 gives us the order, receiving the gospel of our salvation, that is, a gospel which gives the believer the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and salvation, and then the Holy Spirit as the Seal claims the believer for God

forever, an indwelling of no less a Person than the Holy Spirit, equal with the Father and the Son in the unity of the Godhead, making thereby a demand that we should be the reflection of Christ in our ways down here. It is not a question of time, but order; first, the reception of the gospel of their salvation, then the reception of the Spirit.

No doubt Paul patiently instructed these disciples in the faith of the gospel, for we read that they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. He laid his hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost, and spoke with tongues. The number of the men was about twelve.

For three months Paul went into the synagogue, boldly speaking the Word, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. However, strong opposition rose; some spoke evil of the teaching before the multitude; and things came to such a point that Paul departed from them, separating the believers from the synagogue, and carried on his meetings in the school of one Tyrannus. After this point Paul appears to have made a break with the synagogues, though at the end of his life he compromised on the advice of James and the elders at Jerusalem, and went to the Temple at Jerusalem as we shall see later. But this decision arrived at at Ephesus to transfer the ministry from the synagogue to a hired school was deeply important. Up to now there had been believers on Christ frequenting the synagogues, and being zealous for the law, but how could Judaism and Christianity mix? So the time came when a clear cut had to be made, and it occurred at this point

in Paul's history. It is well to pay special heed to this. No longer disputing in the synagogues, Paul *separated the disciples*, disputing daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Paul continued thus by the space of two years, so that all in Asia heard the Word of the Lord, whether Jews or Greeks. At this point we are told of the miracles Paul wrought, so that from his body handkerchiefs or aprons were brought to the sick, and they were healed of their diseases, and even evil spirits were exorcised by this means. Thus would God honor His servant, and give him these striking manifestations that the Lord was with him. Could the habitués of the synagogue gainsay this?

Satan ever copies and imitates. Certain wandering Jews, exorcists, attempted to imitate the miracles of Paul. They called upon an evil spirit, saying, "We adjure thee by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, did so. The evil spirit in the man answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

The man possessed of the evil spirit then leaped upon these seven men, and with superhuman strength fell upon them, and overcame them, so that they fled from the house naked and wounded. This striking incident was known to all the Jews and Greeks dwelling at Ephesus. Fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord was magnified. Thus was Satan defeated as ever, spite sometimes of appearances to the contrary. We have to wait to the end, and we shall ever find Satan an absolutely beaten foe, and good finally triumphant.

Many believed, confessing their deeds. This took a very practical form, for many who had curious books, books of incantations, heathen books, and the like, brought them, and made a mighty bonfire. The value of the books was 50,000 pieces of silver, an immense sum for those days. "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed."

Paul purposed in his spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia to visit Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." He sent into Macedonia two of his companions, Timotheus and Erastus, but he himself stayed on in Asia for a season.

It was not long before the Devil raised up fresh opposition. There was at Ephesus a magnificent temple to the goddess Diana, which was the pride of the whole heathen world. It is probable that there was no building in the whole world comparable to it for beauty, wealth, and superstition. History tells us it was 425 feet in length, 220 in breadth, and the columns were sixty feet high. These were 127 in number, each the gift of a king.

A number of craftsmen earned their living by making silver shrines for Diana. One of them, Demetrius by name, felt that if Christianity were to continue to make the inroads on the ranks of idol-worshippers, as it had been doing, their living would be in danger. He called his fellow-craftsmen together and pointed out this danger. This enraged them, and they began to cry out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The cry was contagious, and the whole city was soon in an uproar. They caught Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's

companions in travel, and rushed with one accord to the theatre. Paul, with the courage that ever marked him, was about to go in there to the people, but the disciples held him back. Certain of the chief of Asia, who were his friends, begged him to refrain from endangering his life by going into the theatre.

Confusion reigned, and many did not know what they were shouting about. They drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. He essayed to speak, but when the multitude gathered that he was a Jew, for two hours they shouted themselves hoarse, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

Things were looking black when a diplomatic town clerk came forward. He spoke of the undeniable fact of the greatness of their temple, and how the city was a worshipper of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter. These things could not be gainsaid. Further Paul and his companions were not robbers of temples, nor blasphemers of their goddess. If Demetrius had a grievance, there were the law courts where he could implead. There was a lawful assembly to settle such matters. Further they were in danger of being called to account for the day's uproar. With these words he calmed the people, and dismissed them to their homes.

After this Paul called the disciples together, embraced them, and departed for Macedonia. Having gone over those parts he went to Greece, where he abode three months. Learning that the Jews laid in wait to kill him, as he was about to sail to Syria, he determined to frustrate their efforts by going in

a different direction, and departed again for Macedonia. A side-light is thrown on this journey in Titus 3: 12, where Paul tells Titus that he had determined to winter at Nicopolis. This was on the western shore of the peninsula, and some 300 miles from Philippi, from which port he eventually sailed. Meanwhile he sent on his companions in travel, Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia, and Timotheus. These proceeded to Troas to await Paul there.

Then we read that Paul and Luke, the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, got to Philippi, probably after a winter at Nicopolis, and sailed for Troas, a journey of five days, there meeting the brethren that awaited their coming. That Luke joined Paul at this juncture we gather by the use of the personal pronoun he used, when he wrote, "*WE* sailed away from Philippi" (Acts 20: 6).

For a week they stayed there, and on the first day of the week the disciples met together to break bread. It is interesting to note that while there is a command to keep the Sabbath given to the children of Israel, there is no command to Christians to keep the first day of the week. It is the genius of Christianity not to give commands, save those that are moral, such as believers loving each other. Yet it is happy to note the overruling providence of God that gives the Sunday to be a day of rest and freedom from occupation. The fact that the early Christians met on the first day of the week, and were in the habit of breaking

bread on that day has happily given to us a good example, which we gladly follow.

Paul was on his third and last missionary journey so he took full occasion to minister the Word. This he did till midnight. Many lights were in the upper chamber. Paul spoke for long. One young man, Eutychus, overpowered by sleep fell from the third loft and was picked up dead. Whereupon Paul went down to where the dead man lay, fell on him, and embracing him, said to the bystanders, "Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him." Then Paul partook of food, talked a great while till break of day, and so departed.

Paul was minded to go on foot to Assos, while his companions went by ship and arranged to meet Paul at the said Assos. There they all sailed to Mitylene, thence to Chios and Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium, and the next day arrived at Miletus, a seaport situated about fifty miles from Ephesus.

There he called for the elders of the Ephesian Church. With what alacrity they would come to see their beloved Apostle. He reminded them of his labors in their midst, how for the space of three years he had warned them with tears night and day as to the truth, and that of their own selves men would arise, speaking perverse things to draw disciples after them. He told them he was going to Jerusalem, saying that bonds and afflictions awaited him, that this did not move him, his desire being to finish his course with joy. He tells them they would see his face no more. He commended them to God and the Word of His grace. He had coveted no man's silver and gold and

had labored with his own hands to meet his own necessities, and those of them that were with him. Then he quoted to them the only words of the Lord Jesus uttered on earth that are found outside the four Gospels, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Having done this he kneeled down and commended them to the Lord. Weeping and sorrowing that they should see his loved face no more, the brethren fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him farewell, and so they accompanied him to the ship. Paul and his companions sailed *via* Coos and Rhodes to Patara on the mainland. There finding a ship sailing to Phenicia, and passing by the island of Cyprus, they landed at Tyre, *Here ends Paul's third missionary journey.*

* * * * *

Finding disciples at Tyre they stayed a week. These disciples were the Spirit's mouthpiece telling him that he should not go to Jerusalem. Spite of this prophecy, Paul and his companions on leaving Tyre travelled south towards Jerusalem. They arrived at Ptolemais where, meeting brethren, they stayed one day, and then proceeded to Cæsarea. There Paul stayed at the house of an old friend, Philip, who had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. It is interesting to hear of these women, as it shows how sisters may be gifted and used of the Lord. It does not say that they prophesied before Paul, but that they prophesied, doubtless without transgressing the injunction of 1 Timothy 2: 12.

Whilst there a certain prophet, Agabus by name, came from Judæa. He took Paul's girdle, and with it bound his own hands and feet, saying, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles" (Acts 21: 11). Paul's companions and the brethren present begged him with tears not to go to Jerusalem. Paul answered, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21: 13). Seeing he was determined to go, they said, "The will of the Lord be done." Be it noted that the disciples at Tyre told Paul by the Spirit that he should not go to Jerusalem. Arrived at Cæsarea, Agabus does not forbid his going to Jerusalem. Did he take it for granted that he was determined to go there? He warned him by the Spirit what awaited him, persecution and deliverance into the hands of the Gentiles.

They then took up their carriages and reached Jerusalem at last. This was a very serious journey for Paul. He never was really a free man from this point. How graciously the Lord supported His servant, we shall see. The brethren received Paul and his companions gladly. The next day Paul went to the Apostle James, and all the elders were present, and rehearsed to them the result of his ministry among the Gentiles. They were glad and glorified God, and then gave Paul advice. They told him there were thousands of the Jews who believed, and who were, also, zealous of the law. Evidently there was no clear cut

at Jerusalem between Judaism and Christianity as the Epistle to the Galatians and the Epistle to the Hebrews would inculcate. Hebrews 13: 13 says, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." The camp there is Judaism. Christianity and Judaism can no more mix than oil and water.

These Jews were under the impression that Paul taught that their children did not need to be circumcized, nor to walk after the customs of the Jewish religion. Something must be done, they thought, to soften this impression. There were four men who had vows upon them. If Paul would take these men, pay their charges that they might shave their heads, then, seeing Paul with these men, the people would be assured that what they had heard of him was not true, but that he lived an orderly life and kept the law. The Gentile believers were another matter. Not having been brought up under the law, there was no need for them to follow the customs of the Jews. If they refrained from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication, that would suffice for them.

Paul, alas, responded to this suggestion, and took the men the next day, purifying himself with them, and entered the Temple to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until an offering could be offered for each one of them.

This went on for almost seven days, when the storm burst. Some Jews who came from Asia seeing him in the Temple cried out, "Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against

the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place" (Acts 21: 28). This last accusation arose through their seeing Paul in the company of Trophimus, an Ephesian, whom they supposed Paul had brought into the Temple.

Paul was dragged out of the Temple, the doors were shut, the city was in an uproar. The people were about to kill Paul, when the Chief Captain, a Roman officer, hearing of the tumult rushed troops to the scene. When the people saw the centurions and soldiers arrive they left off beating Paul.

The Chief Captain commanded him to be chained with two chains, demanded who he was, and what he had done.

An uproar ensued, some crying one thing, some another, so the Captain ordered Paul to be taken to the castle. The violence of the crowd was such that the soldiers had to carry Paul to the castle stairs. Paul then asked the Chief Captain if he might speak with him. He replied, "Canst thou speak Greek? Are you not the Egyptian, who made an uproar, and led into the wilderness four thousand murderers?"

Paul replied that he was a Jew of Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city, and besought the Chief Captain that he might speak to the people. Leave being granted, Paul stood on the stairs, beckoned with his hand, calling for silence, and addressed the people in the Hebrew tongue. When the people heard the Hebrew language they gave quiet attention. Paul then told the people who he was, and described to them his conversion. A Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia,

brought up at Jerusalem at the feet of the famous Gamaliel, he was instructed in the perfect manner of the law, and was zealous toward God.

He narrated how he persecuted the people of God, binding and delivering unto prisons men and women. The high priest and the elders of the nation had furnished him with letters to Damascus, to which he was proceeding in this work of hunting out the Christians, and bringing them to Jerusalem to be punished.

As he journeyed near to Damascus he saw a light, and heard a voice, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" He answered, "Who art Thou, Lord?" The answer came, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." At that moment the conversion of Saul took place. What an event! What mighty consequences flowed from it! He was told to go to Damascus and ask for a disciple, Ananias by name. Blinded by the light, he was led by the hand to Damascus. Ananias came to him and said, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight." He told him he was a chosen witness for God. He was baptized. Returning to Jerusalem when praying in the Temple he had a vision. In this vision the Lord told him Jerusalem would not receive his testimony. He replied to the Lord that they knew how he had imprisoned and had beaten those who believed in Him, especially in the case of Stephen when his blood was shed, and he stood by consenting to the martyr's death. The Lord said unto him, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence *unto the GENTILES.*"

As soon as the word "Gentiles" fell from Paul's lips, a furious outburst of fanatical hate broke out. The

people cried out, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live." As they cried out they tossed off their clothes, and threw dust in the air. It is sad beyond words that such rage should be exhibited because the grace of God went out beyond the Jewish nation. They had forgotten the promise to Abraham, "In thee shall ALL NATIONS of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22: 18). They had forgotten the prophecy, "They shall declare My glory among THE GENTILES" (Isa. 66: 19).

The Chief Captain could not understand why this outburst took place. He evidently did not understand Paul's address, seeing it was the Hebrew language which the Apostle used. In order to find out the reason of this wild outburst, he gave instructions that Paul should be examined by scourging—such was the strange justice of those days. As they proceeded to bind Paul with thongs, he spoke to the centurion who was standing by, saying, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

When the Chief Captain heard this he was afraid, and asked him if he were indeed a Roman, for only with a great sum had he himself obtained Roman citizenship. Paul told him he was freeborn.

The Chief Captain then released Paul, and arranged that the chief priests in the Sanhedrim should furnish the reason for all this outburst, and that Paul should appear before them on the morrow.

On the morrow when Paul appeared an awkward circumstance happened. He had only just begun his speech of defence. He declared that he had lived in all good conscience till that day. The high priest

Ananias broke out in anger, and ordered those who stood by to smite Paul on the mouth. Such was the blind injustice of religious fanaticism. Paul replied, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" (Acts 23: 3). They that stood by replied, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" Paul replied that he did not know that this was the high priest. Had he known this he would have obeyed Scripture, which tells us not to speak evil of the ruler of the people. Many think that Paul suffered from defective sight, and so did not identify the high priest, even at a short distance.

Paul then perceiving that there were Sadducees and Pharisees in the council, declared that he was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, believing in resurrection, for which belief he was called in question.

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, nor in angels, nor in spirits, whilst the Pharisees believed in all these.

The Pharisees hearing this sided with Paul, declaring they found no evil in him. If an angel or a spirit had spoken to Paul, let them not fight against God.

Thereupon a violent dissension arose, so much so that the Chief Captain feared Paul would be torn in pieces. He commanded the soldiers to bring him away by force, and lodge him safely in the castle.

The night following the Lord stood by Paul, and assured him that as he had testified of Him at Jerusalem, so he should also testify at Rome. Thus was being fulfilled what the Lord said to Ananias at the time of Paul's conversion, that he should bear testi-

mony to the Lord's name before Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

We cannot avoid the feeling that Paul was wrong in claiming to be a Pharisee, and thus snatch a strategic advantage by setting the rival Sadducees and Pharisees at variance. On the other hand it is remarkable that Scripture states these things, and does not pass judgment on the rightness or wrongness of Paul's actions. Further, and this is anticipating, if Paul got into trouble through not listening to the believers at Tyre, who told him by the Holy Ghost that he should not adventure to Jerusalem, how gracious of the Lord to use him, in testimony both at Jerusalem and in Rome. Chained as he was to a soldier, God used him at Rome in writing the inspired "prison epistles," as they are styled, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and 2 Timothy, and possibly the Epistle to the Hebrews.

We well remember, at a time of great crisis when leaders right and left were being swept off their feet, and one wondered would any stand for the truth, it was a great comfort, strange as it would seem to say it, that Paul did undoubtedly make mistakes. If Paul could give a wrong lead, whom then can we trust? This thought only cast one on the Lord Himself, to get above the servant to the Master, to be thankful for what help the servants can give, but not to be dependent on even the best of them, but to look to the Lord Himself, where alone there is no failure.

A determined plot to murder Paul was now formed. More than forty men had taken an oath neither to

eat or drink till they had accomplished their devilish purpose of killing this devoted servant of the Lord. They requested the chief priests and elders to convene the Sanhedrim on the next day, and, as Paul would come near to them, on his way they would thus be enabled to carry out their evil design.

However Paul's sister's son heard of this lying-in-wait. At once he went and revealed the plot to his uncle. Paul asked a centurion to take his nephew to the Chief Captain as he had something to say to him. The request was granted. The Chief Captain took the young man kindly by the hand, and went aside with him privately and asked him what he had to communicate.

The young man informed the Chief Captain about the plot to kill Paul. He bade the young man not to allow anyone to know that he, the Chief Captain, had been informed of the plot, and then made prompt plans. He ordered two centurions to make ready two hundred legionary soldiers, of cavalry, seventy, of spearmen, two hundred, to be ready at the third hour of the night to go to Cæsarea. The third hour of the night would be nine o'clock of our evening. Cæsarea was a journey of sixty or seventy miles from Jerusalem. Strong feelings were evoked, and the Chief Captain was at once prompt and yet cautious in the matter—prompt, in allowing no time to elapse before he got Paul away from Jerusalem; cautious, in that he sent a powerful enough guard to meet any eventuality.

With them he sent a letter, "From Claudius Lysias to the most excellent Governor Felix," a man of coarse

and licentious life. In this letter he states why he has sent Paul, and that he had ordered his accusers to come before Felix and state their case.

Travelling all night they arrived at Antipatris, a town some thirty or more miles away. The next day the legionary soldiers and spearmen returned to Jerusalem, and Paul and the cavalry pursued their journey to Cæsarea, where on arrival the letter of the Chief Captain was presented. Felix asked Paul to what province he belonged. When he was told Cilicia, he said he would hear his case when his accusers should arrive from Jerusalem, and he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

After five days Ananias, the high priest, arrived with the elders, bringing with them an advocate, Tertullus by name. Tertullus evidently spoke in the Latin tongue, and began by saying complimentary things as to the régime of Felix. Then he plunged into the real reason for his speech. He accused Paul of being a pestilential fellow, a mover of sedition, a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, who came to Jerusalem and profaned the Temple. Him the Jews would have judged according to their law, but the Chief Captain Lysias came and violently took him away, and commanded that his accusers should appear before Felix. Tertullus suppressed the truth that Lysias had saved Paul from the violence of the Jews. This had, however, been pointed out in the letter from Lysias to Felix, that he had rescued Paul from the Jews, and had frustrated an attempt to murder him. The elders present assented to all that Tertullus put forward.

Paul was then beckoned to come forward, and give his defence. His address was masterly. He began by saying that he submitted himself to Felix's jurisdiction with cheerfulness, seeing he had been a judge for many years to their nation. He had arrived only twelve days previously at Jerusalem in order to worship. He was not found disputing with any, nor raising up the people whether in the synagogues or in the city. He confessed that after the way which they called heresy, he worshipped God, believing all things written in the law and the prophets. He said certain Jews from Asia had found him purified in the Temple, neither with multitude or tumult. If such there were who could accuse him, why were they not appearing before Felix and preferring their charges? When he appeared before the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem he had "cried standing among them, touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day" (Acts 24: 21). If that was evil, let them say.

Felix hearing these things, and by long residence in the country knowing the Jews and their prejudices thoroughly, deferred any action till Lysias should arrive, when he would enquire more fully into the matter. Meanwhile a centurion was to keep Paul a prisoner, yet to leave him a large amount of liberty, forbidding none of his friends to minister to, or visit him.

After certain days Felix came with his Jewish wife Drusilla, to hear Paul concerning his faith in Christ. There sat on the judgment-seat a coarse and cruel Roman libertine, his wife a profligate Jewish princess.

Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance (*self-restraint*), and judgment to come. Felix trembled. The power of the address reached his conscience. Would that he had welcomed these probings of conscience as to his life of sin and wickedness. He would hush the preacher. He would stop the flow of accusing words. He left Paul bound. He hoped for bribes from his prisoner. Little did he know the character of Paul. If he had known it, he would have stood abashed in the presence of purity and truth. He sent for him again and again. What would Paul say? We know he would not hide the truth. What a wonderful opportunity for Felix, but, alas, he let it pass by.

For two years Paul was still bound. Felix made room for Porcius Festus, and to give the Jews a pleasure he left Paul bound. As for justice there seemed no power to administer it. In those days the position of a prisoner often was at the mercy of a mere whim or caprice on the part of the judge.

Festus, having taken up the reins of office, after three days went from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. When there the high priest and chief of the Jews desired Festus to send for Paul to be tried, intending to turn it into an opportunity of lying-in-wait on the way, with the intention of murdering him.

Festus wisely refused their request, and invited his accusers to return with him to Cæsarea, and there prefer their complaints. After ten days Festus returned, and the next day after his arrival summoned Paul to stand his trial. The Jews laid many and grievous charges against Paul which, however, they could not prove. Paul answered that "neither against the law

of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended anything at all" (Acts 25: 8).

Unaccountably Festus went back on his former determination, and in a most surprising manner asked Paul if he was willing to go to Jerusalem to be judged there. How the Jews must have gloated over this turn of affairs, but Paul took a new line. He appealed to Cæsar. Being a Roman citizen by birth he had this right. Festus had no option but to agree, and said, "Then to Cæsar shalt thou go."

A few days later Agrippa, King of Chalcis, and his sister, Bernice, came to Cæsarea to salute the new Governor, Festus. After some days Festus told King Agrippa about Paul. He told him how on asking if he would go to Jerusalem to be tried, he had appealed to Cæsar. Agrippa's curiosity was aroused, and he intimated that he would like to hear Paul. Festus courteously answered, "Tomorrow thou shalt hear him."

On the morrow with great pomp King Agrippa and Bernice with the chief captains and principal men of Cæsarea entered the judgment-hall. Festus opened the proceedings by addressing Agrippa and the rest of those assembled. Evidently impressed by the fact of the king knowing more than he did of the customs of the Jews, he was glad of this opportunity especially as he would have to report the case to Cæsar Augustus when he sent Paul to Rome.

Agrippa told Paul he was permitted to speak for himself. Paul expressed his pleasure in speaking to a king who was expert in all customs and questions among the Jews. He then narrated in full and vivid

language that experience of all experiences, his wonderful conversion on the Damascus road, when he was called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ. How, following his conversion, he had begun to testify at Damascus, proceeded to Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Israel, and then turned to the Gentiles, preaching that men should repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance. As he spoke of Christ's suffering and rising from the dead, Festus cried with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." Paul answered with dignity and courtesy, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

Paul then addressed King Agrippa with the question "Believest thou the prophets?" Before he had time to reply, Paul added, "I know that thou believest."

Agrippa then replied, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." This was said evidently in a sneering, contemptuous way. Little did the King understand the wretchedness of his attitude. Agrippa, king as he was, surrounded with great pomp, never had a man with such moral loftiness, such clear vision of the things that make up life, such knowledge of God and truth, before him. Paul was on a far higher plane than the heathen king. Little did he know it.

Paul's reply showed the man of moral dignity, the tender-hearted evangelist, the brave witness for God. Chained to two soldiers, he lifted up his hands, and exclaimed in tones of intense earnestness, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me

this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26: 29). Alas, the king knew not the day of his opportunity. He rose, Festus, Bernice and all that sat with him rose likewise and filed out of court, turning their backs upon the light, not knowing the wonderful opportunity they had had, and the utter folly of refusing it.

Agrippa and Festus spoke together between themselves, and agreed that Paul had not done anything worthy of death, or even of bonds, and might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed to Cæsar.

The time had now come for Paul to take his journey to Rome. He had longed to pay Rome a visit. He had addressed an Epistle to that Church. When at Ephesus Paul said, "I must also see Rome." Little did he think that he would catch his first glimpse of it as a prisoner with martyrdom before him. Yet so it was.

Paul, with Luke and Aristarchus as companions and probably Timothy, was committed along with other prisoners to the care of Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. A ship of Adramyttium was found, a coasting vessel evidently bound for home waters, for Adramyttium was a seaport of Mysia, north of the province of Asia, a distance of about 800 miles from Cæsarea. However, they went as far as Myra in this ship, a distance of about 500 miles, hugging the shore as much as they could. The first day at sea they reached Sidon. The centurion courteously treated Paul, and allowed him to go ashore and see his friends. It is striking to see with what respect Paul was treated on this occasion.

Sailing thence the winds were contrary, so they took advantage of the lee of the Island of Cyprus. They then sailed by the coasts of Cilicia and Pamphylia, and came to the said Myra, a seaport town of Lycia. We wonder what thoughts would pass through the mind of Paul as he sailed by the coast of Cilicia, where his native city was, not far away. What thoughts would course through his mind, his wonderful conversion, his partnership with Barnabas, who came to Tarsus to secure his co-operation in the work, his subsequent labors with Silas and others, the imprisonments, the scourgings, the perils by land and sea, of robbers, of the wilderness, of the cities, the plots to murder him. Now life was largely behind him, and at Rome he was to play the last bit of drama before his exit from life.

This ship of Adramyttium had served its purpose, and carried our voyagers well on their way. At Myra the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy, and arranged to complete the voyage in her. Ships with corn continually travelled between Alexandria and Italy. The historian Josephus, at a later date took a similar journey, and was shipwrecked very much like Paul.

For many days the sailing was slow, winds, doubtless being contrary, and passing by Cnidus, they left the lee of the shore and sailed out to the open sea, arriving at Crete over against Salome. Skirting the south of the island they arrived at a place called The Fair Havens, hard by the town of Lasea. They stayed a considerable time at The Fair Havens, as sailing was becoming dangerous at that time of year.

Paul then admonished those responsible for the navigation of the ship, telling them that the voyage would be dangerous, and bring much damage to the lading and the ship, and also of the lives of those on board. However, the centurion deferred to the opinion of the master, or captain of the ship, and seeing The Fair Havens was not a commodious harbor to winter in, and the majority giving advice to try for a better place, suggesting the port of Phenice, which lay south-west and north-west of the island, they determined to proceed on the voyage. Moreover, a south wind blowing softly tempted them to start again.

In the light of subsequent events how often the centurion and master must have wished that they had paid heed to Paul's warning. Not long after their start, as they hugged the shore of Crete, a violent wind, name Euroclydon, bore down on them from the mountains. The ship could not bear up against such a tempest, and they had to let the ship drive. Running under a small island, Clauda, to the south-west of Crete, by dint of hard work they got the ship's boat on board, using helps, and undergirding the ship, to make as sure as they could the safety of their vessel. Fearing they might run into quicksands they struck sail, and let the ship drive. The next day, things were so serious, that they lightened the ship. On the third day Luke narrates, "*We* cast out with *our* own hands the tackling of the ship" (Acts 27: 19). Notice, Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, departs from the usual "they" and "their" and says "we" and "our," showing the danger which the ship

was in. Things must have become more than serious, if passengers, including Paul, Luke and Aristarchus, assisted the crew in their work of throwing overboard the tackling of the ship.

For many days no small tempest lay upon them. Sun and stars did not appear. The sky was black and threatening. All hope of being saved was taken away. It was indeed a most pitiable condition to be in.

It was impossible to take proper food. Long abstinence had reduced the strength of their bodies and lowered the feeling of hope in their minds, that might have asserted itself. Paul now stands forward. He tells all on the ship that the Lord had stood by him, that He had assured him that he was to be brought before Cæsar, and that, moreover, God had given to him the lives of all on board, and that they should be cast on a certain island. He bade them be of good cheer. What an effect this would have upon them we can well imagine! Here is a prisoner taking the ground of having all their lives committed to him by his Lord. What a turning of the tables! Not the centurion or the captain, but Paul is *the* prominent figure on board that ship.

After being driven about for fourteen days in Adria (the Adriatic Sea), the shipmen thought they were nearing land. At midnight they took soundings, and found they were in twenty fathoms of water. A little further they found it to be fifteen fathoms. Fearing they should fall upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for day.

The shipmen conceived the idea of abandoning the ship by letting down the ship's boat into the sea, and allowing those on the ship to believe that they were casting out anchors on the forepart of the ship, and thus effecting their escape. Paul came forward to the centurion, and said, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Paul's word was now law, so the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and allowed it to drop into the raging sea. As daylight broke on the depressing scene Paul prayed the people on the ship to take food, asserting that not a hair on any of their heads would fall. So speaking, he took bread, and publicly gave God thanks for the food, and began to eat, the rest following his example.

There were no less than two hundred and seventy-six souls on board, so it was no small promise to make, that everyone on board should be saved. Indeed, it seemed humanly an impossible promise.

Again they lightened the ship, casting the cargo of wheat into the sea.

They did not know where they were, but discovered a creek with a sandy shore, and determined to run the ship, if possible, aground. They took up the anchors, loosed the rudder bands, hoisted the main-sail, and let the ship drive to the shore.

Falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship ashore. The forepart of the boat was aground and immoveable, the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. The soldiers counselled that the prisoners should be killed in case they might swim to shore, and so escape. The centurion, seeing that this would include Paul, kept them from their pur-

pose, and commanded that all who could swim, should cast themselves into the sea, and so escape. The rest on broken bits of the ship and boards reached the shore. So was fulfilled Paul's promise, indeed the Lord's own promise, that not one life should be lost, though it seemed impossible at one time that it could be so.

They soon found out the island they were cast upon was Melita, now well-known under the name of Malta. The people of the island received the shipwrecked mariners and passengers with great kindness, and kindled a fire because of the rain and the cold.

We gather from Paul's life that whenever there was anything to be done, he was ever ready and helpful to do his part, whether in laboring with his hands for his own necessities, or in helping to throw the tackle out of a ship in distress. Here he is seen gathering sticks to help keep the fires alight. In so doing a viper came out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. The superstitious natives, when they saw this, came to the conclusion that he was a murderer, whom, though he had escaped the sea, was not suffered by the gods to live.

However he shook off the viper and took no harm. The people looked to see him swell, and fall down dead suddenly with the fatal poison of the viper's fangs. Looking a long while and seeing no harm come, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

It is wonderful, and yet not wonderful, how God cared for His servant. The chief man in the island, Publius by name, lived in that part where the shipwrecked mariners and prisoners had landed. He re-

ceived Paul, Luke, and Aristarchus courteously, and entertained them for three days. But God will be no man's debtor. Publius' father lay sick of a fever and a bloody flux or hemorrhage. Paul went into the sick chamber, prayed with the sick man, laid his hands on him, and healed him. This being noised abroad, others in the island who were diseased, came and were healed. When the time came to leave the island they honored them in many ways, and loaded them with such things as were necessary. They were three months on the island, and then they were able to take passage in a ship, the "Castor and Pollux," belonging to Alexandria, and which had wintered in the island.

They landed first at Syracuse, a seaport on the eastern shore of Sicily. Tarrying three days at this famous port, they went on to Rhegium on the mainland on the Straits of Messina, and thence to Puteoli, a distance from Rhegium of about 180 miles. At last the sea voyage, eventful as it had been, was over.

At Puteoli they spent seven days, meeting the brethren, and so proceeded to Rome. They still had some seventy miles by road to travel. Paul would traverse the famous Appian Way, constructed by Appius Claudius, and named after him. Arrived at Appii Forum, or market-place, they were met by brethren from Rome. They had come nearly thirty miles to meet the aged Apostle, who had labored for Christ in so many places, and gone through such terrible persecutions, and who had cared for saints whether he had seen them in the flesh or not. One can imagine the deep joy mingled with sorrow as they saw their

beloved Apostle a prisoner, chained to a soldier, "Paul the aged," broken and weakened by all he had gone through. And Paul, how he would feel going to Rome as a prisoner—and yet the joy of it, a prisoner of the *LORD*.

Ten miles further on they arrived at The Three Taverns, and there another group of brethren met the Apostles. We read that the Apostle thanked God and took courage. What a cheer and encouragement on the road and yet mingled with anxious fear and distress as to what the future held for him.

At last Paul entered Rome. What must have been his feelings as he passed through the most magnificent capital of the whole world! Nero, a monster of lust and cruelty, a murderer of his own mother, and wife, sat on the throne, and to him he had appealed. Arriving at Rome he was handed by the courteous Julius to the Captain of the guard, the prætorian præfect, whose official duty it was to keep in custody all accused persons who had to be tried by Cæsar.

However, Paul was suffered to dwell in his own hired house with a soldier to guard him. It was no small trial to be chained as a prisoner night and day and have no privacy.

After three days' quiet, Paul called the chief of the Jews together. When assembled, he said unto them that he had committed nothing against the people or customs of the fathers, yet he was delivered into the hands of the Romans. After examination they would have let him go, but the Jews expostulating, he had appealed to Cæsar. He had, however, nothing to complain of against the nation. He could say that

it was for the hope of Israel that he was chained to a soldier.

The Jews replied that they had received no letters from Judea referring to him, nor had they been told by word of mouth. They desired to hear what he had to say, for everywhere this sect, that is the Christians, was spoken against.

On a day appointed many came to his lodging, to whom he expounded the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets from morning to evening. Some were convinced and believed, and others were not convinced. When they disagreed among themselves Paul told them plainly the words of Isaiah the prophet were fulfilled in them, in that hearing they heard but did not understand, seeing they saw but did not perceive. He wound up with the words, "Be it known unto you, that the salvation of God is sent *unto the GENTILES*, and that they *will* hear it" (Acts 28: 28)—a last characteristic touch! Then the Jews departed and had great reasoning among themselves.

Paul continued two whole years in his own hired house, receiving all that came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, no man forbidding him.

There the curtain drops. The Acts of the Apostles written by Luke the evangelist, the companion of Paul in many places, and in his last journey by sea and land to Rome, leaves the narrative at this point.

Can we not learn a lesson? We marvel at the restraint as well as constraint God's Holy Spirit put

upon the inspired penmen. One would naturally have thought that the trial before Cæsar, the martyrdom by beheading, the place where the precious body was interred, would have been described with meticulous care. But no. Do we not learn the lesson that the real reason for giving us all these details of the Apostle's missionary effort was to bring out God's ways through His servant and his fellow-laborers of blessing to men, of how the gospel was preached, of how the assemblies were formed? When that recital came to an end the writer was not allowed to tell us about Paul's trial, martyrdom and interment. These were outside the scope of the mind of the Spirit in the dictation of this unique and deeply interesting book. These details might have led to the putting of the servant on a pedestal, where he might be idolized, or even worshipped, even as we see in Rome today in the place given to St. Peter and the Virgin Mary, and the canonized saints as intercessors. We should not miss the reason why the history of the Apostle Paul ends in this quiet way, as seen in his own hired house, receiving all who came to him, instructing them in things concerning the kingdom of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. A sweet closing vignette it is.

* * * * *

We come now to some thoughts relative to the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. There are twenty-seven epistles in the New Testament, and five writers—Paul, Peter, John, James and Jude—inspired penmen whom the Holy Spirit used. Of these twenty-seven

epistles the Apostle Paul wrote fourteen (if we include the Epistle to the Hebrews), and the rest of the writers wrote thirteen. It will be seen that Paul wrote the larger portion of the inspired epistles. When we look into the matter more closely, the proportion seems even greater. There are one hundred chapters in the Pauline epistles, whereas in the rest of the epistles there are but twenty-one chapters. The Pauline epistles contain 2312 verses, whereas in the remaining epistles there are 431 verses, plainly showing the far larger portion of the epistles have come from Paul's hand.

* * * * *

The chronological order of the epistles appears to be as follows, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy. To this we add the epistle to the Hebrews, as we believe Paul was the writer. The exact order of the epistles is a matter of conjecture. We are on firm ground with some. There are the prison epistles, as they are commonly called, written while Paul was in prison at Rome, doubtless when chained to a soldier. What must the soldier have felt as he witnessed the labors of his prisoner in such circumstances. The prison epistles are Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, Second Timothy and possibly the Epistle to the Hebrews. The date of that to Titus depends on a much disputed point as to whether Paul was not set at liberty for a time and paid visits to certain places,

returning for a second time of imprisonment. However, this is not a matter of great moment. The epistle is what matters.

* * * * *

There is a saying that conduct is a mirror in which we show ourselves. In Paul's conduct we get to know how deeply he was influenced by the Spirit of Christ. We observe this in apparently little things as seen in the epistles. For instance, most men in his exalted position as the apostle to the Gentiles would not dream of associating smaller and younger men with himself in his inspired epistles. Whoever heard of a Pope associating any other name with his own when issuing an encyclical letter; or the Archbishop of Canterbury in delivering a charge to his clergy? That Paul should mention other names than his own in his inspired epistles denotes humility, large-heartedness, consideration for others and fellowship. Here are the examples:

"Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ . . . and Sosthenes our brother" (1 Cor. 1: 1).

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother" (2 Cor. 1: 1).

"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1: 1).

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother" (Col. 1: 1).

“Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians” (1 Thess. 1: 1).

“Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians” (2 Thess. 1: 1).

“Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-laborer” (Philemon 1).

* * * * *

Paul's interest in others, love for the saints individually, and his intimate knowledge of their devotion to the Lord and service for Him are very marked in the salutations at the end of his epistles. This is notably so in Romans 16 and Colossians 4. It has been often remarked that these chapters are illustrations of the Judgment-Seat of Christ. One thing is certain, in inspired epistles Paul paid no false compliments, and anything said in praise of this one or that one was deserved.

It was not only the brothers who were selected for notice. In Romans 16 a number of sisters are mentioned, and none in a casual or haphazard way. Phebe is a servant of the church at Cenchrea. Priscilla, mentioned before her husband, is a helper, one who was willing to lay down her own neck for the apostle. Mary bestowed much labor. The beloved Persis labored much in the Lord.

This list is all the more remarkable as Paul when writing to the church at Rome, had never been to Rome. Yet he exhibits a truly sympathetic interest and knowl-

edge of these he mentions. The great Apostle was, like his Master, interested in all God's people. It was because they belonged to Christ. We may well remember that a good deal of earnest labor lay to the credit of Phebe, Priscila, Mary, Persis, etc., before Paul could commend them as he did. But what shall be said of "Quartus, a brother?" Can nothing be said in his favor, save that he is a brother? Apparently not. Let these thoughts stimulate us all in seeking to serve the Lord, that when the Judgment-Seat of Christ comes and the Lord scrutinizes all our lives, we may earn the benediction: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25: 23).

* * * * *

Another very interesting touch is found in 1 Cor. 16: 12: "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time." There is no trace of pique that Apollos did not yield to his earnest desire. He might have insisted that being the apostle of the Gentiles, Apollos should bow to his wish. On the contrary, he acknowledges that Apollos had a will in the matter, that he was responsible to the Lord and not to Paul for his movements in His service. Here we learn a lesson that one servant of the Lord should not seek to enforce his will on another servant, but leave each to act before the Lord. Indeed, he wrote to the Roman saints, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his

own master he standeth or falleth" (Rom. 14: 4). In this incident we note humility, readiness of mind to recognize responsibility in another, carefulness not to come between a servant and his Master. We may well learn a lesson from this.

* * * * *

The blending of unswerving faithfulness with tender love and compassion is seen remarkably in Paul in connection with his treatment of John Mark. The first mention of this young man was that it was in his mother's house at Jerusalem the brethren were met to pray for the deliverance of the Apostle Peter from prison. The next mention is when Barnabas and Saul set out on their first missionary journey: "They had also John to their minister" (Acts 13: 5). The three voyaged to Cyprus, which was the country of which Barnabas was a native, and we are likewise told John Mark was sister's son to Barnabas (see Col. 4: 10). Having spent some time in Cyprus, the three sailed to the mainland. Arriving at Perga in Pamphylia, we read, "And John departing from them returned unto Jerusalem" (Acts 13: 13).

Time went on. The first missionary journey was over, and Paul, contemplating a second journey, proposed to Barnabas a return visit to every place they had visited, and see how the brethren did. Barnabas, agreeing to this, determined to take John Mark with them. Paul, however, thought it not good to take one with them who had departed from them at Pamphylia and who refused to go on with the work.

Contention was sharp between Paul and Barnabas. Paul was faithful. Barnabas was determined to have his way. They parted. Barnabas went off to Cyprus with Mark. We hear, alas, no more of Barnabas.

Thank God, we hear of John Mark again. However, it was not Barnabas but Paul that had to do with his restoration. Barnabas was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that Mark was his nephew. We do well to cultivate natural affection, the absence of which is one of the signs of the last times, but we should learn not to allow natural affection to affect our judgment in the things of the Lord.

Paul's epistles throw light on Mark's restoration. He must have travelled far in that direction for Paul to write, "Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, touching whom ye received commandment: if he come unto you receive him" (Col. 4:10). You may be sure that Mark deserved this commendation, and that it was a joy to Paul to give it. Evidently Mark was with Paul at Rome at this time. Finally, Paul, in writing to Timothy, says: "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Tim. 4:11). How touching it is that the unfaithful servant was chosen to delineate THE faithful Servant, even our Lord Jesus Christ. Mark was chosen to write the Gospel that bears his name. As far as one knows, Paul had the comfort and cheer of Mark's ministry till his strenuous life was ended by a stroke of the executioner's sword.

May this be a cheer and encouragement to any backslider who reads these lines. Restoration lies in

the heart and conscience of the backslider. Happy it is when such get back to communion with the Lord and His people, and service for the Lord and His people. It is possible. The Lord's grace and love are amazing.

* * * * *

As one's mind travels over the contents of the epistles, one is immensely struck how very much truth the Apostle Paul, and he alone, was allowed to minister.

Take the Epistle to the Romans, that mastery unfolding of the Gospel of God to the saints in that imperial city. Twice over he speaks of "*MY gospel*" (chaps. 2: 16; 16: 25). Why "*MY gospel*?" There is no such unfolding of the gospel as is found in this epistle. We are indebted to that epistle for the unfolding of the grand truth of *justification by faith*, the battle-cry of the glorious Reformation, the foundation of solid peace with God of untold thousands. James is the only other writer who employs the word "justification," but he is concerned with "justification by works" (James 2: 21, 25). The Epistle to the Romans brings out the truth of the gospel. Not only are the sins of the believer met and atoned for, but the nature that produced the sins is condemned and set aside before God, and the believer is called upon to walk in newness of life.

We are indebted to Paul's writings for instruction as to putting away a wicked person from among ourselves, that there is a within and a without—a *within*

the assembly where God's holiness must be maintained, and a *without* where God judges.

We are indebted to Paul's writings for the truth of the mystery of God's will, how all things are to be headed up in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth, even in Him.

We are indebted to Paul's writings for the unfolding of the mystery "which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16: 25); "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints" (Col. 1: 26)—the mystery of Christ, the risen, triumphant One, the *HEAD* in heaven, and believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit as members of Him and of one another, forming the *BODY* of Christ on this earth. Did Paul get a first intimation of this on the day he was converted and heard the words from Christ in heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *ME?*" that in persecuting the lowly members of Christ on the earth he was persecuting Christ Himself? No illustration could be closer or speak of more intimate union between Christ and His own on the earth than that of the Head and the Body. Would that this glorious truth might draw us nearer to the Lord and each other!

We are indebted to Paul's writings for the unfolding of the truth of the Rapture. The Old Testament prophesied the second coming of our Lord to set up His millennial kingdom on this earth, His thousand years' reign as King of the Jews, and over the whole earth as the Son of Man, when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as

the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2: 14). It was reserved for Paul to tell us how the Lord is coming *for* His people, in order that He may come *with* them when He comes to reign. He writes, "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15: 51, 52). In Paul's first inspired epistle, that to the Thessalonian church, he further explains how this will take place (1 Thess. 4: 13-18). This is a glorious hope, revealed to us in Paul's epistles and nowhere else.

It is in Paul's epistles alone that we get the moral qualities that should mark bishops and deacons in the local churches.

It is Paul who brings before us the solemn truth as to the Judgment-Seat of Christ, which we do well to pay heed to. Thank God for the immutable foundation the believer builds upon, even Jesus Christ, but what are we building thereon? Is it that which is the product of the promptings of the Spirit of God, symbolized by gold, silver, precious stones, or the uprising of the flesh, symbolized by wood, hay and stubble?

It is Paul who tells us what the signs of the last days are, warning us of perilous times. We are in these last days, and it is good that we are foretold their character, otherwise we might be perplexed and dismayed as we see such indifference and worldliness in that which professes the name of Christ. On the

contrary, faith is strengthened as we see Scripture being fulfilled before our very eyes.

Much more might be pointed out on these lines, but enough has been shown of how remarkably God used His servant Paul to bring out the truth of the gospel and the truth of the church.

We would like to add why we include the Epistle to the Hebrews in the Pauline epistles. The allusion to Timothy is very like Paul and fits in with his connection with him. A stronger bit of evidence is seen in 2 Peter 3: 15, 16. The Apostle Peter speaks of all Paul's epistles," in which are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction." But he speaks of a particular epistle which Paul wrote. Peter addresses his first epistle to converted Jews scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, and it looks as if the second epistle was addressed to the same people. If Peter wrote to the Hebrew believers, here we have the assertion that "our beloved brother Paul" had also written to them. Peter would not refer to an uninspired epistle. This being so, which epistle could be referred to but that to the Hebrews? Its deep spiritual teaching, its masterly arguments, point to Pauline authorship. However, while we have no doubt in our minds on this subject, we cannot dogmatize. The epistle itself is what matters.

* * * * *

When we review briefly what we have considered of Paul and his missionary labors, we are greatly

struck how the Lord met him in conversion, gave him first Barnabas as a companion and, after that, Silas raising up more and more laborers as years advanced, such as Luke, the author of the Gospel bearing his name and the Acts of the Apostles, Timothy, Titus, Mark, Crescens, Tychichus, Aristarchus, etc.

In his young days we note his pioneering zeal, his physical endurance and moral courage, his purpose, his dauntless facing of terrible opposition and persecution, his arduous journeys by sea and land. As the years went by, we find him consolidating his work. We note his zeal for God's people, his prayerfulness, his tears, his humility.

Then as to his writings, we are amazed at the vast output that came from his pen, the wonderful range of truth, the amount of special revelation given through him.

One last word. Are we inclined to say, "I am of Paul?" We answer that Paul himself, his character, his teaching, forbid this. At the same time facts are facts, and we have sought to bring them before our readers. We do rejoice that God has shown what He can do with a man entirely devoted to Him.

As Paul got to the end of his life, it seemed as if natural and physical powers declined, and early up-bringing asserted itself, and we find him hurrying to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Pentecost and shaving his head and paying the vows for four men in connection with the temple. This from the writer of the Epistle to the Galatians, with its magnificent defense of the gospel against the attempt to bring in circumcision and law-keeping as necessary for the be-

lievers, seems incomprehensible. It shows how hard it is to unlearn, especially that which has been imbibed in the days of youth. There is frailty with all save One. Paul above all would forbid us saying, "I am of Paul." We trust we have learned that truth well from his lips and pen, and may each reader of this book learn that salutary and necessary lesson. To *God* be all the glory. We can hear Paul fervently saying, Amen and Amen, and to this we add our humble Amen.

* * * * *

It may interest the reader if we permit ourselves to go outside Scripture, and give what ordinary history tells us about Paul's closing days. He stood his last trial before the Emperor Nero, the foulest of all the Roman Emperors. He was conducted down the Appian Way on his last journey. A flash of the sword, and the head of the devoted servant of Christ was separated from his body. The tired body, scarred by scourgings, bearing the brands of the Lord Jesus, was laid down. He could write to Timothy, his son in the faith, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 6-8).

He had indeed fought a good fight and kept the faith. His example enthuses multitudes, of the Lord's

people to this day. They feast upon his inspired writings, the whole tenor of which forbids us saying, "I am of Paul." We rejoice in Peter, John, James and Jude, and accept them all as complementary to that which Paul was used to bring out. Thus we get Scripture in all its parts, Old Testament and New Testament, Moses and Paul, Isaiah and Peter, Proverbs and John, types and antitypes, shadows and substance, prophecy and fulfilment, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3: 17).

* * * * *

Tradition, that very probably has a substantial foundation for it, tells us a little about Paul's personal appearance. It states that he was little of stature, bald, with a long dark beard, aquiline nose, piercing eyes and bushy eyebrows. We must remember Scripture gives us no description of his personal appearance, but engages us with the description of his labors, and introduces us to his writings.

If our readers enjoy the reading of this book as much as the writer has done in producing it, he will be amply repaid for his labor. It has indeed been a labor of love. The study of the Acts of the Apostles has refreshed the spirit of the writer, teaching him many lessons, more than he can say. May writer and reader be moved to greater devotedness to the Lord, to be ready for every good work, and to suffer, if need be, for His sake.

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