

The
Church of Christ
Founded
Spiritual-Studies
In
THE ACTS
By
A. S. Copley



“And we are witnesses of all things, which He did both in the land of the
Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree”—Acts
10:39.

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Grace Assembly
4660 Zion Ave.
San Diego, California 92120
(619) 280-4646
www.graceassemblysandiego.com

PROLOGUE

It is with great pleasure and deep thanksgiving to God that we publish the fourth edition of this exposition of the book of Acts by the late A. S. Copley. We dare say there is not another exposition any where to compare with this one. The author revised these before he left us, because of the enlarged spiritual riches which his later studies brought to him. There is a great demand for this exposition. We trust this reprint edition may prove a greater channel of blessing to lovers of the Truth than the former.

The Scripture quotations from the Acts generally given in these notes are according to the Revised Version. If otherwise, mention thereof is made.

If you want a blessing for your soul,

Read the Acts.

If you want the Lord to make you whole,

Read the Acts.

The Editor (Grace and Glory)

Note from Publisher:

Grace Assembly is privileged to publish and post this commentary on our Web Site, www.graceassemblysandiego.com. We believe these commentaries rank among the best for Bible students who desire to learn about the Word of God and the Pauline Revelation. These commentaries were written during the early days of the latter rain outpour of God's Spirit and they continue to provide enlightenment to the reader. These are the original writings of the authors. Grace Assembly has not made any changes or additions to these writings other than format changes for the convenience of the Bible student. In the left hand column we have added the King James Bible version as it applies to the commentary on that page. Where the authors have referred to scripture references without quoting the scripture in the text, we have added the scripture as a footnote. In some places the authors have referred to Bible versions other than the King James. Since Grace Assembly holds to the King James Version as the preserved text, we, therefore, have added in the text the same scripture from the King James Version. We trust these ancillary changes will be helpful to the Bible student.

The Introduction

“It seemed good to me also having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the words wherein thou wast instructed” (*“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.” KJV*)—Luke 1:3, 4. By comparing Acts 1:1 with this verse, we learn that Luke wrote both books. He was the only New Testament writer who was not “of the circumcision,” that is, Jew. See Col. 4:11, 14. He had written the Gospel of Christ, as “the Son of Man,” to a man, Theophilus, for all men. How fitting that he should now write the continuation of salvation for Jews and Gentiles, which the Acts records.

Tho’ this Book is called, “The Acts of the Apostles,” and rightly so, it is the continuation of the deeds and teachings of Christ. Note the clause, “Jesus began,” etc.—V. 1. The same Holy Spirit who filled and led Jesus, also filled and led the apostles. Thru His mighty power, Christ went on working and teaching by their agency. You will notice also that this book has an informal and abrupt ending; for the works and words of Jesus Christ can never be written fully with pen and ink. Comp. John 21:25. Rather they are written “on tables that are hearts of flesh” (*“but in fleshy tables of the heart.” KJV*)—2 Cor. 3:3. Neither does He lack men to carry on His work today. The Book of Acts forms an important bridge work between the Four Gospel records and the Epistles. It is not only historical, but also emphatically prophetic, typical and dispensational. We must look for all these features in the book in order to obtain the greatest profit from our study. Let us always bear in mind, when reading any book of the Bible, that we are reading the mind of God. Hence, this is no ordinary account. We are treading upon the supernatural. One is amazed at the depth and breadth of truth contained in the Book of Acts, which falls naturally into

Two Grand Divisions

The first twelve chapters comprise the first part; and the remaining sixteen chapters, the second part. Each division clusters around one particular character—the first around Peter, the second around Paul. The first part pertains especially to the Kingdom of God, of which Peter was the chief Apostle. The second part pertains to the Church, or Body of Christ, of which Paul was the chief Apostle. We cannot easily over estimate the value of seeing this distinction and of holding to it, if we would understand this Book.

The First Division. chaps. 1 to 12, summarizes God’s dealings with Israel at the beginning of this age and ends typically with the overthrow of anti-Christ. This hook is not simply biography and history in cold type, but also rich prophecy in letters of fire. The first twelve chapters cover literally a period of about twelve years. Twelve being the full kingdom number, the number of Divine dominion on earth, is very significant here. While God was preparing to suspend His dealings with His ancient people, Israel, He was also preparing to introduce a new order of things, even the Church.

The Second Division summarizes the arduous ministry of Paul and his co-laborers among the Gentiles, planting churches to which he wrote letters afterward. (See notes on chap. 13.) We

consider The Acts a delineator, or pattern book. Here we learn what to do and how to do it. If we keep to the simplicity of religious operations outlined in this wonderful sample case, we will be spared unspeakable failures and unnecessary heartaches. We will not adopt the religious machinery of carnal men, but go on in the liberty of the glory of God's dear children. The supernatural power of Jehovah will increase in our midst. Signs and wonders will never wane. Never will we have to cry out with shame, "Oh, for the old time power."

Outline of Division One

Chapters 1 to 12

1. The appearances and ascension of Jesus Christ—Chap. 1.
2. The Lordship of Jesus, even the despised Man of Nazareth, shown by the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit—Chap. 2:36.
3. The Glorification of Jesus as the Son of God, even Jesus of Nazareth, by the healing of the lame man, type of Israel's restoration at the end—Chaps. 3 and 4.
4. The Exaltation of Jesus as the promised Prince, intimated by His judgment of Ananias and Sapphira, and by the many special signs and wonders wrought thru the apostles—Chap. 5. Note v. 31. The millennium is foreshadowed—Vs. 33 to 37 with Lev. 25. Jesus as Prince and Saviour, rejected by the religious officers—Chap. 5:17-41.
5. Jesus, as the Just One, the Son of Man, rejected by the sects, the people and the elders typical of the present time—Chaps. 6 and 7.
6. Jesus proclaimed to Samaria and to the Eunuch by Philip, typical of His being proclaimed to Israel and to the Gentiles at the beginning of the next age—Chap. 8.
7. The Salvation of Saul. A new regime in sight—Chap. 9.
8. Jesus proclaimed to the Gentiles in Cornelius' house—Chaps. 10 and 11. The New Age Introduced.
9. Jesus, as the King, rejected by Herod, a type of anti-Christ—Chap. 12.

The Acts KJV

Chapter 1

1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

1:2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

1:4 And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, **but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.**

1:5 **For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.**

1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

1:7 And he said unto them, **It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.**

1:8 **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

The Acts Commentary

Appearings and Ascension of Jesus

Chapter One

“The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach” (*“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,” KJV*)—V. 1. We saw that the Gospel of Luke was addressed to Theophilus—¹Luke 1:5. By that fact, we know that Luke wrote this book also. The little verb “began” is full of meaning here. It indicates that the wonderful works and words of Jesus Christ cannot be confined to three and a half years.

Chapter 1 connects the Book of Acts with the Gospels. It intimates Christ’s resurrection, which fact is emphasized in the first chapters. The results of “His passion” (His death on the cross, v. 3) and of His ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit, were dependent upon His resurrection. For this reason, Peter insisted that the number of the twelve be complete, to bear “witness with us of His resurrection”—V. 22.

Verse 1 is the key-verse. See first paragraph of the Introduction. Verse 3 and 6 indicate the theme of the first twelve chapters—“the kingdom.” Verse 7 was a concealed portion to those disciples. They did not then see this church age. The query of verse 6 expressed their great concern. The plain and repeated words of Jesus to them made them to hope for His return to reign. Observe the intimate relation of the important facts of this chapter, as if they occurred in immediate succession—today Christ’s death; tomorrow, His resurrection; the next day, His ascension; then the advent of the Spirit and finally, Jesus’ advent. Indeed it is just that real with God. The disciples did not understand Jesus in saying, “Upon this Rock I will build My Church”—Matt. 16:18. They expected the immediate return of their Lord. Their language thru-out these opening chapters shows forth that fact. The word “church,” which occurs a number of times in the first twelve chapters, simply means “congregation,” or “assembly.” Compare Stephen’s words, “the church in the wilderness” (chap. 7:38) with ²Lev. 8:3, 4 and 5. It plainly means God’s people. Be it remembered that these first chapters are primarily occupied with kingdom matters. Church matters really begin with chap. 13. The Master’s answer to the disciples’ question of verse 6 shows that He wanted them to be concerned just then with “the promise

¹ Luke 1:5 “There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.”

² Lev. 8:3, 4, 5 “And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done.”

1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

1:12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

1:13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James.

1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

1:15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

1:16 Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

of the Father.” He had before given them a symposium on the Holy Spirit (John 14 to 17); but they had to receive Him in order to understand Him and to be “witnesses unto” Christ.

An Important Vacancy Filled

After the ascension of Jesus, the disciples repaired to the “upper room,” perhaps a chamber in the temple—¹Comp. 2 Kgs. 23:12, 1 Chr. 28:11; also Mk. 14:15. There they continued with “one accord in prayer and supplication.” (V. 14). It was in the midst of this prayer time, that Peter announced, saying, “One must become a witness with us of His resurrection” (V. 22). There is no room for question as to whether Peter was in divine order. The need was there.

Twelve was always the Divine number of Kingdom fullness. Four, the divisible number of humanity, multiplied by three, the indivisible number of Deity, equals twelve, the comprehensive number of divine dominion on earth and of new creation completeness. Study the holy city in Rev. 21. The Holy Spirit would not come till that vacancy was filled. Wonderful! God had a man in training for the place during all those three years. Comp. verse 21 with ²Mark 4:10. No doubt Matthias knew it long before, even as Moses knew forty years before hand that he should lead Israel out. Note that “He was numbered with the eleven apostles” (v. 26), also, “Peter standing up with the eleven”—Chap. 2:14. In chap. 6:2, he is counted with “the twelve.”

But some one who does not wish to give Paul the place that God has given him, arises and says that Paul should have had that place, that he really became the twelfth apostle. Let Paul answer for himself. In 1 Cor. 15, he is recounting the occasions on which Christ was seen and by whom, after His resurrection. He declares that “He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve;” later, “He was seen of James, then of all the apostles.” The next verse proves conclusively that Paul did not count himself as one of “the twelve,” nor as one of “all the apostles;” for he says, “Last of all, He was seen of me also.” A careful study of the following citations shows that there were seven other apostles

¹ 2 Kings 23:12 “And the altars that *were* on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.”

1 Chronicles 28:11 “Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat,”

Mark 14:15 “**And he will shew you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us.**”

² Mark 4:10 “And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.”

1:17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

1:18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

1:19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

1:20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

1:21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

1:22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

1:23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

1:24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

1:26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

besides the twelve, and that Paul was one of those seven. Compare ¹Acts 19:22 with 2 Cor. 8:18, 23, ²1 Thes. 1:1 and 2:6 with 2 Cor. 1:19; also ³Acts 14:14, 1 Cor. 4:6, 9 and Phil. 2:25. The word “messenger” in 2 Cor. 8:23 and Phil. 2:25 is apostle in the Greek. Paul was the “chief” apostle of another group, for another and distinct purpose, even as Peter was the foremost of the twelve apostles.

Interesting Notes

The “not many days” (V. 5) were 10 days to which add “forty days” (V. 3)—from Christ’s resurrection to Pentecost. See ⁴Lev. 23:16. The word “power” (V. 7) is “authority.” The word “witness, or testimony” occurs about 50 times in the book. It expresses our duty to God. The phrase “one accord” (V. 14) occurs 7 times, a telling feature of those days. It is a musical term. If we walk in the Spirit, there will be harmony among us as Christ’s instruments, “making melody in your heart to the Lord”—Eph. 5:19. The word “appointed” (V. 23) means “set forth” as in Chap. 6:6. The saying, “that he might go to his own place” (V. 25) is the final proof that Judas Iscariot was not saved. He did not “fall from grace” (Gal. 5:4), nor from his “own steadfastness”—2 Pet. 3:17. He “failed the grace of God” (“*any man fail of the grace of God;*” *KJV*)—Heb. 12:15. He had never laid hold of saving grace. By transgression, he fell from his office—Verse 25. The word “place” means “district, or region.”

¹ **Acts 19:22** “So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.”

² **2 Corinthians 8:18, 23** “And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches...Whether *any do enquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren *be enquired of*, *they are* the messengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Christ.”

² **1 Thessalonians 1:1** “Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians *which is* in God the Father and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 2:6 “Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor *yet* of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.”

2 Corinthians 1:19 “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.”

³ **Acts 14:14** “*Which* when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard *of*, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,”

1 Corinthians 4:6, 9 “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and *to* Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another... For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.”

Philippians 2:25 “Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.”

⁴ **Leviticus 23:16** “Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.”

The Lordship of Jesus

Chapter Two

Chapter 2

2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

2:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all together in one place”—V. 1. Pentecost was the second annual Jewish feast. It occurred early in the third month of the Jewish sacred year. That day came just 50 days from the time that they waved the barley sheaf, or first fruit unto God. That is the Holy Spirit was poured out just 50 days from the morning of the resurrection of Christ. The many Old Testament types and promises of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit were fulfilled that hour. The Comforter, of whom Jesus spoke freely (John 14-17), then came. He became to the disciples the endowment with power. Perhaps we can study this chapter in no better manner than by answering several questions.

1. What happened that day? Several striking things.

First, “a sound...as of a rushing, mighty wind.” (V. 2) That sound was “from heaven.” It came “suddenly” and sovereignly, entirely independently of the people. It went nowhere else, but came and “filled all the house where they were sitting” in one accord, waiting for the fulfillment of the last word of the Lord. Does this not speak of the Spirit as a mighty, intelligent One? What if He designs to manifest Himself in such a manner today? Should anyone object? But very many do.

Second, “and there appeared unto them tongues, parting asunder, like as of fire.” (V. 3) A strange phenomenon indeed. Had not John foretold of a “baptism with fire?”—Matt. 3. Yet that too was a surprise. There were not only a few new tongues, but 120, one for each disciple, cloven as if speaking to all mankind.

Third, “and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” (V. 4) That was the central fact. All the others were accomplishments. For that the disciples were looking and waiting. They did not and could not understand what the Spirit’s advent should mean until they experienced His indwelling. It is even just so today. Yet, those who have not been filled, or anointed with the Spirit as were the hundred and twenty, attempt to teach others about Him. How can they? How greatly all saints need this anointing. And what a privilege to be filled with God’s Spirit. Reader, do you appreciate it? Oh, matchless love! Oh, unspeakable condescension, that He, the spotless Dove, should deign to dwell in this tenement of infirmity! Ah, but the precious blood of Another purchased our bodies and made them His temples—¹1 Cor. 6:19, 20. Thus weakness

¹ 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

becomes dynamite.

Fourth, dare I name it? “And began to speak with other tongues.” (V. 4) The devil hates this phenomenon more than any other thing pertaining to the Christian life, except the blood of atonement. And why? What harm can it do? Be it remembered that the speaking in tongues was altogether Divine. The disciples knew nothing about it beforehand. Perhaps they were familiar with ¹Isa. 28:11, 12. They were not waiting for tongues, nor for the other manifestations, but for the Holy Spirit. However they spoke “as the Spirit (who had just come upon them) gave them utterance.” Were they to be blamed? Of course not. Well, if I receive the Holy Spirit and speak in another tongue, why do you blame me? If I do not speak in a tongue, how can anyone know that the Spirit has come to me? How do I myself know? What right has any man to tell us that we ought not to speak in tongues? “Forbid not to speak with tongues,” exclaimed dear Paul. Why denounce it, as of the devil? Was Peter’s new tongue of the devil? There is some indication that the devil is not very far off from the folk who fight the sign and manifestation of new tongues.

They “began” to speak, which implies that speaking in tongues was to be continued, even as what “Jesus began to do and teach” (Chap. 1:1) should be perpetuated by His disciples. What is the use of tongues? cries the critic. Are you not ashamed to speak so lightly about Jehovah’s sovereign acts? Are you not afraid that you might offend His love? Dare you set your carnal, finite ignorance up against Divine, infinite Wisdom? If you are honestly enquiring, simply run the Bible references and the Holy Spirit will give you a dozen reasons for this peculiar phenomenon. “Tongues are for a sign” of the Divine presence, a sign that the Spirit is poured out; for there were no tongues before the Spirit was sent. They are a distinct sign of Divine power; for without that power, no one can speak the heavenly language. People beg for money, teach rank error, indulge in chicanery in the Lord’s work; but Satan never disturbs them for so doing. Yet, to stop the unruly member from worshipping and adoring the blessed Lord, men write pages upon pages of the most scathing sort. Is it not written that “tongues...shall cease?” some one asks. Yes, tongues shall cease when the Author of this gracious gift shall have accomplished all the Father’s will thereby, but not till then. And let Jehovah, not men, say when tongues shall cease.

It is very evident that the advent of the Holy Spirit was with mighty power, very manifestly supernatural and phenomenal, accompanied with signs and wonders and dynamics. Why should those concomitants ever have ceased? Why do ministers discountenance the supernatural today? Why do they fear the

¹ Isaiah 28:11, 12 “For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear.”

2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

2:6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

2:7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

2:9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

2:10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

2:11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

2:12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

2:13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

phenomenal? How can they expect the Holy Spirit to continue what “Jesus began both to do and teach” (Chap. 1:1) if He is not allowed to demonstrate His unlimited power and employ the gifts which He brought with Him? Need we wonder that there is no life, no joy, no victory, no healing balm in most religious circles? Why are prominent men crying out for a revival? Why are they exhorting the church to pray for it? Because they are rejecting the revival which Jehovah sovereignly sent in 1906, and which has been encircling the globe. Sir, you will never have a revival unless you accept God’s Revivalist, the Holy Spirit, after His own scriptural fashion.

2. Who received the Spirit? The twelve apostles and “certain women,” who were of one accord with them. Most likely the seventy, whom Jesus had sent forth, were there also. “All the apostles” of 1 Cor. 15:7 must include the seventy. The word “sent” in ¹Luke 10:1 is apostled in the Greek, also in ²Mark 6:7. Men today would eliminate the women from that company; but they were present and they were filled and prophesied, even as Joel had foretold. See verses 17, 18. Some men claim that the Gift of the Spirit was for the apostles only; but the first company filled included the apostles, “the women and the brethren” (“*with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*” *KJV*)—Chap. 1:12-14. Then in Chaps. 8, 10 and 19, we learn that the Spirit was the Father’s Gift for all His people, if they would receive Him.

3. What was the effect of the disciples receiving the Spirit? The answer is plain and full. The multitude were confounded; they were all amazed and marveled; they were in perplexity, saying one to another, “What meaneth this?” Others mocking said, They are full of new wine. The God of mighty power was on the scene. The whole city was stirred. But what was the particular fact that amazed the people? This is no small query. Three times it is here stated (vs. 6, 8 and 11) that the people marveled because they heard the disciples speak in their own tongues. A multitude of Jews from fifteen different countries and speaking the dialects (dialekto, Gr.) of those lands, were assembled in Jerusalem because of the annual Jewish feast of Weeks, or Pentecost. See Lev. 23:15-21. It was the miraculous and unheard of phenomena that aroused the slumbering masses. Oh, if the clergy of our day were only simple enough to be plain ministers of the Christ of apostolic days, what wonders would God do. Alas! they run from the supernatural, the phenomenal, the really spiritual. They rather join those who are “mocking,” and talk worse than in those days; for they say that “speaking in tongues is of the devil.”

¹ Luke 10:1 “After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.”

² Mark 6:7 “And he called *unto him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;”

2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

2:15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.

2:16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

4. How shall we account for the outpouring of the Spirit and the speaking in other tongues? Peter answers, saying, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, etc.”—Vs. 16 to 21. Joel did not say that the recipients should speak in other tongues; but the record declares that they did. Isaiah foretold those days by saying, “With stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people, to whom He said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing”—Isa. 28:11, 12. The due time came for the fulfillment of both Joel’s words and Isaiah’s. Peter also announced the death and resurrection of Jesus, confirming the latter by quoting David’s words in the 16th Psalm. Then added this undeniable fact—“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost; He (Jesus) hath shed forth (poured out) this, which ye now see and hear”—V. 33. The will of the Father was done by that outpouring of the Spirit. The will of Jesus Christ was done. It was the will of the other Comforter to come at that moment, and 120 disciples were fully prepared to receive Him. Neither did they object to the manner of His advent, nor the accompanying supernatural sign of speaking in new tongues. By the direct orders of Jesus, 120 were assembled in one accord, waiting for the descent of the promised mighty Holy Spirit. That was not the peak of perfection, as one has written, but rather the peak of power.

Peter’s Pentecostal Sermon

In the Apostle’s first Spirit-inspired message, he quotes from two Old Testament men; viz, the prophet Joel and king David. Iris quotation from Joel falls into two distinct parts. The first part, verses 17 and 18, refers entirely to the Gift of the Holy Spirit pertaining to this present age and the next age. The second part, verses 19 and 20, refers to the beginning of the next age. Verse 21 covers both periods. Let me call particular attention to verse 17—“And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh, etc.” Men deliberately denounce the present, effective, phenomenal working of God, (known as “the Latter Rain”) as fanaticism and devilish. Was Peter correct in calling that time “the last days?” No one denies his words. In what days are we now? Not one prophetic student denies that we are in the last days. What happened in the last days then? If all that Luke records in Acts 2 took place then; how can verse 17 be fulfilled now, if these are the last days, unless we allow a repetition, or continuation of those happenings now? If those phenomena were the fulfillment of Joel’s words then, what else but those amazing supernaturals can be said to be the fulfillment of his prophecy today? How dare any man attempt to garble the Scriptures and introduce a supposed substitute for Jehovah’s own sovereign, almighty Gift and confounding accompaniments? How can Bible students conscientiously slip over those plain words—“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God?” If, as the Apostle declares, God saith; it behooves us all to believe it all and profit by it.

2:18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

2:19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

And not only did Peter announce that God said it, but He saith it. He has been saying it ever since Joel wrote those words, even for over 2700 years. Happy and victorious are they who “gladly receive” Joel’s and Peter’s words as the words of God.

Note an important difference in the wording. Joel said, “Afterward;” but Peter says, “In the last days.” God had first promised material blessings and prosperity, which were to be followed by the pouring out of the Spirit. Study Joel 2:18 to 27. “Corn and oil and wine” were promised. He bid the beasts not to be afraid; for the trees should flourish and be fruitful for them. He bid the children of Zion to rejoice; because they should “eat in plenty and be satisfied” and never again be ashamed. The material rains, which had been withheld for so many years on account of Israel’s disobedience, that is, the former and the latter rains, should be poured out copiously upon the holy land. Then, “afterward,” after those bountiful blessings, the spiritual blessings should flow forth with the advent of the Holy Spirit.

But it pleased the Lord to send the Spirit ahead of the material blessings. The latter did not come upon Palestine before the Spirit was poured out. Therefore, Peter could not say, “Afterward,” but “in the last days,” which of course include Joel’s “afterward.” Now mark two noteworthy facts. About 1875 A. D. the rains began to fall in the holy land, restoring it to productiveness, at least in some measure as Joel 2:18 to 27 foretold. Then about 1906, the Lord began to visit the Church with the spiritual latter rain, the Holy Spirit with the invincible sign of speaking in new tongues. Joel’s “afterward” could not come at the beginning of this age; but it has come near the close and is upon us today. Now if Peter could say of the advent of the Spirit then, “This is that;” how much more can we shout, “This is that,” because it is more fully the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy than the Pentecost at the beginning. Indeed we can say, This is that, spoken by Joel, and that which came at the first. Not only has it come “after” the material rainfall; but the mutterings of judgment are so manifest that the judgments foretold by Joel, which were not fulfilled when the Spirit first came, are sure to come upon the world very soon. “The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Gen. 15:16) in Christ’s time; but it is full today, reeking with blatant infidelity and modern idol worship—¹1 Kings 21:26. Jehovah cannot endure it much longer.

The second part of Joel’s prophecy, verses 19, 20, were not fulfilled after Pentecost at the beginning. They yet await fulfillment. We should expect them to follow the present down-pour of the Latter Rain. It is just before the coming of the day of the Lord that God will show wonders in heaven and signs upon the earth. That coming time of judgment, which Joel termed “great and

¹ 1 Kings 21:26 “And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all *things* as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.”

2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:

2:21 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

2:24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

2:25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

2:26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

2:27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

terrible,” Peter calls “great and notable.” The latter word is “epiphane” in Greek, which means literally, shining upon; hence, appearing, manifestation. Prophetic students frequently term it “the epiphany” in distinction from “the Parousia” (Gr.), or presence, or coming of the Lord. The word “appearing” in Peter’s first epistle is not the same as here. There it properly means “revelation,” as in Chap. 1:13. In the Greek, it is “apokalupsei,” that is, an uncovering. Peter always looked for the unveiling, or revelation of Jesus. To obtain a fuller understanding of the word “appearing,” or epiphany (Acts 2:20), it will pay the diligent student to compare ¹1 Tim. 6:14, 2 Tim. 1:10 and 4:1, 8 and Tit. 2:13. In ²2 Thess. 2:8, the same word is translated “brightness.” From this last citation, we can see readily why Joel calls it terrible; for by the dazzling, outshining of His presence, Christ will destroy His enemies forever. Joel calls the day of the Lord also “a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness”—Joel 2:1, 2. Then will the Lord be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels (His whole body), in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—2 Th. 1.

“Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades; neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption”—Vs. 26; 27. Peter turned suddenly from Joel to David, who also was a prophet as well as a king. Jesus’ burial and resurrection were the fulfillment of David’s graphic words. It was the same Peter who wrote afterwards of Jesus’ visit to the believers in Hades, or Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16), where He preached unto the spirits in prison—those of course who had died believing God and accepting His word—³1 Pet. 3:19, 20. But he was there only a few hours. It was not possible that He should remain subject to death. His holy body could not yield to corruption. Life repels and overcomes death.

¹ **1 Timothy 6:14** “That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:”

2 Timothy 1:10 “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:”

2 Timothy 4:1, 8 “I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom...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.”

Titus 2:13 “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

² **2 Thessalonians 2:8** “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:”

³ **1 Peter 3:19, 20** “By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.”

2:28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

2:29 Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

2:30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

2:32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

2:34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

2:35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

Light expels darkness. Weakness succumbs to power. Not only did Jesus comfort the prisoners of hope and then depart from their abode; but “when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive.” “He descended first into the lower parts of the earth” (much lower than the grave, even into Hades) and freed the captives and took them with Himself “far above all heavens”—Eph. 4:8-10. No marvel then that Paul wrote, that “to depart and be with Christ is far better” (*“having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:” KJV*)—Phil. 1:23. There is only one excuse for staying here, as the Apostle declares—“to abide in the flesh is more needful for you”—Phil. 1:24.

“This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses”—V. 32. The apostles emphasized greatly the resurrection of Jesus. It was the unanswerable proof to every honest Jew of His Divine sonship and messiahship. “He was declared the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead, even Jesus” (*“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:” KJV*)—Rom. 1:4. Having heaped up an array of plain facts, confirmed by Old Testament prophecies, demonstrating the Divine sonship and call of Jesus Christ, Peter concluded his masterful discourse by a burning exhortation. “Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ (Messiah, or Anointed One), this Jesus whom ye crucified”—V. 36.

Was Peter’s Sermon Effectual?

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?”—V. 37. Yes, Peter’s sermon was effectual, because it was the voice of God. The 120 were together in “one accord.” Likewise the Apostle’s hearers were present as one heart. Their need was one and their cry for help was one. Therefore, the Spirit could enable His servant to give an answer at once. “And Peter said unto them, Repent ye and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit”—V. 38. Israel’s repentance and baptism had a particular meaning. They were not “sinners of the Gentiles” (Gal. 2:15), nor sinners as we commonly say today. They were all God’s people, actual worshippers of Him and looking for the promised Deliverer, the Messiah and King. Being zealous for the law of Moses, they were observing the rites and ceremonies in the temple as set forth in Exodus and Leviticus. Up to the light they had, many of them, no doubt, walked in God’s will. But now Christ came as the fulfillment of those rites and ceremonies, which He had said, “I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill”—Matt. 5:17. “By mighty works and wonders and signs” (*“by miracles and wonders and signs,” KJV*) (v. 22), God approved of His Son in their midst. But as a nation, the Jews rejected Him. See John 5:18 and 10:34-37. He also had

2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

2:40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

said to them, “Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of ME: but ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life” (*“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” KJV*)—John 5:39, 40.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out, Israel were granted unbounded evidences that Jesus was indeed the Anointed One of the Father. Therefore, they should repent of their former attitude toward Him and accept Him as their Savior and Prince. By one outward act, could they do that and express their faith in Jesus of Nazareth; viz, by being baptized in water in His name. Peter did not mean, as some teach, that God would forgive their sins if they yielded to baptism in Jesus’ name. That would have been a salvation by works, against which the whole Bible stands boldly and plainly. He meant rather, if they believed on Jesus, they would be baptized in His name. God did not save the Jews one way, partly by works, and the Gentiles wholly by grace. “He made no distinction between us (the Jews) and them (the Gentiles), cleansing their hearts by faith” (*“And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” KJV*)—Acts 15:9. Paul’s words to the twelve at Ephesus indicate the nature and force of water baptism. He said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus” (*“Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” KJV*)—Acts 19:4, 5. Comp. also ¹Luke 1:76. In both cases, they showed their faith by yielding to baptism. They who hearkened to John and to Paul were not pricked in their heart and did not need to cry, What shall we do? because they did not resist the truth when they heard it.

The preposition “unto,” in the phrase “unto the remission of your sins,” is “eis” in the Greek. Its radical sense is direction towards motion to, in or into. Baptism cannot mean more than in the direction toward, or as a motion unto salvation. That is, it expresses faith in Christ as the Savior. Furthermore, John the Baptist had announced “the axe laid at the root of the trees” (*“the axe is laid unto the root of the trees:” KJV*)—Matt. 3:10. Both Jews and Gentiles proved themselves unable to bring forth good fruit; for “there is none that doeth good, no not one: all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”—Rom. 3:12, 23. Therefore, God’s judgment axe, the law, cut down the trees thru Christ’s substitutionary death on Calvary. He was “cut off, but not for Himself,” but for all men—Dan. 9:26. “We thus judge that One died for all:

¹ Luke 1:76 “And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;”

2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

2:43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

therefore all died” (“*because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:*” *KJV*)—2 Cor. 5:14. Therefore, when Israel yielded to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, they simply acknowledged thereby that the Man whom they had rejected, is indeed their promised Redeemer, and that thru Him only could they have eternal life. Thus they outwardly declared that they could not help themselves, that the rites and ceremonies were only shadows of Christ, and could bring them no blessing, but He was the real Substance. They acknowledged that they died in His death and were raised in His resurrection to live by His very life in them.

Hence, we read, “They then that had received his (Peter’s) words were baptized;” (V. 41) or which is richer, “Those therefore who gladly had welcomed his words were baptized.” And there were added in that day about three thousand souls. Of course with their heart turned thus to Jesus Christ, they could receive the Holy Spirit quite readily; for He had been given freely already, even poured out upon all flesh and was waiting to be received. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers”—V. 42. We just studied the teaching of the apostles, as set forth in verses 38 to 41. How blessed it would be thruout all Christendom today if the ministers and people still continued in the same doctrine. Of course the disciples continued in fellowship; for a wholehearted acceptance of the whole truth results in full fellowship among believers. As Jesus gave instruction to the twelve (¹Matt. 26:26-29) and years afterward to Paul (²1 Cor. 11:23-25), so they observed “the breaking of bread.” Instead of cutting out this memorial, as some would do today, they continued it. Instead of pronouncing it “a tradition nailed to the cross,” as some do now, the Apostle Paul perpetuated the observance of it and gave us the correct interpretation thereof as, related to the Church of Christ. Some people are so piously afraid of formality, that they would exclude spiritual forms, or symbols. They fear that the Spirit cannot be free to operate thru what they call forms and ceremonies. Let us remember that the Holy Spirit does not move haphazardly, like a bird in the air. He moves always according to the written Word. If we

¹ Matthew 26:26-29 “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, **Take, eat; this is my body.** And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, **Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.**”

² 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, **Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.** After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, **This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.**”

follow His direction, we too will move thus, and we never will be bound by any dead form. Every motion of every meeting will be living, shining with beauty and pulsating with power. Let us fear rather that we might get away from the inspired pattern delineated in this book of Acts. Indeed it is the record of “the Acts of the Apostles;” but they were filled with and guided by the dear Holy Spirit. When we conform to the pattern, we are moving in the Spirit.

In 1 Cor. 11, we read of two of the three church ordinances. The Greek word “paracoseis” translated ordinances, v. 2 is translated “traditions” in ¹2 Thess. 2:15 and 3:6. They were not nailed to the cross, because they were given to Paul to be observed by the church. Study these references and learn their importance. Baptism in water is the third ordinance, or tradition.

“And the prayers.” That is, the saints in the beginning continued to pray as well as did the apostles. Nowadays, the preacher does the praying, and his prayers are usually as cold as Greenland. There is no real warmth, or power in them. Too often they proceed from uncircumcised lips. It appears that the primary purpose of gathering was for prayer. Peter and John went to the temple at three P. M.; for that was “the hour of prayer”—Chap. 3:1. Now the people assemble to hear a list of wordly announcements and a formal talk, or lecture. Then the lame were wonderfully healed; now they have no place for the weak and maimed. Then they lifted their hands to God in streaming cries of need, and He shook the place of meeting in answer thereto—Chap. 4. Many wonders and signs were done in Jesus’ name. When Peter was imprisoned later because of his loyalty to the truth, the Church prayed him out—Chap. 12. If you want a safe symposium on living, effective prayer, read the Acts.

“All that believed were together and had all things common, and they sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all according as any man had need”—Vs. 44, 45. The same facts are stated in greater length in Chap. 4:32 to 37. The conduct of the saints as expressed in these verses was the fulfillment of Lev. 25. Every fiftieth Jewish year was a jubilee year, which pointed forward to the millennium. That very year in which Jesus died and the Holy Spirit was poured out was a Jubilee year. The disciples supposed that the millennial reign of Christ was due and that He would return very soon. Indeed it was due and He would have come back about 7 years later if the Jews as a nation had received Him. Therefore, they acted in obedience to Lev. 25 and sold their possessions and had all things common, as they will do again when the lord does return. However, Jesus did not return then, but introduced a different order of procedure. The Church was never intended to observe that

2:44 And all that believed were together,
and had all things common;

2:45 And sold their possessions and
goods, and parted them to all *men*, as
every man had need.

¹ 2 Thessalonians 2:15 “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”

2 Thessalonians 3:6 “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

rule of order given to Israel. Hence, the Apostle Paul, the Church apostle distinctively, never taught the community of goods. For that reason, wherever men have endeavored to introduce such a custom, it always failed. They were not led of the Lord. The unity required of the Church is “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” that is, the 7 ones of ¹Eph. 4:3-6. We are not admonished to try to bring it about (for it already exists); but we should be “diligent to keep the unity.” (*“Endeavouring to keep the unity”—Eph. 4:3 KJV*) The gifts and offices have been bestowed that we might “all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, etc.” (*“we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God,...” KJV*)—Eph. 4:13. “And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home; they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people”—V. 46, 47. The breaking of bread here was not a part of the worship, as in verse 42. There the prayers are mentioned with it; here not so. Note how rejoiced they were. This also is an earnest of how glad and wholehearted Israel will be in the millennium.

“And the Lord added together day by day those that were being saved”—V. 47. It may be of interest to the Bible student to read this verse exactly as it occurs in the Greek—And the Lord added those who were being saved daily to the assembly. If ministers would compare this verse with Chap. 5:14 and 11:24, they would not stress church joining. At least, they would not attempt to do the adding; for it reads distinctly, that the Lord added. Nor did He add any unsaved people, but those being saved. Furthermore, they were not added to any man-made sect, or denomination. Even the two words, “the assembly, or church,” are given by four copies only, as found in the Vatican. Doubtless the other two citations should settle it as to whom the Lord added the converts. There we read that they were “added to the Lord.” That agrees with Paul’s words, “joined unto the Lord,” in 1 Cor. 6:17. When He saved people, He adds them to Himself. The New Testament admits of no other adding, or joining, except to Himself, or by Himself. After the sad episode of Ananias and Sapphira (Chap. 5), “no man durst join himself to them.” (*“And of the rest durst no man join himself to them:”—Chap. 5:13 KJV*) That ought to be full of instruction and warning to all believers today. The foregoing happenings occurred in the year 33 A. D.

¹ Ephesians 4:3-6 “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*”

Chapter 3

3:1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*.

3:2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3:3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

3:4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

3:5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

3:6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

3:7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

3:8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

The Glorification of Jesus

Chapters Three

“And He took Him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and his anklebones received strength: and leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God”—Vs. 7, 8. People generally are more, or less familiar with this healing narrative. How few, however, observe its typical value. If you do not look for typical teaching in the Acts, you will miss much that is yours by divine grace. The healing of the lame man at the gate beautiful was an object lesson to all Israel of what God was about to do for them as a nation, if they had received Jesus. It was in His mind also to do the same stupendous things for the Gentiles. That man had been lame for about forty years—Chap. 4:22. Forty is the number of testing. Moses was tested for forty years as to his faithfulness. Then he was tested as to his qualifications for responsibility. Finally, forty years more tested his success as a leader and his fitness to receive a full reward. Jesus was tested forty days in the wilderness.

The beggar's lameness illustrates Israel's utter helplessness after fifteen hundred years of tutorage under the law—¹Gal. 3:21-25. When Christ came, the Law, the tutor, or school-master, was no longer needed. It could not give life, nor sustain life. The law could only chide, correct, curb and chastise its pupils until Christ should come; but not “bring us unto Christ”—Gal. 3:24. But He came and proved His reading and ample ability to heal the people, soul and body, by recovering the lame man. Some of the people believed and received the great blessings. They too went walking and leaping and praising God. Thank God, they who today believe fully on Jesus receive the like fulness of blessing, freedom and joy. The law cannot make people walk uprightly, leap and shout for joy. It cannot heal the sick and alleviate pain. Only grace can bless.

The lame man's wonderful healing foreshadows the healing of the whole nation of Israel, when Jesus comes again. “Shall a nation be born at once?” cries the prophet—Isa. 66:8. Yes, the whole nation will be healed and leap and praise God. They will accept the Christ, whom they have rejected these twenty centuries. Read Isaiah 25 to 27, also 35:10 and note the frequent utterances of the phrase, “in that day;” They will gladly acknowledge

¹ Galatians 3:21-25 “Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”

3:9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

3:10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

3:11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

3:12 And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

3:13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.

3:14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

3:15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

3:17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers.

Jesus to be the Son of God, the Holy One and the Just, the Prince of life, whom their father's killed. His name thru faith in His name will give them perfect soundness in soul and body. Dear Peter explained that all the above resulted from the death of Jesus Christ in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

An Appropriate Appeal

“Repent ye therefore and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, so that there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord and that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus; whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things, etc.”—Vs. 19-21. The Apostle wisely uses the healing of the beggar and the explanation he gave, as a mighty leverage to persuade his audience to accept Jesus. The Spirit made Peter declare that the “times of refreshing,” promised to them in the Old Testament could only come by the personal return, or “presence of the Lord.” How true is that. He uttered also another solemn truth—those refreshings were dependent upon Israel’s repentance. As we shall see by the seventh chapter, their refusal to turn to the Lord, shut up the heavens and penned up their Lord in the regions above. Hence, their cry, like a vexed widow (¹Luke 18:3-8), will bring Him back to deliver them and refresh them beyond measure.

Dear Reader, consider these words most carefully. Today God is visiting the Gentiles and taking out a people for His name—Chap. 15:14-17. We can expect nothing more. The Jews must accept Jesus nationally before the world-wide revival can come. The world is not turning to Him. When you hear, or read that a whole city is taking a stand for Christ under the ministry of some modern evangelist, you may know at once that the full gospel of the despised Nazarene is not being proclaimed. Ministers and methods that are popular with men are an abomination to the holy God. Comp. ²John 5:43, 44 and 1 Cor. 4:9-13. The greater revival, the world-wide revival for which some claim to be

¹ Luke 18:3-8 “*And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*”

² John 5:43-44 “*I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?*”

1 Corinthians 4:9-13 “*For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.*”

3:18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

3:22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

2:23 And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

2:24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

2:25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

2:26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

praying, will not arrive till Jesus returns and will be received by the Jews. Observe the last verses of chap. 3. “Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blest.” Note in particular the following. “Unto you first, God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you in turning everyone of you from your iniquities.” Oh, the responsibility of Israel for the salvation of the nations. “If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world; what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?”—Rom. 11:15 to 31.

How rapidly the Spirit sweeps us forward in the unfolding of the Divine plan. In chap. 2, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit were manifested and the resurrection of Jesus proved. In this third chapter, the return and presence of “the Prince of Life” are announced. The entire period of Israel’s partial blindness is spanned by this chapter and their deliverance offered to them. Of course, the Apostle did not then know how long the Lord would be detained in the heavens. Doubtless he was made to know later on by reading ¹Psa. 90:4 and ²Hos. 6:2, whereby he learned that “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day”—2 Pet. 3:8.

¹ Psalms 90:4 “For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.”

² Hosea 6:2 “After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.”

Chapter 4

4:1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

4:2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

4:3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

4:4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

4:5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

4:6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

4:9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

4:10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

4:11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were

Mercy Refused

Chapter Four

“And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled, because they taught the people and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them and put them in ward unto the morrow; for it was now eventide”—Vs. 1-3. In their addresses, the Apostles constantly aimed to make Israel see that Man, whom the Jews had just crucified, was indeed the Anointed of God. Those Spirit-filled men proved that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Jews’ own Scriptures. Thus they were forced to behold the Spirit’s perpetual effort to show them God’s amazing grace, which their legality hated as poison. Study the rapid growth of their malice, which sought to keep pace with Jehovah’s gracious and mighty workings. From “amazement and marvel,” they go on thru “mockery,” and “grief.” Then they are “filled with indignation,” “gnash on Stephen and stone him” to death, thus “crucifying to themselves Christ afresh.” (*“crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh”—Heb. 6:6 KJV*)

Peter’s first sermon was occasioned by the amazement and perplexity of the people, who asked one another, saying, What meaneth this? and by the cry of some, saying, What shall we do? —Chap. 2:12 and 37. His second message was occasioned by their greatly wondering, as if the holiness of the apostles had healed the impotent man—Chap. 3:11, 12. The present discourse was the answer to a question by the sore-troubled officers who said, By what power, or in what name, have you done this? That a notable miracle had been wrought, they could not deny; but they did not wish to receive it as Divine.

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit (not filled again, as some would teach), said unto them. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in this name, doth this man stand here before you whole”—Vs. 8-10. What a comprehensive and convincing reply. Their critical query gave the Apostle the opportunity to emphasize the NAME, which is above every name. You will observe that the word “name,” as referring to Jesus, occurs seven times in this chapter. That is very significant. The angel said to Joseph in a dream, “Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins”—Matt. 1:21. From His birth, the Jews hated His name. Peter rung the changes on His name. The Stone which the Jews rejected, God made the Head of the corner. Note these striking words—“And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved”—V. 12.

At once it becomes evident why the Apostles exhorted the people to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ from the beginning—Chap. 2:38. And this

unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

4:14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

4:15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

4:16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*.

4:17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

4:18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

4:19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

4:20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

4:21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all *men* glorified God for that which was done.

4:22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

4:23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

4:24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

4:25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

is why we read thru-out this book that the people were baptized invariably in His name, and in no other name. Not once is it written that anyone was baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. "God hath made Him both Lord and Christ (Anointed), this Jesus whom ye crucified." (*"that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."*—*Chap. 2:36 KJV*) "The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus." Moses wrote of Him, saying, "Him shall ye hear in all things, etc." "Believers were the more added to the Lord," and to Him only. "Him did God exalt with His right hand, a Prince and a Savior." (*"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour,"*—*Chap. 5:31 KJV*) Chaps. 2:36 and 3:13, 22 and 5:14, 31. For these ample reasons, every thing was done in Jesus' name. Should baptism in water be an exception? Nay, verily not. ¹Matt. 28:19 will be observed when the Lord returns with the Church, His Body, of which He is the scriptural Head. Really they who baptize in the name of the Trinity pull the millennial age into this church age, which robs Jesus Christ of the exalted and honored place which the Father gave Him, as the Head of the Church. Observe also ²Col. 3:17, 23.

Is not the Book of the Acts an inspired record? Did not the twelve apostles and Paul move in God's perfect will? If they did, what authority have we to deviate from their mode of operations? If they did not do as the Holy Spirit bid them, why did not Paul teach us better? Why do his writings agree with the Acts? Comp. ³1 Cor. 1:10, 13 and 5:4 and 6:11, Phil. 2:9, 10. The mighty power of the name of Jesus was further demonstrated, when the disciples gathered together in prayer, beseeching God to give them boldness to preach, heal the sick and work signs and wonders "thru the name of Jesus"—

¹ Matthew 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"

² Colossians 3:17, 23 "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him... And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;"

³ **1 Corinthians 1:10, 13** "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment... Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

1 Corinthians 5:4 "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

1 Corinthians 6:11 "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Philippians 2:9, 10 "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;"

4:26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

4:30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

4:34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

4:35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

4:36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus,

4:37 Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

Vs. 24-31.

A Millennial Forecast

In their petition to the Lord, the disciples quoted from the second Psalm, “Why do the Gentiles rage?” (“*Why do the heathen rage,*”—*Psa. 2:1 KJV*) etc. The opposition and rage of the Jewish and national officers then was only a shadow of how both church and state will be arrayed against our Lord at the opening of the coming dispensation. The earnest of those days is apparent now. The people are imagining vain things. The kings are setting themselves in array against God’s Anointed. Modernism in Christendom no longer wants Jesus to be the “Savior;” and of course the kings do not want Him to be “The Prince.”

Likewise, as intimated in our notes on chap. 2, verses 32 to 37 of this chapter are a millennial scene. Israel will be of one heart and have all things common. With great power will the ministers then witness and great grace will be upon them all. There will be many Barnabases in evidence then.

Chapter 5

5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

5:2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

5:4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5:5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

5:6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

5:7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

5:8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

5:9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.

5:10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

The Exaltation of Jesus

Chapter Five

These events are not simply bits of history. They are profoundly instructive, both as to experience and type. Let us not miss God's deepest thought and purpose in them. Therefore, we are not to see the individual sin of that selfish couple alone here, but the deep seated sin of national Israel. In Luke 12:1, Jesus termed that sin "the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy." But back of this, lay a still deeper sin, which is generally overlooked, or treated lightly. Men throw clubs at the evil fruit; but fail to see the root. Jesus Christ killed the root. This the old man never likes. Study the last one of the Ten Commandments. Observe the fullness of that verse, and all summed up in one tremendous word—"COVET." The Holy Spirit declares this to be the root-evil. In ¹Eph. 5:5 and ²Col. 3:5, coveting is termed "idolatry," or worshipping another. This is why Paul uttered ³Acts 20:33 and singles out coveting in ⁴Rom 7:7. This is the reason for that full lesson on coveting in 1 Tim. 6:1-10. "The love of money is the root of all evil," because money buys all that men covet. The old creation, whether it is in the world or in believers, raises a great cry about other sins among men, notably drunkenness, adultery, etc.; but the Holy Spirit strikes at the tap-root of sins. Coveting is the mother of drunkenness, adultery, lying, stealing, etc. What is coveting? It is desiring any thing out of God's will. It is desiring some one, or something else as a source of comfort and support rather than God Himself. It is "idolatry."

The hypocrisy of Israel, "they say, and do not," who claimed Abraham for their father and the living God as their God, but in their hearts were far from both, is thrown on the screen in the conduct of Ananias and his wife. God's just wrath against hypocrisy, the fruit, and coveting, the root, is displayed in their sudden cutting off. From the Old Testament writings, they knew what to expect. God was still dealing with Israel; and His judgment of those two parties was an object lesson to the nation. It should be a warning to us today. In 1 Cor. 10:5-10 is found the reason for such severe treatment. Chiefly, "these things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also

¹ Ephesians 5:5 "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

² Colossians 3:5 "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:"

³ Acts 20:33 "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel."

⁴ Romans 7:7 "What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

5:11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

5:12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

5:13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

5:14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

5:15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

5:16 There came also a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

5:18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

5:19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

5:20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

5:21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

lusted.” In like manner, Simon was smitten with blindness for a season, ¹Acts 13:11, a type of the spiritual blindness which has happened to the whole nation because they refused the Messiahship of Christ—²Rom. 11:25.

Those early days were a transition from the Kingdom of God on earth to the Church of Christ, seated by faith with Him in the heavenlies. This will appear plainer as we proceed in our studies. Hence, the transitional place of Ananias and Sapphira. Israel, led by Joshua, entered in triumph into the promised land. They were progressing finely. God delivered fragrant Jericho in to their hands, which typified their provisional conquest of the world. “BUT,” says the holy penman. It is always a sad day when God has to record that blunt conjunction, “BUT.” “But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing”—Achan threw a blot and blight upon the scene. He “took of the accursed thing.” He broke the sevenfold tenth commandment. He “coveted.” And God had Achan stoned to death for troubling Israel—Josh. 7.

Achan in the Church

Acts five corresponds with Joshua seven. Spiritually, Israel were then in the promised land. The world was judged and cursed at Calvary. Those who received the truth were filled with the Spirit. The world lay provisionally at their feet, conquered and subdued. They were meeting with unbounded success. “The Lord added together daily such as were being saved.” (*“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”—Chap. 2:47 KJV*) “But.” Here is this same significant blunt conjunction, the first word of chap. 5. What does it mean? Was not the Spirit given? Were the disciples not in the will of God. Do we not read: “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost?” How then could there arise that dreadful blight in such a holy and Spirit-empowered gathering? Verse 13 lets us into a secret. Some people attempted to “join themselves to them.” Those self-joiners pretended to make a full consecration to God. It soon becomes evident as to whether people are self-joined to the meeting, or divinely “added to the Lord.” And the manifest love of the world proves men’s hypocrisy and coveting nature. The whole world, ruined by sin, was cursed in the death of Christ. It is therefore justly devoted to God, for whom it was purchased by His Son’s death. When we believe on Jesus Christ, God gives us a nature that loves Him and which uses this world for His glory. We are “added to the Lord.” And that old nature in all of us, which covets, was condemned and cursed at Calvary, when “Christ was made a curse for us” (*“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:” KJV*)—Gal. 3:13. Constantly admit this fact, count with God; then “the

¹ Acts 13:11 “And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.”

² Romans 11:25 “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”

5:22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

5:23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

5:24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

5:25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

5:26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

5:27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: and the high priest asked them,

5:28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

5:29 Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.” will be forever powerless.

“And of the rest durst no man join himself to them...And believers were the more added to the Lord”—Vs. 13, 14. Where the Holy Spirit has His way and His power prevails, there is no such thing as “joining the church,” but people are joined unto the Lord—¹1 Cor. 6:17. By that seductive method, the “four hundred prophets of Baal” (*“Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.”—1 Kgs. 18:22 KJV*) are filling up the creed-bound churches and reporting great revivals; but how few are born of the Spirit. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was set at the gateway of this church age as a warning against this subtle religious snare. The religious spirit of the age is so fascinating and powerful in its cunning, has so much of the truth, and in many respects is so like the genuine, that very few people are not snared by it. Our only safeguard is to take Christ as our life and walk in the fullness of the Spirit and keep filled with the Word. Bear in mind that the foregoing is typical of the righteous reign of Christ during the millennium. His judgment of those two hypocrites suggests the full authority He will possess as the Prince, or King of kings and Lord of lords. This explains why similar hypocrites are not judged in a similar manner today as were Ananias and his wife. Now the wheat and tares are allowed to grow together until the harvest—²Matt. 13:27-30.

Jesus Officially Rejected

Chapter 5:17-40

“But the high priest rose up and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation and laid hands on the apostles and put them in public ward”—Vs. 17, 18. In chap. 4, we saw that the Jewish officials were beginning to take a stand against the apostles. Hence, Peter’s third discourse was addressed to the “rulers of the people and elders”—Chap. 4:8. His former messages were addressed to all the people — “Men of Judea, or Israel, men and brethren”—Chap. 2:14, 22, 29 and 3:12. The answer of the apostles and the continued miracles did not allay their rage. At first they were “sore troubled” because of the apostles’ teaching—Chap. 4:1. Now they are “filled with jealousy” and determined to wipe them off the map. But the Lord came to their rescue and delivered them miraculously from the prison and bid them preach “all the words of this life.” Of course they obeyed, and an unusual thing happened. They held a “daybreak” meeting in the temple.

¹ 1 Corinthians 6:17 “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.”

² Matthew 13:27-30 “*So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*”

5:33 When they heard *that*, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

5:34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

5:35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

5:36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

5:37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

5:38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

5:39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

5:40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Oh, what a message had they—words of life, yes, all the words of this life; not this natural life (psuche, Gr.), but the supernatural, eternal life (zoes, Gr.). It was the new creation life, which had recently sprung out of death. The original reads thus—“all the utterances (hramata, Gr.) of this life.” Jesus said to John, “I am the Living One” (*“I am he that liveth” KJV*) (Zon. Gr.) Rev. 1:18. Therefore, he says, “He that hath the Son hath life” (zoe, Gr.), which he terms “eternal life,” in the verse before. I say that we have a wonderful, life-giving, life-sustaining message in the Divine utterances or this eternal life. We do well if we search and see Christ on every page of Scripture.

A Court of Injustice

The high priests called the council and all the senate, or elderhood together. Look at that assemblage—“high priest, captain, chief priests, officers, Sadducees”—a religious senate. They had met about two months before and had the Son of Man put to death. Now they again show their enmity against Him by refusing to heed His Spirit-anointed messengers of peace. They were not ignorant, but acknowledged that the truth was being proclaimed. They said to the apostles, “Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine (not denying that it was scriptural), and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us”—V. 28. They deliberately refused the cleansing power of the blood of the Lamb, “recently slain and yet living” (*“By a new and living way,” KJV*)—Heb. 10:20, Gr. Hence, they knew the inevitable consequence—banishment from God forever. Instead of yielding to conviction and turning to Christ, they officially decided to stop the mouths of God’s faithful servants who were the channels thereof. But for Gamaliel’s wise counsel, they would have slain them immediately, even as later they did Stephen and James—Chaps. 7 and 12:1.

“They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ”—Vs. 41, 42. It is worth our while to note how the Church at first met persecution. They prayed. After the first arrest, “they lifted up their voice to God with one accord”—Chap. 4:24. They comforted themselves by recalling Scripture, which their foes were fulfilling. Instead of being discouraged, they cried for added power and boldness to declare the truth. Likewise after the second arrest and release, they went on with their God-appointed task, rejoicing in their persecutions. Generally people count it a shame to suffer for Christ; but they counted it an honor to suffer dishonor in His behalf. Why? Because they knew that they were fighting for a good cause and for the One who surely will win. Observe also that they did not try to defend themselves. When questioned, they answered and explained. When light was sought, they gave it. They offered neither apologies on the one hand, nor resentment on the other. They kept themselves wholly committed to the wisdom and care of the Lord. What an example for His servants today. Let us profit thereby.

Rejection of Jesus Settled

Chapters Six

Chapter 6

6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

6:2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

6:3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

6:5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

6:6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.

“Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations”—V. 1.

Mark the first phrase—“In these days.” (or those days, Diag.). A period of about two years no doubt elapsed from the death of Christ till Stephen’s career began. Therefore, we date Stephen’s career from 35 to 40 A. D., or about five years. In studying chapter 7, we will see reasons for this view. An observance of these dates, helps us to valuable typical and dispensational teaching in this book.

The Grecian, or Grecian Jews were either Gentile proselytes to the Jewish faith, or Jews born in foreign countries. The Greek word is Helleniston, that is Hellenists. They rightly claimed the care of the congregation, which began to deviate from the “all-things-common” plan with which they started—Chaps. 2 and 4.

The apostles’ hands were full of the ministry of the Word. They had no time to serve tables. As Paul wrote later to Timothy, they were not to be entangled with the affairs of this life. Paul did not always work with his hands; but when occasion required; as for example when entering a new field, he was not ashamed of toil, nor afraid of soiling his delicate hands. As a rule, if divinely-called ministers “continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the Word” (v. 4), they will have ample employment in spiritual things. The apostles summoned the congregation to select seven men to look after the needy. Note the co-operation of the ministers with the assembly. Note also that they were not chosen chiefly for their ability to serve; but they should be “full of the Spirit and of wisdom.” They did not fear the speaking in another tongue in a restaurant in those days. What if some did shake, or were prostrated under the power of God? Mark another fact. It is not stated that the Lord directly led to the appointment of those seven; but at least, He permitted it. People who are filled with the Spirit may do many things by permission, which are not against the doctrine of the Lord, or His clearly defined plan.

Why did they choose seven, no fewer and no more? It was because that was a transitional time. Seven is preeminently the number of dispensational fulness and completeness. It is employed distinctly with reference to this church age and with the beginning of the next. Study its constant occurrence in Revelation. Since God was about to do “a new thing,” and Stephen and Philip were soon to be sovereignly set to be links between the old and the new, seven men were then chosen to manage the business affairs. Some saints today have erroneously imitated the apostles and appointed, or elected boards of seven

6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

6:9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

6:10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

6:11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God.

6:12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council,

6:13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

men, and called them elders, or deacons. Those seven were not called either one. Men today call them deacons. In truth the Greek word for deacon, sometimes translated servant, other times minister, applies to spiritual service far oftener than to material service. Furthermore, Paul never appointed seven men as deacons, or elders of any assembly. The number seven will be a millennial number, which Stephen's day figures.

Stephen's Spiritual Service

"And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people"—V. 8. It must have been an interesting sight to behold Stephen praying for the sick while ministering material food. No one was there to object to his laying his hands on a suffering guest. No doubt between meals, He was busy casting out demons and recovering the afflicted. At any rate, God's hand was sovereignly upon Stephen and Philip. Men had appointed them to a business career: but the Lord gave them a more important appointment.

Why did the Lord choose Stephen? Were not the ministry of the apostles, Peter and John, satisfactory? Yes, they had performed their part well: but God was introducing a new act, which required new actors. The Jews were rapidly drawing further and further away from Christ. Kingdom interests were receding. A transition Period required a transition figure, and that figure, was Stephen. John the Baptist closed the old, shadowy regime and opened the new, substantial one by introducing Jesus Christ. Similarly Stephen arched the way between the twelve apostles and Paul, or between the Kingdom and the Church. He was not an apostle. Jesus had not chosen him to be such; and yet the Spirit made him a mighty miracle worker, a fiery messenger with an unanswerable message. God sovereignly appointed him to proclaim the truth. Amos said, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit; and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel"—Amos. 7:14, 15. Stephen's call was like that. God did not ask counsel of the Jewish priests, or senate, nor of the twelve apostles. He does what He wills, and chooses whom He wills.

Here are some stubborn facts. When Jesus came and taught and wrought, the Father expected Israel to hearken to Him. If they refused. He went right on, counting only them His own who followed Jesus. When the Spirit was poured out upon the 120, God moved on with them and with those who received their word—"the Lord working with them and confirming the Word with signs following"—Mark. 16:20. They who believed the word of the apostles, were counted as the congregation of the Lord. The same ongoing God held Stephen's hearers responsible to accept what he was saying to them; because Stephen's address was the voice of God to them. The same order obtains today. The Latter Rain began to fall forty years ago. They who received it and have walked in its

6:14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

6:15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

power, have the presence and power of God with them. The denominations and other sects have grown formal and dry, because they refused to move on with Jehovah in His own sovereign way. Soon Paul's full message of grace, which shall be crowned with glory, appeared among us. They who have received it and are walking in the liberty, joy, power, correction and hope which it affords, are going on with the Lord, the Word of the Lord mightily growing and prevailing. Others are becoming worldly and formal and selfish. I dare say that these are solemn facts. God moves on. If saints do not move with Him and in His way, they invariably move backward, lose out and grow cold.

What is now the Catholic Church, was once the true Church of Christ. Alas! she is not such today, despite all her claims. God calls her "the mother of harlots." For years the protestant bodies constituted the Church of Christ. Alas! they are certainly not such now. Are they not the harlot's daughters? Only local meetings, few and far between, and individuals, can be counted as of the Church. And what about the Pentecostal sects, who prefer physical demonstrations to Bible doctrine, or man-made dogmas to real Bible truth? Only local assemblies and individual believers can be reckoned as of the Church of Christ.

"But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called that of the Libertines, etc."—V. 9. The Libertines were Jews, who had been imprisoned in Rome, but were set free and became freed-men in Jerusalem. The second named were Jews from Cyrene. The third were Jews from Alexandria, the largest and most noted city of Egypt. Apollos was from that city. The fourth were Jews from Cilicia and Asia. These it seems made up a certain synagogue, which became especially incensed against the truth as set forth by Stephen. There was a temporary cessation of hostilities after the second arrest of the apostles; but now these from that particular synagogue stirred up the people, the elders and the Scribes. They seized him, brought him before the council and swore falsely against him. Note Stephen's countenance—"as it had been the face of an angel." (V. 15) And they all beheld that face. If men will not hearken to the voice of God's Word and Spirit, they win not be moved by the angelic countenance of His messengers.

Chapter Seven

Chapter 7

7:1 Then said the high priest, Are these things so?

7:2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

7:3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

7:4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

7:5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not *so much as* to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.

7:6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years.

7:7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

7:8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac *begat* Jacob; and Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs.

7:9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,

Chapter seven is a masterful answer to the high priest's question, "Are these things so?" It begins with "God of the Glory," and consummates with "the glory of God." Stephen first called Abraham on the witness stand. Then he traced God's dealings with Israel and their attitude toward Him down to the advent of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. He deftly showed that "the fathers" maltreated and resisted God's servants along these two thousand years. The patriarchs were moved with jealousy against Joseph, a perfect type of Christ—V. 9. Moses' brethren "thrust him away," when he sought to deliver them from Egypt, saying, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?"—V. 27. He emphasized the fact that as God had sent Moses whom his brethren refused, so God had sent Jesus, the Prophet like unto him, of whom Moses wrote. He showed them that Jesus was the Angel who spoke to Moses in the mount—¹Ex. 33:2, 14 and Isa. 63:9. They had raised a great hue and cry in defense of the law and the holy place, as if Jesus would destroy it. Stephen met that foolish stand by quoting from their own "law," or holy writings, which they seemed to revere, even ²1 Kgs. 8:27 and Isa. 66:1, 2. Note verses 48 to 50. Having reached that invincible climax, filled with holy indignation by the grieved Holy Spirit, he exclaimed:

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." Those were indeed scathing utterances, but provoked by years of hatred against Jesus Christ. Stephen continues—"Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which showed before the coming of the Righteous One." Then he culminates his burning charge by adding: "Of whom ye have now become betrayers and murders; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels and kept it not"—Vs. 51-53.

¹ Exodus 33:2, 14 "And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite...And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest."

Isaiah 63:9 "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

² 1 Kings 8:27 "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"

Isaiah 66:1, 2 "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven *is* my throne, and the earth *is* my footstool: where *is* the house that ye build unto me? and where *is* the place of my rest? For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

7:10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

7:11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.

7:12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

7:13 And at the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

7:14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to *him*, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

7:15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,

7:16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor *the father* of Sychem.

7:17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

7:18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

7:19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

7:20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

7:21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

7:22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

Stephen's Triumph and Exit

The last seven verses of this seventh chapter are very significant. Be sure that you catch their meaning. At the beginning of his address Stephen's face shown "as the face of an angel," because he was filled with God's Spirit and Word. At its end, He was still filled therewith. Like every one thus filled (comp. ¹Rev. 1:11), "he looked up steadfastly into heaven," What did he see? Ah! Spirit-anointed upward-gazers always behold special and wonderful things. He saw three entrancing objects—"the heavens opened, the glory of God, and Jesus standing." He began his sermon, believing God's Word, by declaring that "the God of glory appeared to Abraham." (*"The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham," V. 2 KJV*) This is the first time the phrase, "the God of the glory," occurs. It intimates a doctrine and hope of which Israel were ignorant, even "the mystery in God" (*"the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God" KJV*)—Eph. 3:9. Now near the end, he sees, by a revelation, the glory of which his faith made him speak.

What did it all mean? Plainly this. Jesus was standing up, ready to return and be Israel's King if they had welcomed Him. See chaps. 1:11 and 3:20. He had not yet "sat down at the right hand of God," as we find Him later—²Heb. 1:3 and Rev. 3:21. God is always slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. Probably for about seven years from His ascension, the Lord Jesus was standing at the Father's right hand, waiting for Israel to invite Him back. Thru Peter and John, He had spoken to them and wrought mighty miracles. An earnest of millennia! blessings, liberty and power flowed in every direction in Jerusalem, filling the city with the doctrine of the Lord. It seemed that Daniel's last week of seven years, the last of the seventy determined weeks, or 490 years, was being fulfilled—³Dan 9:24. The first three items of Dan. 9:24 were fulfilled by the death of Christ. The other three were due also within that time, from 33 to 40 A. D. But the infuriated council and officers hearkened not to Stephen's words. Their attitude toward him was similar to that against Jesus Himself.

¹ Revelation 1:11 "Saying, **I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.**"

² Hebrews 1:3 "Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"

Revelation 3:21 "**To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.**"

³ Daniel 9:24 "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

7:23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

7:24 And seeing one *of them* suffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

7:25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.

7:26 And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

7:27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

7:28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?

7:29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.

7:30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

7:31 When Moses saw *it*, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

7:32 *Saying*, I *am* the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

7:33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

7:34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

Indeed it was their rejection of Jesus. It was their settled official renunciation of Jesus and His message. They crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh—Heb. 6. They virtually said, “We will not have this Man to reign over us”—Luke 19:14. Therefore when we next read of our Lord in heaven, He is “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”—Heb. 1:3. He is there interceding in our behalf during these two thousand years that we may live down here in victory and reach the glory in triumph—¹Heb. 7:25.

Stephen’s own nation cast him out and stoned him, running upon him and stopping their ears against his sublime testimony. Did he resent them? Nay; he offered two prayers to God. First, he cried, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Either he knew that he was dying, or he desired to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, as Paul wrote years afterward—²Phil. 1:23. Then, filled with the unselfish Spirit of Jesus (³Luke 23:34), “he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” Then he fell asleep. What young man was with that rebellious mob? What two facts are recorded of him? Why is he mentioned in this connection? Was Stephen’s career a failure? Were his utterances fruitless and lost? Nay! No doubt his ministry was the instrumentality of Saul’s salvation. He spoke the Word of God “who watches over His Word to perform it” (*“Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.” KJV*)—Jer. 1:12, R. V. Also Isa. 11 must be fulfilled to the uttermost. Hence, he could fall asleep in the sure hope of a glorious resurrection and of the restoration of the kingdom.

Daniel’s Last Week

In a preceding paragraph, we stated that the first three promised blessings of Dan. 9:24 were fulfilled on Calvary. Yes, the Lord “restrained the transgression, made an end of sins and made reconciliation for iniquity” (*“to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity,” KJV*) on the cross. Full provision for a full and complete salvation was accomplished thru Christ, who “obtained an eternal redemption” for us as well as for the Jews—Heb. 9:12. The provision was made also for the other three promises in that verse. Note then, that the last of the 70 determined weeks (7 years) of Dan. 9:24 were actually fulfilled; but the Jews, by rejecting Christ, forfeited their right to enjoy those blessings. They judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life—Chap. 13:46.

¹ Hebrews 7:25 “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

² Philippians 1:23 “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:”

³ Luke 23:34 “Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.** And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.”

7:35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send *to be* a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

7:36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

7:37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

7:39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

7:40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

7:41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

7:42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices *by the space of* forty years in the wilderness?

7:43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

7:44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

Because the Jews did not accept Christ at the beginning of this age, it is generally supposed that Dan. 9:24 will have to be fulfilled again. It is held that verse 27 teaches that; but that is not correct. Dan. 9:27 must yet be fulfilled, but not as a repetition of verse 24, nor as the fulfillment of the last seven years of the 490 decreed years, or 70 weeks. Let us give both verses side by side.

“Seventy weeks (490 years) are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish transgression and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place” (*“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” KJV*)—Dan. 9:24, R. V.

“And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week (7 years); and in the midst at the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make desolate, even until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolator” (*“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” KJV*)—Dan. 9:27 R. V.

Observe now, that verse 24 promised blessings only, and all those proffered blessings came thru the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and thru the Gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. But verse 27 offers no blessing, but foretells distress and desolation. It is important to note all these distinctions. The “one week” of verse 27 is not said to be the last of the 70 weeks of verse 24. It must mean some other week, or seven years. The last week of the 70 was “determined,” or “decreed,” with the other 69 weeks; but it is not stated that the “one week” of verse 27 was determined, or decreed. Its fulfillment is simply foretold. And yet wrath is “determined upon the desolator.” (*“determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”—Dan. 9:27 KJV*) The Lord grants the gracious things of verse 24; but “the prince” (V. 26), whose ancestors (the Romans) destroyed Jerusalem in 71 A. D., will be the cruel actor of verse 27. He will act squarely against Divine authority incited by Satan. Hence, “his end will be with a flood” (*“and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood,”—Dan. 9:26 KJV*) (V. 26), that is, in judgement; for wrath will be poured upon him as the desolator. That prince will be the anti-Christ, an abominable usurper, who will reign for three and a half years as world-ruler, but will be overthrown and slain in the battle of Armageddon—¹Rev. 16:16. At the beginning of that week, or

¹ Revelation 16:16 “And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

7:45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

7:46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

7:47 But Solomon built him an house.

7:48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

7:49 Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what *is* the place of my rest?

7:50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.

7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*.

7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.

7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

7:56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

7:58 And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down

seven years (V. 27), the Jews will accept the overtures of the league of nations and thus bring upon themselves unspeakable anguish and pain. They ought to accept “The Messiah, The Prince” (V. 25), who brought in the blessings of verse 24 at His first advent; for He will be the rightful King.

It is very unfortunate that any of us ever fell into the error of calling Dan. 9:27 “The last week of Daniel;” for Daniel himself never calls it such, nor does any other Bible character. Furthermore, the 70th week, or last seven years of Dan. 9:24, were fulfilled by the activities recorded in Acts 2 to 9 inclusive. They were an earnest of millennial blessings. Chap. 9 records Saul’s conversion and anointing with the Spirit. Chaps. 10 and 11 record God’s visit to the Gentiles. While the Lord was preparing the Gentiles for Paul thru the ministry of Peter, He was preparing Saul of Tarsus for the Gentiles thru the ministries of Ananias and Barnabas.

A Positive and Important Fact. Christ was crucified in 33 A. D. This view is proven by Dan. 9:24-26. His 70 Prophetic weeks (490 years) measure from 444 B. C., when Nehemiah obtained permission from Artaxerxes to visit Jerusalem. Add 33 and we have 477. Jesus was executed in the first month of the Jewish year, hence the exact time was 476 years. But the prophets words demand 483 years—“seven weeks and three score and two weeks” (69 prophetic weeks)—from the king’s commandment to the cutting off of the Messiah. How shall we reconcile this apparent discrepancy? We must reduce the Gentile figures to Bible figures. The sacred calendar has 360 days to a year. See Gen. 6 to 8. Sometime, at the time of Noah’s flood, or later, the earth began to travel more slowly around the sun, hence our year has 365 days and about 6 hours. We multiply 476 by 365¼ which equals 173859, the number of days from Nehemiah to Calvary. We divide this number by 360 which gives us 483 years plus 21 days. Hence, other dates for Jesus’ death are incorrect, for they render Daniel’s prophecy null and void, which demoralizes other Old Testament prophecies. Jesus was born evidently in the fall of the year 1 B. C. and was crucified in the year 33 A. D.

their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

7:59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

7:60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Chapter 8

8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

8:2 And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

8:3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison.

8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

8:5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

8:6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

Jesus Proclaimed by Philip

Chapter Eight

“And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed unto them the Christ”—V. 5. Samaria was 35 miles north from Jerusalem.

The first sentence of this chapter properly belongs to the preceding chapter, for a convenient division. Nevertheless, Saul is the important link in the narrative. He was the chief actor in the “great persecution.” How those people loved Jesus and the truth! for they would rather be “scattered abroad” than deny their Lord. The fourth verse is very full of meaning. “They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the Word.” (V. 4) They were on the way to fulfill Jesus’ words to the apostles—¹Matt 28:19. Comp. ²Col. 1:23. This is how God overrules and makes good use of even the opposition of Satan—³Psa. 76:10. Philip’s public spiritual ministry began about 38 A. D., or at least his trip to Samaria doubtless dates from then. Note that “there arose on that day (of Stephen’s death) a great persecution”—V. 1, R. V.

The fact, that they all went preaching, is no argument that all who are filled with the Spirit today and speak in new tongues should immediately quit their work and go preaching, or attempt it. In the first place note that they were compelled to go forth, or surrender their belief. In the second place, they knew the Word, that is the Old Testament. ⁴Comp. Deut. 6:6-9 and Psa. 78:4-7 and Eph. 6:4. In all the addresses and writings of the apostles there are constant

¹ Matthew 28:19 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”

² Colossians 1:23 “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;”

³ Psalms 76:10 “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.”

⁴ Deuteronomy 6:6-9 “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” Psalms 78:4-7 “We will not hide *them* from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know *them*, *even* the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:”

Ephesians 6:4 “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

8:7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8:8 And there was great joy in that city.

8:9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

8:10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

8:11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

8:13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

8:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

references to the Old Testament. That was to them the “Word of God.” Hence, Luke could rightly record that they went “preaching the Word.” When people get saved today, and usually when believers receive the Spirit, they do not know the Word of God. How then can they proclaim it? Nay! but having received the Holy Spirit, who fills us that He may guide and instruct us in the truth (¹John 16:13, 14), we need to read and search the Bible that we may be able to instruct others also.

Observe further what they proclaimed, Philip “preached the Christ,” or Anointed One, and “Jesus”—V. 35. He preached “the good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and (concerning) the Name of Jesus Christ”—V. 12. Accordingly, what did the people receive? “The Word of God.”—V. 12. What were the results? Demons were cast out; the sick were healed; and great joy prevailed —Vs. 7:8. Though Philip baptized, yet baptism was not his theme (Comp. ²1 Cor. 1:17), and though he wrought miracles in Jesus’ Name, yet “the Name” was not his theme. Christ Jesus Himself was always the theme of all the apostles. Therefore, from the Scriptures, they announced Him—Vs. 25, 35.

Of course they declared both the humanity and deity of Jesus—Vs. 32, 34, 37. Consider who Philip was, and that he was anointed with the Holy Spirit—Chap. 6:3, 5 and 21:8. He was not Philip the apostle—³Luke 6:14. Who gave him his office? Again consider the results that follow a real scriptural ministry—Vs. 6-8, 14-17, 35-38. Shame on the modern make-believe gospel that “knows neither the Scriptures, nor the power of God,” (“*not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.*”—*Matt. 22:29 KJV*) but rejects the former and denies the latter. Do you want more evidence of the emphasis that the Holy Spirit puts on God’s Word? Then read chapter 13 and note how often express mention is made of the Word, and see the results of such emphasis—Vs. 42, 44, 52. Hallelujah!

The Spirit Given to the Samaritans

“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost”—Vs. 14:15. Everywhere the divine order is, that the Spirit should be received immediately after accepting Christ; thus two grave blunders are avoided—First, the erroneous teaching that Christ and the Holy Spirit are received

¹ John 16:13, 14 “**Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.**”

² 1 Corinthians 1:17 “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”

³ Luke 6:14 “Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,”

8:15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

8:16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

8:17 Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

8:18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

8:19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

8:20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

8:21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

8:23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity.

simultaneously. The practical proof of this error is before us, in that its devotees lack the joy and power of the Holy Spirit. The second blunder—not receiving the Spirit at once—leaves a gap for Satan to intrude with error, indifference, discouragement and uselessness. “Now is the accepted time,” is the wooing voice of the Father. Observe, that the apostles did not pray that the Spirit be poured out, but that believers “might receive the Holy Ghost.” We need not pray Him out of heaven. He is here. He came once, over 1900 years ago. He only waits to be invited into His temple, the believer’s body—¹1 Cor. 6:19. Comp. chap. 19:3, 6. There were three days time between Saul’s conversion and his anointing with the Spirit—Chap. 9:17.

But why did not Philip pray for the Samaritans to receive the Spirit? Why should the apostles come down for that purpose? After the death of king Solomon, the twelve-horned kingdom was divided into two kingdoms, or the “kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel”—1 Kings 12. This division continues to this day, and they will not be united till Jesus comes—²Isa. 11:12, 13 and Ezek. 37:15, 28. Now when the Holy Spirit came from heaven, He came as the fulfillment of God’s promise to the whole house of Israel (Acts 2:36); but Israel were not all represented in Jerusalem nationally when the Spirit was poured out. As Jerusalem was the capitol of the kingdom of Judah, that kingdom only received the Spirit. Israel, or the ten-tribed kingdom, whose capitol was Shechem in Samaria, must also nationally be visited by the Spirit. And since “the keys of the kingdom” were committed to Peter (³Matt. 16:19), it was officially proper that he should introduce the other Comforter to the ten tribes in Samaria as well as to the two in Jerusalem. Peter also unlocked the heavens for the Gentiles to receive the Holy Spirit—Chap. 10:34-48.

Why was the Spirit not poured out upon the city of Samaria until about five years after His descent upon the hundred and twenty in Jerusalem? This is an important query. The ten tribes were the first to depart from the Lord, and they will be the last of the whole Israelitish empire to return to Him. When Jesus comes back He will begin dealing with the two tribes first, and they will

¹ 1 Corinthians 6:19 “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*”

² Isaiah 11:12, 13 “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.”

Ezekiel 37:15, 28 “The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying... And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”

³ Matthew 16:19 “**And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**”

8:24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

8:25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

8:26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

8:27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

8:28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

8:29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

8:30 And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

8:31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

be the first to receive Him—"A remnant shall be saved." Then later the ten tribes will receive Him—"So all Israel shall be saved"—Rom. 11:26. The Lord's dealings with the Jews thru the apostles and with the ten tribes thru Philip and the apostles, at the beginning of this age, was an earnest of His final treatment of them. And yet individuals from the ten tribes were with the Jews. See chap. 2:22 and 4:10.

"But there was a certain man, Simon by name, which beforetime in the city used sorcery and amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one; to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God."—Vs. 9:10. The plain essential differences between Philip and Simon is obvious. Simon magnified Simon; but Philip exalted Christ. Simon proclaimed himself; but Philip proclaimed Jesus. Simon's religion was cunning, beguiling, enchanting witchcraft. It was of the devil. Philip's Gospel was simple, comforting and sufficient. It was altogether divine. Simon the sorcerer here is an illustration of those who become religious for the purpose of speculation. "Simon believed also and was baptized, continued with Philip and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs that were done." Yes, he believed, or assented to the truth, but he did not "believe to the saving of the soul." (Heb. 10:39) See verse 23. It is easy to be baptized and appear religious in view of getting a name and the people's money. His witchcraft had succeeded before, "giving out that himself was some great one." Now he sees an opportunity to add to his trickery. "Perhaps I can even get Philip with me," he thinks. Then when he imagines that the power of dispensing the fullness of the Spirit, with the entrancing sign of speaking in tongues can be bought with money, he is engulfed with the hope of unparalleled prosperity. Observe that Peter's rebuke does not induce him to repent. He only selfishly desires to escape judgment.

Fellow Student, consider the most dangerous species of witchcraft, typified by Simon's career. Do you know that the Holy Spirit calls seeking justification by works, or seeking the Spirit by works, sorcery, or witchcraft?—¹Gal. 3:1-5. "Are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" asks the Apostle. Be it ever remembered that the Simon-crew are not all gone yet. Their number is "legion." It is amazing how men, some of them professedly Spirit-filled, can deceive hungry, needy hearts by their make-believe piety and holy walk. People look up to them as marvels of perfection, because they talk boldly of straightening up back tracks, paying debts, keeping the sabbath, etc.; and

¹ Galatians 3:1-5 "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

8:32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

8:33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

8:34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

8:36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

8:37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

8:40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

because they have learned to throw a religious, pious spell over people by their own peculiar personality. Such men get a hearing, get results, get the people's money. It is simply pious (?) flesh inspired by the devil. God rightly calls it "witch-craft."

Flying Evangelism

Philip's further career, his experience with the Eunuch, etc., (vs. 26 to 40) are typical of the ministry of God's servants gathering together the dispersed of Israel at the coming of Jesus—¹Matt. 24:31 and Rev. 14:6. Study the various ways and means by which God makes His will known to Philip. It is most probable that as he was "caught away" by the Spirit, perhaps bodily borne across the country in that troublous time, so after the Church will have been taken away to glory, there will be Spirit-anointed men here preaching the Gospel of the kingdom and the soon-coming of the King. They will be miraculously sustained and borne to different places; for the time of trouble will be unspeakably terrible. Then, that the "elect of Israel" may be saved from physical destruction, that time of tribulation will be shortened 250 days—²Matt. 24:21, 22. Philip's experience with the Eunuch was typical of the Gospel going to the Gentiles, which was officially granted them under Peter's ministry several years later (Chap. 10), and also of Israel's taking the Gospel to the nations—³Isa. 52:7, 10, 66:10-12, 19, Luke 24:47, Acts 15:16, 17. Consider ⁴Rev. 21:24. The Ethiopian Eunuch was a descendant of Ham. Gaza was 50 miles southwest from Jerusalem. Azotus, Ashdod, was 40 miles due west

¹ Matthew 24:31 "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Revelation 14:6 "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,"

² Matthew 24:21, 22 "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

³ Isaiah 52:7, 10 "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth... The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

Isaiah 66:10-12, 19 "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon *her* sides, and be dandled upon *her* knees... And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, *to* Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, *to* Tubal, and Javan, *to* the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles."

Luke 24:47 "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

⁴ Revelation 21:24 "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it."

Chapter 9

9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

9:2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

9:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

9:4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?**

9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.**

9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, **Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.**

9:7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

9:8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus.

9:9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

9:10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, **Ananias**. And he said, Behold, *I am here*, Lord.

9:11 And the Lord said unto him, **Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,**

The Salvation of Saul A Preparatory Parenthesis

Chapter Nine

The first thirty verses of chapter nine record the beginning days of the most striking career and character in the New Testament, Jesus Himself excepted. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is like a parenthesis in the first twelve chapters of the Acts. But he became a necessary link between divine purposes. Saul's hatred of Jesus Christ was unspeakably great. With chap. 7:58 and 8:1 and 9:1, 2, comp. ¹Gal. 1:13, 14 and 1 Tim. 1:13 and Acts 26:11. Why did Saul so bitterly persecute the Church? Note the citations again. Religious tradition is a terrible snare. Trace its source—²Jer. 9:14. God made His will known to His people; but self-will and unbelief leave a great gap for Satan to introduce a false religion. Saul knew by experience how to write, years afterwards, about self-righteous Israel—³Rom. 9:31, 32 and 10:2, 3. Note that he magnified God's grace in his salvation—⁴1 Tim. 1:14, 16 and termed himself the "chief of sinners," not because he robbed banks, nor was dissolute, or an insurrectionist; but because he was so persistently and successfully religious and outwardly holy. "As touching the righteousness of the law, (he was) blameless" ("*touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*" KJV)—Phil. 3:6. He endeavored to "establish his own righteousness," ("*establish their own righteousness—Rom. 10:3 KJV*") which was against God's righteousness, and thus make void the redeeming work of Christ, making Him out an impostor. He made out Jesus to be "a blasphemer and injurious," because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and died to redeem every man; for "all have sinned," even righteous Saul. He came the nearest of any man to saving himself

¹ Galatians 1:13, 14 "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."

¹ Timothy 1:13 "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief."

Acts 26:11 "And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities."

² Jeremiah 9:14 "But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:"

³ Romans 9:31, 32 "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;"

Romans 10:2, 3 "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

⁴ 1 Timothy 1:14, 16 "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus... Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

9:12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

9:13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

9:14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

9:15 But the Lord said unto him, *Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

9:16 *For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

9:17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him 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.

9:18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

9:19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

9:20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

9:21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

9:22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

by fulfilling the righteousness of the law. He sought perfection, and outwardly attained it, apart from the redemption of the only Perfect Man. Meanwhile, he showed out his heart rebellion against God by persecuting the people of God. This made him chief of sinners. He did not apparently need God, nor His righteousness. Apparently, he was righteous; but that was only the old condemned creation posing as pious. It was not of faith. It was not based upon the redemption wrought out by another, even Jesus. There was no life; for the law cannot give life—¹Gal. 3:21. So when Saul, enroute for Damascus, saw the Lord, he found himself to be the “blasphemer and injurious” to an inexpressible depth. He exclaimed: “CHIEF of sinners.” (*“sinners; of whom I am chief”—1 Tim. 1:15 KJV*) Oh, what a view of self-righteousness, the religion of works, the sorcery of law-keeping, Paul obtained. Hence, Christ, received and enjoyed forever by simple faith, was ever afterward his glowing message. Note verses 20, 22, 27, 29 with ²Gal. 1:12, 15, 16.

Observe two great facts which the Lord announced to Ananias to encourage him to instruct Saul—Vs. 15, 16. Comp. chap. 26:16-19 and Col. 1:24, 25 and 1 Cor. 11:23-28.

His Conversion Described

“And Ananias said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit”—V. 17. The persecutor was blind for three days after he saw the Lord by faith. Jesus looked different to him than when he probably saw Him on earth. Comp. ³2 Cor. 5:16. Five facts prove that he accepted Christ immediately upon being struck weak and blind. First, his own testimony—“Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision”—Chap. 26:19. Second, his answer to Jesus—“What shall I do, Lord?” (*“what wilt thou have me to do?” KJV*)—V. 6. Comp. ⁴Rom. 10:9 R. V. Third, his worship—“Behold, he prayeth”—V. 11. Fourth, Ananias’ words of salute—“Brother Saul.” If he had not yet believed and was not yet saved, why did not Ananias say, Mr. Saul, “repent and believe the gospel?” (Mark 1:15), a common exhortation to unyielding Jews. Why did

¹ Galatians 3:21 “Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.”

² Galatians 1:12, 15, 16 “For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ... But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:”

³ 2 Corinthians 5:16 “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.”

⁴ Romans 10:9 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

9:23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

9:24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

9:25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let *him* down by the wall in a basket.

9:26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

9:27 But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

9:28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

9:29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

9:30 *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

9:32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all *quarters*, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

9:33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

9:34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

9:35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

he not say, “Repent and be baptized?” (Chap. 2:38), or “repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out?” (*“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,” KJV*)—Chap. 3:19. Fifth, the penitent persecutor’s willingness to be baptized in water.

As circumcision meant a complete cutting off from the world and the death of the old creation, so John introduced water baptism as a similar symbolic death. John’s ministry summed up and culminated the ministries of the prophets of the Old Testament, buried all the Mosaic rites and ceremonies in Jordan and introduced a new religious regime in dipping Jesus into and lifting Him out of the waters of Jordan. Hence, Jesus declared that there was no prophet greater than John the Baptist. It was therefore no small matter for Saul to be baptized in water. Baptism into the name of Jesus, the Chief of the new covenant, meant a complete and eternal cutting off from all the past. He virtually said, I am no longer a Jew, but a disciple of Christ, the despised Nazarene. Baptism in water, to a Jew, is the outward expression of death to Moses and of resurrection unto Christ. No Jew will submit to baptism until, with all his heart, he accepts Christ as his personal Savior; and his fellow Jews will not believe that he is saved thru Christ if he is not willing to be baptized in water in Jesus’ name. Ever afterward, they call him “The blotted out.” Saul had already repented, and had received the forgiveness of his sins, before Ananias arrived; therefore, he was prepared to be baptized as a sign and seal to his faith in Christ.

The conversion of Saul is typical of that of Israel; for they will see the Lord descending in glory and will receive Him—¹Isa. 25:6-9. 1 Cor. 15:8 is a remarkable statement: “Last of all He was seen of me also as of one born out of due time.” After Jesus was seen of Stephen standing at God’s right hand, as if ready to return to Israel if they had received Him, He “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3), because they rejected Him in rejecting Stephen. That sitting was to continue two thousand years, which Hos. 6:2 terms “two days.” But for a special sovereign purpose, Jesus arose from His seat of mediatorship and appeared to persecuting Saul of Tarsus—V. 17. Saul accepted Christ there and then, and was born again; thus he was born two dispensational days, or two thousand years, ahead of the due time for the new birth of Israel as a nation. Comp. ²Isa. 66:8.

¹ Isaiah 25:6-9 “And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

² Isaiah 66:8 “Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? *or* shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.”

9:36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

9:37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber.

9:38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them.

9:39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

9:40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

9:41 And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

9:42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

9:43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

Chapter 10

10:1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*,

10:2 A devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

Consider closely the radical change wrought in Saul and the theme of his teaching henceforth. Study verses 20, 22 and 29. Note also the attitude of his own people toward him after he received Christ—Vs. 23, 24. Why did Saul emphasize the divine Sonship of Jesus? Because that was the root-cause of the Jews' hatred of Him. His claim to being the Son of God, they termed blasphemy—¹John 5:18 and 10:30-36. They had scriptural ground for stoning Jesus if He were not God's Son—²Lev. 24:16. Therefore, they took the same bitter stand against His avowed friend, seeking to kill Saul—Vs. 23, 24. We little understand how the Jews could maintain such bitter hatred against the Son of God; but it simply shows the outcome of refusing to walk in the light. Christian people today, who reject divine light, show a similar spirit, because they walk in the flesh, which hates Christ, who is always spiritual.

Peter Evangelizing

“And it came to pass, as Peter went thru-out all parts, he came down to the saints which dwelt at Lydda”—V. 32. After the parenthesis of Saul's salvation, the ministry of the kingdom apostles, in Luke's record, is resumed. Two remarkable miracles were wrought by Peter's hands in Jesus' name. Now if Saul's conversion is typical of the conversion of the Jews as a nation when the Lord comes, is not Peter's ministry “thru-out all parts” typical of the powerful ministry of the Jews to all Israel when Jesus returns? Doubtless the healing of Aeneas, bedridden for eight years with palsy, foreshadows Israel's deliverance from their long drawn-out spiritual palsy. The raising to life of Dorcas figures the national resurrection of Israel, as outlined in Ezek. 37, where we hear the rattle of the “dry bones.” Dorcas is the Greek and Tabitha is the Syriac for gazelle. Indeed, with gazelle-like swiftness, resurrected and restored Israel will spread the glad tidings to the nations. “Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit”—Isa. 27:6. As a result of the typical ministry, Luke says, “Many believed in the Lord”—V. 42. Just so it will be when Israel turns to the Lord, and Isa. 33 will be fulfilled—“The lame shall leap as an hart.” (*“Then shall the lame man leap as an hart”—Isa. 35:6 KJV*) It is quite probable that Peter's letters to the “sojourners of the Dispersion” will be read by them at the end.

¹ John 5:18 “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.”

² Leviticus 24:16 “And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, *and* all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name *of the LORD*, shall be put to death.”

10:3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

10:4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

10:5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter:

10:6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

10:7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

10:8 And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

10:9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

10:10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

10:11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

10:12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

10:13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

10:14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

10:15 And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

Jesus Preached to Gentiles

Chapters Ten

“Now there was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people and prayed to God alway”—Vs. 1, 2. The date of the happenings of these two chapters were about 41 A. D., or 8 years after the Spirit fell on the 120 in the upper room in Jerusalem. The descent of the Holy Spirit in Cornelius’ house was only an earnest of His worldwide out-pouring which will come after Israel receive the Messiah and proclaim Him far and near. The last week (7 years) of ¹Dan. 9:24 had to be fulfilled before the Lord could begin with the Gentiles. That fact occasions the above date. The phrase, “a certain man,” is quite suggestive. The word “certain” occurs about 50 times in this book. God has certain times for the accomplishments of certain ordained purposes. Bear in mind, that there is nothing haphazard with His plans. He orders men’s footsteps. Cornelius was being prepared beforehand for that day and purpose. Therefore, he was not ignorant of the truth concerning Jesus—Vs. 36, 37. He may have been a proselyte to the Jewish faith. The brief history of his devotion in verse two is truly interesting. Hungry hearts find the Lord, and the loving Lord finds folks who will take the truth. The different means employed by the Lord to make His will known, as recorded here is a profitable study. God used an angel, a vision, the Word, a man and the Spirit.

Being filled with the Spirit is not a proof of knowing everything. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, wrought great miracles, and was the chief of the twelve apostles: yet he did not know until that day that salvation was for the Gentiles, tho’ he had unwittingly declared it before. See chap. 2:17, 39 and 3:26. By the Spirit, men often say more than they know. But when we are teachable and pliable to the Holy Spirit, God can show us any new truth. Israel were forbidden to eat swine’s flesh and certain other things because they were not so wholesome. However, all those sanitary rules, all those Mosaic rites and ceremonies, were written to convey to us invaluable spiritual lessons. Indeed, a great spiritual truth was just then to be uncovered to Peter and his people. Surely that vision of the sheet let down from heaven, “Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air,” (V. 12) is ample proof that God meant His people to see on the one hand, how He abominates the old creation, and how on the other hand, He has made all men provisionally clean by the redeeming act of His Son. Note that the sheet with its freight of apparently unclean creatures—“all manner of

¹ Daniel 9:24 “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.”

10:16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

10:17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

10:18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

10:19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

10:20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

10:21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what *is* the cause wherefore ye are come?

10:22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

10:23 Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

10:24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*.

10:26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

10:27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

beasts,” came down from heaven. The new creation came up from the grave in the resurrection of Jesus Christ; but it also comes down from heaven; for all who believe are “born from above.” “God hath concluded all under sin, all in unbelief” (“*For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*”—Rom. 11:32 KJV) (Jews and Gentiles), or as “wild beasts, creeping things, etc.” “that he might have mercy upon all,” or provisionally cleanse them, and actually cleanse them that believe on Jesus—Rom. 11:32 and ¹Gal. 3:22. This truth of God’s gracious sovereign provision and offer of salvation ought to grip us. “God...granted repentance unto life” to Jews and Gentiles—Chap. 11:17, 18. Once for all, Jesus “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”—Heb. 9:26. All men are clean provisionally; and all are actually clean the moment they believe on Jesus Christ, even “sanctified in Christ Jesus”—1 Cor. 1:2 and Heb. 10:10. Oh, glorious news! Hence, “the voice (of the Spirit, of course) said the second time to Peter, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common”—V. 15.

Study Peter’s address. He preached peace and healing, thru Jesus Anointed, Jesus crucified, buried, raised and the coming Judge, and remission of sins for those who believe. Note verse 43—“To Him bear all the prophets witness, that thru His name, everyone that believeth on Him, shall receive remission of sins.” We call particular attention to this verse, because some men claim that Peter and John taught a salvation by works mixed with grace. They hold also that those apostles had authority to remit sins, which we do not have, basing their view on ²John 20:23. The above verse, however, shows plainly how the apostles “retained, or forgave” men’s sins. The apostles simply declared that everyone who believes on Jesus Christ shall be saved; and we do the same. What happened while Peter was declaring such good news?—Vs. 44-48. The Holy Spirit fell upon all the audience. He always accompanies the preaching of the Christ in His fulness. That was of course the official advent of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles as was His advent to the Jews on the day of Pentecost—Chap. 2:4. That was the third time that Peter turned his official key of the kingdom (³Matt. 16:19) for the descent of the Spirit. Comp. chap. 2 and 8:14-17. What was the satisfying proof to the six Jews with Peter that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit? “They heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” (V. 46) How else shall we know today that people have received the Spirit? There is no other distinctive sign of being anointed with the Holy Spirit than speaking in another tongue, if the Bible samples are our guide.

¹ Galatians 3:22 “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”

² John 20:23 “*Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*”

³ Matthew 16:19 “*And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*”

10:28 And he said unto them, Ye know how 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 shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

10:29 Therefore came I *unto you* without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

10:30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

10:31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

10:32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

10:33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

10:34 Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

10:35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

10:36 The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

10:37 That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Peter's Rehearsal

Chapter Eleven

“When Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised and didst eat with them”—Chap. 11:2. People, even saints, are slow to receive new unfoldings of truth. There is something in our make-up that practically says: “What I have not experienced, or seen, is not to be experienced, or seen.” Job in irony addressed that element in man, saying: “No doubt but ye are the people and wisdom shall die with you”—Job 12:2. Of course that something is of the old creation, which is blind. Because his friends censured him, Peter related to them his experience in detail. It was effectual. “When hath God heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying; Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life”—V. 18. Shem, Ham and Japheth peopled the earth after the flood. And three saved men were employed to begin the peopling of the earth with a new creation stock. They were the Eunuch of Ethiopia, a Hamite (Chap. 8), Saul, a Shemite (Chap. 9) and Cornelius, a Japhite—Chap. 10. “Repentance unto life” is a Divine gift. Men imagine that they can repent at will and by doing so, appease God’s wrath against their sins. Salvation is a gracious gift from God. He owes no man His salvation. And no one would, nor could ever repent if the Lord had not appeased the just anger of an offended God, by His own sacrificial death on the cross. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit enables men to repent and believe. “By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”—Eph. 2:8.

Overlapping Events

“They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen (Chap. 8:1-5) traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews”—V. 19. The remaining verses of this chapter are extremely interesting and comprehensive. The hidden purposes in the Spirit’s workings fill and thrill one’s heart with wonder, when we read with opened eyes. God is bringing one program to a close, the meanwhile using its final performances to pave the way for another. In His wonderful wisdom, God is planning for that special ministry of that special man with a special message, even Paul. Those scattered abroad were supposed to preach to the Jews only; but in spite of themselves, “some of them, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.” (V. 20) And why? Because the Holy Spirit was directing them and “the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed turned unto the Lord”—Vs. 20:21. Thus an assembly was begun by those whom Saul persecuted, which afterward became the glorious center for His Spirit-filled operations. The Church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas thither, who later became

10:39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

10:40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

10:41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead.

10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

10:45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

10:46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

10:47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Chapter 11

11:1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

11:2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

11:3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

Paul's first associate. A sweet thing is recorded of him. "When he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord"—V. 23. Why?—V. 24. Verse 26 is full of meat, the last sentence being especially replete with meaning.

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch," not in derision, as some suppose. The Holy Spirit gave them that name, because that is what believers really are—"Christians," or "Anointed ones;" for "as He (Christ, our Head) is so are we in this world"—1 John 4:17. All believers are anointed to be sons of God; but most of them remain babes in experience, because they do not grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. Similarly we are all called to be "Christians, or Anointed ones" ("the promise is unto you, etc."—Ch. 2:39); but how few avail themselves of their blood-bought rights. While the disciples of Jesus may be called "Christians;" yet those only, who actually receive the anointing with the Spirit and live in His power, are Christians truly in experience. Oh, how many saints live way below their privileges. It was the proper place for the disciples to be called Christians, because that was the real Church center. Men give many vain interpretations of Holy Writ, and rob the truth of its true meaning and the blessed Holy Spirit of His glory. Jerusalem was the Kingdom center, which was national and local. Now because the restoration of the Kingdom was to be postponed and the Jews were to be scattered, there had to be another center for the Church. That it was a new center, emphasized the facts, that the Church of Christ is not a local, nor a national body, but a worldwide and spiritual body.

"The great famine over all the world" (Verses 27-30) was due to the fact that Israel as a nation had rejected the Son of God and the Gift of the Holy Spirit. The phrase, "all the world," means all the inhabited earth. That too was typical of the sore trial, world-wide, from which the full overcomers shall be delivered at the close of this age—¹Rev. 3:10. Thank God, after Jesus comes and Israel receive Him, there will be no more dearth, but abounding plenty, See Joel 2:19 to 27.

¹ Revelation 3:10 "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

11:4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying,

11:5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

11:6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

11:7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

11:8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

11:9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

11:10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11:11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.

11:12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

11:13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

11:14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

11:15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

Jesus Rejected as King

Chapter Twelve

“Now about that time, Herod the king put forth His hands to afflict certain of the Church; and he killed James the brother of John with the sword”—Vs. 1, 2. In Mark 11 and 12, we find mentioned all the pronounced representative enemies of Jesus Christ. First, the chief priests, scribes and elders, then the Pharisees and Herodians and finally the Sadducees, or infidels. The religious world was arrayed against Him first; then the national world. These two united to put Him to death. The same order occurs in our present lesson. First the Jews, the religious folk, then Herod, representing the national powers, show their hatred of Christ by seeking to kill the apostles. During the opening years of the millennium, there will be a huge religio-national combine arrayed against our Lord; but He will overthrow them and reign in peace. Of course, we are studying history; and this twelfth chapter records God’s final dealings with national Israel as to the beginning of this age. Therefore, the chapter closes the biography of the twelve apostles. A new record of them will have to be made when Jesus comes and they shall “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel”—Luke 22:30. The Holy Spirit was preparing the way for a new order of things entirely, and to bring on the scene another body of believers. However, in these narratives, there is more than history. The Spirit can cause men to write history in such a manner as that it also becomes prophecy, more wonderful than the history. That is just what we have before us in this chapter. The consummation of this present age and the introduction of the next is clearly foreshadowed here. Oh, how marvelous is God’s precious Word.

In the Gospel records, Peter and John are always found associated. So also in the Acts. Comp. chaps. 3:1, 3 and 4:13, 19 and 8:14, 25. But after their official trip to Samaria and after the conversion of Saul, John was no more in evidence. Even at Joppa (and Lydda), where Peter “tarried many ways” John was absent. All this is freighted with deep meaning. Peter’s ministry at the last two points is typical of a similar ministry of one, or more, who will bring God’s message to Israel during the 7 years of tribulation, the first years of the millennium reign. Doubtless they will speak from Peter’s epistles. On the other hand, John was given a message (the Book of Revelation) to the Church of this entire period and to Israel at the beginning of the next age.

Accordingly, John’s absence in this chapter typifies the catching away of the Church, positively foreshadowed by his ascension thru the open door into heaven, in his vision of the coming of Jesus—¹Rev. 4:1. He typifies

¹ Revelation 4:1 “After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.”

11:16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, **John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.**

11:17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

11:19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

11:20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

11:21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

11:22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

11:23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

11:24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

11:25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

11:26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

especially, the translation of the full overcomers, of whom he wrote—¹Rev. 3:7-12. The killing of James, recorded here, typifies the cruel death of those who will fall at the ruthless hands of anti-Christ, because they will refuse “the mark of the beast”—Rev. 13:7, 15 and 14:12, 13 and 15:2. Peter, here delivered from prison, is a type of those of Israel who will refuse the mark of the beast, but will be kept from the power of the anti-Christ and will “endure unto the end;” that is, live thru the awful tribulation days—²Matt. 24:13, 21, 22 and ³Rev. 2:26. Each of these men is a type of what he teaches, as if the Lord made them to act out in miniature then the great things which they foretell shall come to pass. “James,” mentioned in verse 17, was the son of Alphaeus (⁴Matt. 10:3) and the Lord’s brother—⁵Gal. 1:19. He wrote the Epistle of James and was the pastor of the congregation in Jerusalem. Comp. chap. 15:13.

Herod in the Drama

Herod is a striking shadow of anti-Christ, His grandfather sought to slay the Baby Jesus, because the spirit of anti-Christ dominated him—Matt. 2. This world never has been friendly to God and His people, and never will be. “The carnal mind is enmity against God,” because Satan made it so in Adam’s fall. Herod slew the Apostle James; then aimed to slay the Apostle Peter, because they continually proclaimed the right of Jesus Christ to be the King of empires.

¹ Revelation 3:7-12 “**And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*”**

² Matthew 24:13, 21, 22 “**But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. . . For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.**”

³ Revelation 2:26 “**And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:”**

⁴ Matthew 10:3 “Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son of Alphaeus*, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;”

⁵ Galatians 1:19 “But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother.”

11:27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

11:28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

11:29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

11:30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Chapter 12

12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church.

12:2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

12:3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

12:4 And when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

12:5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

12:6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

12:7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands.

Consider closely verses 20 to 23, and see how marvelously they figure the present closing days of this age and the opening days of the next. The people of Tyre and Sidon “asked for peace” with Herod. Indeed ever since the great war of 1914-18 the nations have been endeavoring to establish universal international peace by means of perfecting a “peace and safety league.” Will they ever succeed? No doubt they will meet with a surface success; for the Scripture declares that “they (the nations of course) shall say, Peace and safety”—1 Thess. 5:3. That Herod was Agrippa, the third of the four New Testament Herods. He was king from 37 to 44.

How forcefully, “Herod arrayed in royal apparel sat upon his throne,” speaks of the reign of the anti-Christ. The shout of the people, saying, “It is the voice of a god and not of a man,” agrees with Rev. 13:3 and 2 Thess. 2:4—“All the world wondered after the beast,” “the man of sin who exalteth himself above all that is called God, etc.” (“*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God*”—2 Thess. 2:4 KJV) And as it was with Herod, so it will be with the anti-Christ. Herod reigned only seven years, about the length of Dan. 9:27, the period of international usurpation. The anti-Christ will reign as universal despot for 42 months—¹Rev. 13:5. At the very acme of his pride, pomp and power, suddenly “he shall come to his end and none shall help him”—Dan. 11:45. For it is written, “When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape”—1 Thess. 5:3. When the peace pact shall be packed with regulations and international agreements, which will be supposed to insure “peace and safety” thru-out the world, some certain nations (“tidings out of the east and out of the north”—Dan. 11:44), like an angry volcano, will belch forth in fury against the world ruler. The peace and safety pact will suddenly be unpacked and scattered to the four winds. Instead, unparalleled devastation will ensue. The beast, the anti-Christ, and the second beast, the false prophet, will be slain and cast into the lake of fire forever. “An angel of the Lord smote Herod, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost.” (V. 23) He glorified himself instead of God. Just so the anti-Christ will do. He will glorify and deify himself and even attempt to dethrone Jehovah. But Almighty Jehovah will hurl him down forever. Herod died the horrible death here described in 44 A. D.

“But the Word of God grew and multiplied”—V. 24. Yes, thank God, no matter what men may do, or say, the Lord “watches over His Word to perform it” (“*Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.*” KJV)—Jer. 1:12. After the above named international engagements; after the overthrow of the two beasts and after Satan will be cast

¹ Revelation 13:5 “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”

12:8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

12:9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

12:10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

12:11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12:12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

12:13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

12:14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

12:15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

12:16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

into the pit of the abyss, the Work of God will grow and multiply thru-out the whole world for a thousand years. Israel will again be a kingdom and be dwelling in their own land. They will worship God without hindrance, and be “fat and flourishing,” the promise to the aged widow. A great world revival will follow. The Gentiles will seek the Lord in fabulous numbers. Study chap. 15:16-18.

“And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministration, taking with them John, whose surname was Mark.” “Their ministration” (“*ministry*” *KJV*) was taking help to the famine sufferers in Jerusalem—Chap. 11:29, 30. Barnabas and Saul became the direct transition characters from kingdom affairs to church affairs. They are seen last in the former and first in the latter. The following sixteen chapters record a new order of spiritual activities under the superintendency of a new company of Spirit-filled men. Not one of the leading men of the kingdom regime was employed by the Spirit in establishing Gentile churches. Years later, John wrote to the churches which Paul planted.

Outline of Division Two

Chapters 13 to 28

1. Paul's First Gospel Tour—Chapters 13 and 14
2. Legality Hushed Forever—Chapter 15.
3. Paul's Second Gospel Tour—Chapters 16 and 18.
4. Paul's Third Gospel Tour—Chapters 19 and 20.
5. Paul's Last Visit to Jerusalem—Chapters 21 to 23.
6. Paul Imprisoned in Caesarea—Chapters 24 to 26.
7. Paul's Visit to Rome—Chapters 27 and 28.

12:17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

12:18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

12:19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and *there* abode.

12:20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's *country*.

12:21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

12:22 And the people gave a shout, *saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.*

12:23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

12:24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

12:25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Paul's First Gospel Tour

Chapter Thirteen

“Now there were at Antioch, in the Church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.” (V. 1) The date of our present lesson was about 45 A. D., or twelve years after Pentecost. The most interesting portion of the Acts is just before us. We are entering upon the study of a career of special importance to us. We do well to move here with special deliberation that we may thoroughly understand the mind of God in these chapters. If we see with “Dove’s eyes,” viz: by the Holy Spirit, the place that brother Paul occupies in God’s plans, we will also learn the deep things revealed to him for us, by reading especially his writings.

First then, observe the founding of the assembly in Antioch—Chap. 11:19-21. Saul of Tarsus was the primary actor in the persecution of the saints who were scattered from Jerusalem. But the result of his persecution was the planting of a church in Antioch out of Jewish stock; for they “preached the Word unto Jews only.” (*“preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.”—Chap. 11:19 KJV*) God was planning a new order of affairs; hence, they preached to Grecians also, of whom “a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.” A Jewish-Gentile assembly was the fitting foundation for this new scheme. How wonderful are the ways of God!—Compare ¹Eph. 2:20-22.

As soon as the saints in Jerusalem heard this good news, they sent a tried disciple to encourage them, “who, when he was come and had seen the grace of God, was glad.” Still the Lord was leading. “Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus for to seek Saul.” Notice, how continually that “good man” Barnabas clave to the “young man Saul,” from the time he first “took him.” Comp. Chaps. 9:27 and 12:25. Note the high honor that Paul accorded Barnabas years afterward—²1 Cor. 9:6. It is evident that Saul was at least five years in divine training before he was launched upon his special mission as outlined in our present lesson. He received Christ and was anointed with the Spirit in Damascus. There he boldly declared his faith; then went into Arabia for a short season, and returned into Damascus for a Bible course of several years under the instruction of the Holy Spirit. See Chap. 9:19-23 and ³Gal. 1:17-21. Then

¹ Ephesians 2:20-22 “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

² 1 Corinthians 9:6 “Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?”

³ Galatians 1:17-21 “Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;”

Chapter 13

13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

he came back to Jerusalem; but being imperiled by his own countrymen, the disciples sent him to his own home.

It is quite probable that they did not take readily to his new doctrine, which no doubt was already burning in his heart and beginning to flow from his lips. They drew back from the strange teaching of the young prophet. He saw in some measure the depth of the grace of God. He saw it for the Gentiles, to whom Peter, at a later date, announced salvation—Chap. 10. “The mystery of Christ” was possessing Saul and those older saints could not understand him. But the Lord did not let him stay long in Tarsus. He sent Barnabas after him. Having brought him to Antioch, “a whole year they were gathered together with the Church and taught much people” (*“And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people” KJV*)—Note Chap. 11:25, 26.

We mention the foregoing facts, because too often, when the Lord calls his children to a particular line of service, they run ahead of His perfect will, unfitted and unempowered from on high. To go in the will of God is to go in the power of God; to go out of His will is to go without His power. In the will of God, we find an “open door which no man can shut”—Rev. 3:8. Success is certain in God’s will; failure is sure out of it. If we could see the wasted lives, the fruitless efforts, the harmful ministries, on account of premature, unscriptural “work for God,” as God sees them; we would faint with horror. All that rubbish must “be burned”—¹1 Cor. 3:15. O, what a bonfire! Paul heard the call enroute for Damascus. He learned the message while pondering the Old Testament writings during those three years in Damascus. Then he received his commission from God thru the assembly in Antioch, as the first verses of this chapter declare. We saw in Chap. 11:26 an interesting and necessary link between Peter’s ministry and that of Paul. “The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch;” because Antioch, and not Jerusalem, was to be the radiating center for the new school of apostles. That was no accident. That name was assigned them by the Holy Spirit. The word “Christians” (Christianous, Gr). means “anointed ones.” Comp. ²1 John 2:20, 27. We are truly the anointed ones of God.

Paul’s Commission Received

There were two cities by the name of Antioch. One was in Pisidia, a country of Asia Minor; the other, the starting-point of Paul’s operations, was

¹ 1 Corinthians 3:15 “If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

² 1 John 2:20, 27 “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

about 300 miles north of Jerusalem in Syria. It was fitting that Jerusalem was represented at that little meeting by Barnabas, the son of consolation; northern Africa by Lucius and Simeon of Cyrene (See ¹Matt. 27:32) and Asia by Saul of Tarsus, and Galilee by Manaen. “And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted.” Our chief and first ministry is not to preach, but to worship. “The Father seeketh worshippers.” (*“the Father seeketh such to worship him.”—John 4:23 KJV*) If the Lord can get good spiritual worshippers, He soon can get able laborers and teachers and preachers. What a deep delight this ministry becomes as we learn to yield to the holding, waiting, preparing power of the Spirit. And what eternal profit we afterwards see therein. This word minister (leitourgeo, Gr.) means to serve as a priest at one’s own expense; to worship by choice, cheerfully. Our English word liturgy is from this word. Comp. ²Rom. 15:16, ³Heb. 1:7 and 8:2 and 10:11. Yes, they “fasted;” but fasting is not some laborious, rigid refusal to eat. It is a spontaneous cessation of everything that might interfere with a prolonged waiting upon the Lord. See God’s view of fasting in ⁴Isa. 58:3-7.

“And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said; Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” (V. 2) Truly, God can make known His will when we thus wait upon Him. Five men in conference with the Lord were authorized to separate two. Which two? Whom “I have called.” Can anyone deny that Jehovah definitely calls certain

¹ Matthew 27:32 “And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.”

² Romans 15:16 “That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”

³ Hebrews 1:7 “And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.”

Hebrews 8:2 “A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”

Hebrews 10:11 “And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:”

⁴ Isaiah 58:3-7 “Wherefore have we fasted, *say they*, and thou seest not? *wherefore* have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as *ye do this* day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? *is it* to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes *under him*? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? *Is not* this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? *Is it* not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?”

persons for certain tasks? And He does not leave this important matter to finite man. How dangerous and foolish for others to interfere with the course of the conduct of such called-ones. They are going against God Himself. For what were they called? “For the work;” not for pleasure, money-making, nor fame-getting; nothing for the old man. Comp. ¹Luke 10:2. Neither was this the work by which they should earn their salvation, or eternal life. Nay! They were already wonderfully saved and filled with fire and the Holy Spirit—“God’s workmanship or poem created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which He hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (*“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” KJV*)—Eph. 2:10. “Good works” are possible only by those who have eternal life. “Good works” are those only which God ordains.

Co-Operation of the Church

“They sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down”—Vs. 3, 4. Here is a very important item. Notwithstanding all Paul’s inward holy fire, his knowledge of the truth and the full and deep conviction of his call; yet he kept in the background, followed Barnabas and waited for the co-operation of the assembly in entering upon his distinctive mission. The Holy Spirit “called” independently of others: but He “separated” and “sent” thru others. The sending forth by the brethren was the sending forth by the Holy Spirit. What was the lasting result? They ever after stood with him in faith. See Chaps. 14:26-28 and 15:35, 40. This is the Divine plan, and it should always be observed. The Lord makes the saints to know who is called and when he should go. “A man’s gift maketh room for him”—Prov. 18:16. The Lord may sovereignly choose and send someone, especially when the people of God are not walking in His perfect will, or when He purposes to do a new thing. Consider John the Baptist, Stephen and Philip. “They proclaimed the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews”—V. 5. Yes! yes! “the Word of God” was their message. How often this is declared in the Acts. Also they went “to the Jews first and also to the Gentiles.” (*“to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”—Rom. 1:16 KJV*) This is God’s order. See Chap. 3:26, ²Rom. 2:9, 10 and ³1 Pet. 4:17.

13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

13:4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

13:5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to *their* minister.

¹ Luke 10:2 “Therefore said he unto them, **The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.**”

² Romans 2:9, 10 “Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:”

³ 1 Peter 4:17 “For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?”

13:6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:

13:7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

13:10 And said, 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?

Our God is the God of emergencies, and He finds those who will prove Him and also be proved at such times. “Elymas the sorcerer, withstood” the apostles. We should never be alarmed at opposition, nor quail before hardship. It is our opportunity: it is God’s opportunity. That was God’s time for His own glory to put Saul in the lead. Would he rise to the occasion? Was Barnabas a little shrinking? Who should prevail, the legalist (of whom the sorcerer is a type), or Jehovah? Saul means “asked for.” The tall, stately fellow for whom Israel asked a thousand years before, egregiously failed. Will this Saul fail? Nay! Why not? His name is changed to Paul, “the little.” He had already learned that Christ alone was his life and strength. He depended upon God only. He glorified in weakness—¹2 Cor. 12:9, 10.

Opposition of Satan

“But Saul, who is also Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him and said, O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness; wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?”—Vs. 9:10. We should not only be filled with the Spirit, but also yield to Him absolutely. God never fails the believer who acknowledges his own weakness, and at the same time counts on Him who is all-sufficient. Saints often miss God’s best because they fail before a test. He knows when we are in a hard place. He could make it easier, if He would; but He seeks our development. He wants to show what He can do for us and thru us if we count on Him. He would make us warriors of steel. Elymas was full of the spirit of Satan; but Saul was full of the Spirit of God: hence he overcame him. The sorcerer’s birth name was Bar-Jesus, or “Son of the Savior;” but he was not true to his name. In his walk and life-work, he was Elymas, “the sorcerer.” Saul was true to his new name, Paul, “the little;” by depending on the Lord. Therefore, he prevailed in the fray. Compare the phrase, “son of the devil,” with the phrase, “the sons of disobedience” (“*the children of disobedience*” *KJV*)—Eph. 2:2, 3 R. V. For them, there is no salvation. They have grown in their surrender to Satan and become his sons. What a terribly solemn fact is this. All of us who are saved were once “by nature children of wrath;” but not children of the devil, much less sons. Thank God, by the new birth, we became children of God; now it is our privilege to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord” and thus become sons of God, “led by the Spirit of God”—Rom. 8:14. Contrast ²John 8:44.

¹ 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10 “And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

² John 8:44 “**Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**”

13:11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

13:12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

13:13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

Observe that the blindness of Elymas here is typical of Israel's religious blindness for this age. Study ¹Rom. 11:10, 25. Their pharisaical teachers, who taught that men must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses in order to be saved, were the worst kind of sorcerers. And some saved Jews partook of this heresy. They "bewitched" young saints into a religion of works—²Gal. 3:4. Paul's words here declare that such a doctrine is subtle, mischievous, an enemy of all righteousness and is of the devil. Of course it perverts the right ways of the Lord, which are ways of faith and grace. The teaching of Barnabas and Paul was rightly termed "the doctrine of the Lord," which deeply impressed the pro-consul, Sergius Paulus. The doctrine was manifested thru the power of God. Too many people ignore the former, but run after the latter. Indeed what is sometimes supposed to be power of God, is only the gesticulations of the flesh. Man's carnal display is erroneously called "the manifestations of the Spirit." Real truth grips honest hearts. Real truth, the doctrine of the Lord, results in real "manifestations of the Spirit, which are to profit with all." (*"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."*—1 Cor. 12:7 KJV)

The Apostles Moving On

"Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem"—V. 13. Of the seven points visited on Paul's first Gospel tour, we have noted two. It is not stated whether they preached in Selucia, or not. Its meaning "white light," was doubtless unlike the city morally considered; but it was so-called because it was a seaport town. Salamis, meaning "shaken," was shaken indeed in a new way when the apostles there proclaimed the Gospel. Paphos, meaning "which boils," was a pot of religious iniquity which Elymas stirred with his ladle of sorcery. However, the apostles introduced "a pot of oil," boiling with the glory of God, being heated by the fire of God's Word. Perga means "very earthy." Therefore, it needed the Gospel, as do all places for the same reason. They may be bright, beautiful and promising in the natural; but they are nothing to God without Christ. Pamphylia means "mingled people." It was therefore a fine place to spread the glad tidings, thereby reaching different nationalities. We should not study these narratives as history only, but also as full of typical and spiritual lessons. Hence, the attention we give to the meanings of the names.

"And John departing." The youthful John Mark could no longer endure to be only an "attendant" of those men who "hazarded their lives," for the truth.

¹ Romans 11:10, 25 "Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back away...For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

² Galatians 3:4 "Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain."

13:14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

13:15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and brethren*, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

13:16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

13:17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

13:18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

13:19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

13:20 And after that he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

13:21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

He could not stand “the work”—Chap. 15:38. It is always easier to go to Jerusalem, where there is a crowd—“many thousand of Jews that believe,” “where there is something doing,” as the superficial say. How few stand for the truth, crowd, or no crowd, results, or no results. But the truth will bring results, even “fruit that will abide,” (*“that your fruit should remain”*—John 15:16 KJV) if we are willing to toil and suffer in the will of God. John means “the gift, or favor of God,” and Mark means “the polite, or shining one.” But it required more than an excellent and beautiful name to keep him going on in such a strenuous way.

However, the time came, when even John Mark had to rally to the standard and write of Jesus Christ as the faithful Servant of Jehovah—even the Gospel of Mark. God wrought faithfulness in him and made him willing to be a servant, even under Paul, and “profitable for ministering” (*“for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”* KJV)—2 Tim. 4:11. Herein lies a rich lesson. John’s first period of service with Barnabas and Paul was that of an attendant, an underling officer (hupereten, Gr.), called officer and servant in ¹John 18:12, 22, 26. After he became willing to serve in that capacity, the Holy Spirit made him a minister of a more spiritual character, even a deacon (diakon, Gr.). If you desire promotion, be content with your present ministry and serve faithfully in it. You will be promoted when you deserve it for God’s glory. And yet, if John had continued with Paul from the first, he would not have needed to return by the humiliating route of being brought by Timothy, who was younger in the Lord than himself, and probably younger in years. Young man, take warning from John Mark and take courage from him also.

In Antioch of Pisidia

“But they, passing thru from Perga, came to Antioch in Pisidia and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day and sat down”—V. 14. The rest of this long chapter is devoted to the apostles’ labors at that place, which was several hundred miles from Antioch in Syria, whence they started. Study Paul’s mode of operation and testimony here. Observe that he spoke profusely from the Old Testament in addressing that Israelitish community. First, the apostles “sat down.” However full of truth and fire we may be, it is usually wise among strangers to sit and wait. Comp. ²Isa. 30:7. Note that Paul addressed them as “men of Israel.” By a tactful historic recital, Paul brought his hearers to the

¹ John 18:12, 22, 26 “Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him...And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?... One of the servants of the high priest, being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?”

² Isaiah 30:7 “For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength *is* to sit still.”

13:22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

13:23 Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

13:24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

13:25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose.

13:26 Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

13:27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.

13:28 And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

13:29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.

13:30 But God raised him from the dead:

13:31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

13:32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

birth of Christ, the offspring of David. Verse twenty-three is therefore a new item of history to them.

“Of this man’s seed, hath God according to promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus.” Him he called “this salvation”—V. 26. He announced Him to be glad tidings, and the fulfillment of their own holy writings. Scripture explains scripture. The statement in the second Psalm, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee,” is here explained to mean Christ’s resurrection—V. 33. You will find “the sure mercies of David,” described in Psalm 89, as God’s promise of Jesus’ millennial reign. Observe also that Paul taught, not only “forgiveness of sins,” but also “justification”—Vs. 38, 39. Here for the first time in the Acts, do we read of this marvelous doctrine of justification. You ask, What is the difference? The difference is great. An offended party can forgive an offence, because he chooses to do so; but he cannot justify the offence, nor the offender. In fact, the offender remains an offender forever. The offence was committed once forever. But the offended Jehovah can justify the offender. He not only “forgives our iniquity,” but He “covers our sins” (Rom. 4:7), so that offended justice can see them no more. The ungodly, when forgiven, stands as if he had never been ungodly; the offender is counted as never having offended. He stands righteous before the highest tribunal in the universe. “It is God that justifieth”—Rom. 8:33. We learn in ¹Rom. 3:23 and 5:9 how this was made possible. Because Christ paid our debt in His death for us, God no longer imputes sin to us, but instead imputes righteousness unto us (²2 Cor. 5:19, 21), the moment we believe on Jesus—³Rom. 4:3 and 5:1. Reader, if you really believe that you are thus justified before God, you can never deliberately, designedly harm your brother—⁴Rom. 8:33. This is grace—V. 43. Learn Paul’s invincible doctrine of justification in his epistle to the church in Rome.

Note how the Gentiles hung on Paul’s words—Vs. 32, 43, 44, 48. Observe also the emphasis put upon the Word of God. The only salvation taught

¹ Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

Romans 5:1 “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

² 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21 “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation... For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

³ Romans 4:3 “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”

Romans 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”

⁴ Romans 8:33 “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth.”

13:33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

13:34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

13:35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

13:36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

13:37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

13:40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;

13:41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

13:43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

in the Bible is “everlasting life” (V. 46), and some “were ordained to it”—V. 48. This ordination is not arbitrary on God’s part. By listening to the word, they arranged themselves to it. Comp. ¹2 Thes. 2:13 and ²1 Pet. 1:2 and see that faith is required and obedience, on our part, or the “obedience of faith.” God “opened the door of faith” unto us and we enter in by choice—Chap. 14:27. What is the heart attitude of believers toward those who do not believe and why?—Vs. 45, 50 and chap. 14:2, 5, 19. When people close the heart against Christ and the truth, they leave an opening for Satan to enter. But what is the result of believing “the word of God’s grace?”—V. 52. How strange, then, that man will not believe. See ³2 Cor. 4:4.

The Divine Order Always

“It was necessary that the Word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” (V. 46) Therefore, whenever Barnabas and Paul went to a town, they first offered their goods to the Jews. On that particular occasion, they began to be more pronounced in carrying the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Spirit was showing them that the Jews would not receive it. Study the clause, “judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life.” What a solemn and strange statement. That was the way the Lord looked upon their rejection of salvation thru His Son. Do not many Gentiles, who accept Christ today, judge themselves unworthy of eternal life? If not, why do they try to make themselves worthy? Why do they attempt to perfect themselves, and earn eternal life by thinking to hold out faithful? Most of the saints, even after they see the grace of God, yet deplore the fact that they are unworthy, as they suppose. They still wish that they had some merit. But there is no merit, no worthiness, in the old creation. In Christ, we are wholly worthy; for we are a new creation in Him. The new life is His life, which cannot be otherwise than worthy and accepted. Again we revert to verse 39. He, whom God justifies, is accepted, because his very righteousness is the spotless righteousness of Christ counted over to him when he believes.

“For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of

¹ 2 Thessalonians 2:13 “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:”

² 1 Peter 1:2 “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

³ 2 Corinthians 4:4 “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

13:44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

13:47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

13:49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

13:50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

13:51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

the earth”—V. 47. The Apostle quotes from ¹Isa. 42:6 and 49:6 to prove to the Jews that the Gospel should go to the Gentiles also. It is a fine thing to know the Scriptures. A “thus saith the Lord” makes our teaching unanswerable. Observe, however, that Paul identified himself with Jesus Christ. Isaiah wrote of God’s Son, that He should be for a light to the nations; but here Paul declares that he himself is that light, as if Isaiah had written of Paul. Well, did not Jesus say to His disciples, “Ye are the light of the world?”—Matt. 5. Is it not written. “Among whom ye are lights (luminaries) in the world?” (*“among whom ye shine as lights in the world;” KJV*)—Phil. 2:15. Not only did Paul represent Jesus Christ among the Gentiles, but he labored in their midst as Christ. It is not enough to represent Christ, as reflect Him in the world, as some put it; but we are here as He. They, who apprehend this truth, cannot be false to Jesus; they cannot flirt with the world, nor court its favors, nor make merchandise of the Gospel.

¹ Isaiah 42:6 “He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.”

Isaiah 49:6 “And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

Chapter 14

14:1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

14:3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

14:4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

14:5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use *them* despitefully, and to stone them,

14:6 They were ware of *it*, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

14:7 And there they preached the gospel.

The Apostles in Iconium

Chapter Fourteen

“And it came to pass in Iconium, that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed”—V. 1. Despite the bitter opposition of Satan thru the unbelieving Jews, while the missionaries were in Antioch, the Word of the Lord was spread abroad thru out all that region Chap. 13:49. “I will work, and who shall hinder?” (*“I will work, and who shall let it?”—Isa. 43:14 KJV*) saith the Lord. When He allowed the chief men of the city to cast them out of their borders, then they came to Iconium. Here they had great success and continued a long time. The persecution seemed to fire them anew to proclaim the truth; for they spoke boldly in the Lord. Observe closely verse 3—“the Lord bare witness unto the Word of His grace.” If the reader does not like the message of grace, consider this statement. That we emphasize the glad tidings of grace, may not impress you, or interest you. God’s witness to it should convict every law-keeper deeply; and indeed it does, but he resents it and throws off the conviction. How does the Lord bear witness to the Word of grace? The answer is simple—“granted signs and wonders to be done” by the hands of His servants. In spite of this saying and of other similar scripture statements, some men, even some who claim to see the grace of God, ignore and repudiate the Lord’s manner of witnessing to His grace. Then what Bible proof have they that they are proclaiming the Gospel?

In Lystra

“They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia.” (V. 6) The enemy could not endure the prosperity of the Word in Iconium; hence, the Jews and Gentiles sought to stone the Apostles. Therefore, they went on to other points. Satan could not stop them. Nay, nay. The sun is a great ball of fire. Nothing can hinder it from shining, tho’ men may try to hide from his light and heat. Just so with men filled with the Word of God and with the Holy Spirit. Nothing can extinguish the fire in their bones, tho’ some may reject the flames that leap from them.

Lystra was a Gentile town; therefore, the Apostles did not quote so freely from the Old Testament at first. Note that it is not said that they went into the synagogue of the Jews, as in other cities. “There they preached the Gospel;” that is, they announced Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and the Savior of men, without especially trying to prove it from the Scriptures. Then the Lord confirmed their wonderful message by healing the impotent man. Modern missionaries ought to study the travels of those first missionaries. They certainly never would talk of sending “medical missionaries.” Such language is a misnomer in the Bible.

14:8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

14:9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

14:11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

14:12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

14:13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

14:14 *Which* when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard *of*, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

14:15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

14:16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

The physical impotency of that man in Lystra expresses the inward impotency of all mankind. All men are crippled in their feet from birth. None have ever walked uprightly before God since Adam and Eve stumbled and fell. "All have sinned." All "come short." All are helpless apart from Christ. His healing also is a beautiful picture of how the Lord lifts up all those who believe on Him, and enables them to stand, leap and walk, by giving them a new life and making them new creatures in Himself. Observe two important facts here. First, the Gospel message begets faith in the hearts of its hearers. Second, Paul did not attempt to heal everybody that was ailing; but he was ready to deliver those who had faith. The faith of God is not presumptuous, but waits and operates on prepared soil. What was the public effect of the healing of the impotent man? Answer,

"And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker"—V. 12. Jupiter (Zeus, Gr.), or Father Jove, was the deity of power among the Greeks and Romans. He was regarded as the king and father of gods and men. He was the son of Kronos (Saturn) and Rhea, hence called Kronides, ruler of the lower air. Rains and storms are supposed to come from Jupiter. Comp. chap. 19:35. Mercury (Hermes, Gr., Mercurius, Lat.) was supposed to be the son of Jupiter and Maia. In Homer, he is called by the various names, according to his different ministries—the giver of good luck, the god of secrets and cunning, the conductor of ghosts to hades. Later, Mercury was worshipped as the god of learning, trade, the arts and sciences, and eloquence. Indeed, Mercury means, eloquent, learned, crafty. Barnabas was older than Paul (See chap. 7:58), and doubtless of a larger physique. His powerful fatherly presence impressed the people; but Paul's learned eloquence (his invincible words in the Spirit) arrested them. We can see at once why those ignorant, needy people called them gods. They knew that God only could perform such a miracle as the healing of the helpless cripple.

But did the Apostles accept their deification of them? That is what many Christian workers today incite. They want the admiration and applause of the public. They count it the highest honor, and a proof of spirituality, to be borne aloft like kings on the hands of their hearers. Not so with Barnabas and Paul. Instead, "they rent their garments and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions (nature marg.) with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God," etc.—Vs. 15-17. They avoided everything that would cause their auditors to be occupied with them, but sought to make them see the Lord and His wonderful goodness. They were seeking nothing for themselves. They were seeking the good of the citizens and the glory of God. Every faithful minister of God today follows in their steps. In chap. 16, we will learn of a choice youth who believed about that time.

14:17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

14:18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

14:19 And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

14:20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

14:21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch,

14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

As the Jews had done elsewhere, so here; “They came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead”—V. 19. The Apostle refers to this experience no doubt, in 2 Cor. 1:8-10. He takes occasion thereby to, set forth an excellent item of truth for practical use. He said “We have had the answer (sentence, mar.) of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead, who delivered us out of so great a death, and doth deliver.” (*“But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver”—2 Cor. 1:10 KJV*) On the surface, it would seem that he had the sentence of death in his body at that time when he was taken up for dead. But is there not a deeper truth, a background fact here? Does not our brother mean also that we all have had the sentence of death pronounced upon us on the cross? When do we cease to trust in ourselves, and absolutely trust in the God of resurrection? Is it not when we really believe with all the heart that there is nothing in the old creation to be trusted? Yes, we accept the sentence of Calvary; then go forth to prove it in actual experience. How often death would have been our portion if the God of resurrection had not intervened.

“And when they had preached the Gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch” (in Pisidia). Eight points were visited with the glad tidings, covering a period of several years, resulting in many converts to the Christian faith and the founding of assemblies. On going homeward, was their gospel bell cracked? How did it ring? It rang loud and clear in three distinct tones in particular—confirmation, exhortation and instruction—V. 22. They left the saints in good hands in every place—“They appointed for them elders in every church.” (V. 23) The word appointed, or ordained (cheirotoneo, Gr.) means “to elect by stretching out the hand.” Assembly order is scriptural, but not organization. There is not the first intimation of any carnal bounds set about the saints.

“They sailed to Antioch.” There is no question as to which Antioch; for Luke says. “From whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled”—V. 26. I find two meanings of the word Antioch, viz., “driven against,” and “speedy as a chariot.” Both meanings apply aptly to the assembly there. They sped on with the Lord, and of course, the enemy drove his chariots against them. Do you observe to what Barnabas and Paul had been committed? “The grace of God.” That would not suit most ministers today. They prefer to be committed to some official board, or district elder, or general overseer. Thank God, under His grace, we find the adorable Trinity a reliable official Rock, tested by ages. We find a kind and wise general Overseer in our Head, the Lord Jesus, and a powerful and co-operative district Superintendent in the Holy Spirit. For twenty years, the writer has

14:24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

14:25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

14:26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

14:28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

demonstrated the scripturalness of these statements with ever increasing profit, power and joy. In brokenness of spirit and overwhelmed with awe, I can only exclaim, “What hath God wrought!”

“And when they were come and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and how that He had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. And they tarried no little time with the disciples”—Vs. 27, 28. Oh, how full of meaning and nourishing meat is every portion of God’s Word. What the eyes of my heart see in this Book of Acts would fill a thousand pages; but time and space forbid. The church did not know the Apostles were coming. They could not telephone, nor telegraph, much less teleface. The city was not stirred carnally by the news of their arrival. The church only was concerned in them, and they were interested chiefly in the church. Note how those dear men said nothing of themselves, or of what they had done. Paul seldom spoke in his letters about his troubles and persecutions; yet, who had more than he had? They simply recited God’s dealings with them, which necessitated a bare mention of opposition. A door of faith opened to the Nations was the great marvel. And who did that? Did eloquent Paul? Did big father Barnabas? Nay, but God did it; and it pleased Him to employ Paul and Barnabas to spread the good news.

The word “tarried” (diatribo, Gr.) literally means “to rub between;” from “dia,” thru, or thoroughly, and “tribo,” to rub, bruise, grind, etc. Hence, it means also to abide, to tarry, to spend time, etc. It occurs only five times in the New Testament, twice in this chapter. For example, verse 3, where we learn the nature of their tarrying. They were not idle. They were not engrossed with the things of the world. They ground out some of the old corn of the land of Canaan. They rubbed out the Word of God in between the times of laboring with their hands and praying for the sick and ministering to the saints in spiritual things. I dare say that they who learn the rare art of rubbing between, grinding out a little meal, snatching a morsel of truth now and then, eating less, sleeping less, visiting less, reading less of other things, than most people, but searching the Word more—such become the beacon lights always.

Chapter 15

15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

15:3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

15:4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and *of* the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

“And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved”—V. 1. Ex. 12:43-49 Moses’ reign was ended.

There is scarcely a more important portion of Scripture than this chapter. The only general council recorded in the New Testament met to settle questions which have disturbed the peace of saints in this age. If the teachings of that council were really believed and practiced, there would be no need of many convocations today.

Paul and Barnabas had spent a whole year in Antioch. Afterward they had established assemblies in seven other places, teaching salvation by faith alone, wholly apart from works. It was after they had returned to Antioch and had been “long time” there, that those troublers came down. It was more than eighteen years after Pentecost (Comp. ¹Gal. 1:18 and 2:1, 2), when that unannounced conference was held in Jerusalem to deliberate on the way of salvation. All the apostles, including Paul and Barnabas, were there—Vs. 2, 6. Necessity was upon Paul and Barnabas to have that question settled. They had prolonged and labored discussions with the legalists, who stubbornly withstood them. Therefore, the brethren at Antioch appointed that they and certain others should go up to Jerusalem and confer with the apostles and elders there about the subject. Paul wrote afterwards, that he “went up by revelation” to that conference, taking Titus with him—²Gal. 2:1-3. He was fully persuaded that he was scriptural in his teaching and toil. He had a clear grasp of the utter helplessness of the law to save, or bless, and was thoroughly persuaded that salvation was absolutely by grace. Note chap. 13:38, 39, which we have studied. Therefore, if the Lord had not revealed to him definitely that he should go and interview the kingdom apostles, he would not have gone. The perfect will of God for him was his constant purpose; hence, he went up. When they arrived in Jerusalem, there met them certain of the Pharisees with the same legal opposition. Indeed they had been down to Antioch, and persisted in their error. Yes, legality withstands the grace message everywhere.

“And the Apostles and the Elders were gathered together to consider of

¹ Galatians 1:18 “Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.”

² Galatians 2:1-3 “Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:”

15:6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

15:7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

15:8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

15:9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

15:10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

this matter.” (V. 6) The problem was not to be solved so easily. Legality is Satan’s strong religious fortification. Therefore, it fights tiger-like and hangs on like a leach. The conference began and proceeded with “much questioning, or discussion.” Sure; for legalists are fine talkers and they never seem to, grow weary.

Peter First on the Floor

After three years of fellowship with Jesus on earth, and after a score of successful years of Gospel ministry in the wisdom and power of the Spirit, Peter boldly declared the way of salvation for Jew and Gentile to be by faith alone. Hear him. “God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and BELIEVE”—Chaps. 10, 11. Mark the invincible proof he gives—“And God, who knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by FAITH”—Vs. 8, 9. Observe exactly the phrases: “even as unto us” and “no difference.” For, twenty years, Peter witnessed that people, Jews or Gentiles, received purity of heart—salvation—or the Gift of the Holy Spirit, it was invariably by faith alone in Jesus. Not the slightest tinge of works was admitted. Then note his stern rebuke. “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, nor we were able to bear?” (V. 10)

My Friend, do you see what it means to bring in works, or self-effort as a means of salvation, or of perfecting believers? Water baptism, sabbath-keeping, feet-washing, making restitution, lopping off habits, changing your dress, trimming your beard, or hair—all these are acts of “tempting God,” if they are done in order to be saved, or to receive the Spirit, or to keep saved. To teach thus is to “put an unbearable yoke on the neck.” It proved unbearable to the fathers; it is unbearable to every body. Hence, Jesus had said: “Come unto Me all ye that labor (working for salvation), and are heavy laden (with law keeping)...take my yoke (faith) upon you, and learn of Me...for My yoke (grace) is easy and my burden (faith) is light”—Matt. 11:28-30. Yes, God be praised! “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of GRACE and truth; and of His fullness have we received, and grace for grace; for the law was given by Moses, but GRACE and truth came by Jesus Christ” (“*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth... And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace... For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*” KJV)—John 1:14-17. Then observe Peter’s unanswerable conclusion: “We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they”—V. 11.

Barnabas and Paul Next

15:12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

15:13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me:

15:14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15:15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

15:16 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:

“And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them”—V. 12. Whether these two apostles made any doctrinal statements, or not, Luke does not say. The only proof they gave that the grace-way was the divine Way, was the results of their labors everywhere they had gone. They needed no other proof. If their testimony of fifteen years effectual service, seeing many hundreds saved and filled with the Spirit and unspeakable miracles and wonders wrought, all thru simple faith, would not convince the legalists, nothing else would. They certainly rung the changes in declaring that all that had been done under their ministry, God Himself did it according to His grace. Their addresses were beyond question the most interesting of all.

James on the Program

“And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren hearken unto me. Simeon (Peter) hath rehearsed how first God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets”—Vs. 13-15. Peter proved that salvation was by faith thru grace by showing the beginning of God’s plan for this age. Then Barnabas and Paul demonstrated that salvation was by faith thru grace by their invincible witness to God’s mighty works. Finally, James confirmed the arguments of those three faith-warriors by Old Testament prophecies. He introduced his remarks by recalling what Peter had said. Then he made known three vital truths. First, during this age, God is “taking out a people for His name.” Second, at the end of this age, “the residue of the men” (that is Israel—Chaps. 12:11) will seek the Lord. Third, “and all the Gentiles;” that is, nationally all, but not literally every individual; for some will yield feigned obedience—¹Psa. 18:44, 66:3 and 81:15.

Study closely verses 14 to 18. Men talk of converting the whole world today. They exclaim very religiously, The whole city for Christ. Despite all the headlines, that the whole city turned to the Lord, there is no record of any entire city being saved. The nearest to such a victory was in Paul’s time, when “almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of the Lord” (*“And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God” KJV*)—Chap. 13:44. But did they all believe? If they did, why did they expel the Apostles from their midst a few weeks later? Bear in mind that God is only making a visit to the earth during this age, to gather out a Body and build a

¹ Psalms 18:44 “As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.”

Psalms 66:3 “Say unto God, How terrible *art thou* in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.”

Psalms 81:15 “The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.”

15:17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

15:18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

15:20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

15:21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

Bride for His Son. Men look in vain for a worldwide revival in view of ushering in a democratic millennium, and that without the Christ.

The Divine Outline

“After this, I will return...saith the Lord.” James quoted Amos 9:11, 12. The personal return and presence of the Lord, not simply as a visitor, but as a permanent resident, is the promise of God and the hope of believers. That only can bring in the millennium. He must come and rebuild the tabernacle of David. Then Israel will be restored and then the longed for worldwide revival will be the order of the day, even of the millennial day. Jesus must be sitting upon the throne of universal dominion and His lovely Bride with Him for these things to be accomplished. Not popular evangelism, but Christ and His people will convert the world, during their honeymoon. Hallelujah!

The Counsel of James

“Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles turn to God”—V. 19. James was the pastor of the kingdom congregation in Jerusalem. His words following Peter’s words, of course had weight with both Jewish and Gentile believers, curbing the former and comforting the latter. Observe that he terms the teaching of legality “trouble,” just what Paul called it afterward—Gal. 6, 17. He put himself on record as believing that Gentiles “turn to God,” even under Paul’s ministry. Those were hard blows against the law-keepers; but the Holy Spirit was moving him to speak. He advised further that they give four simple cautions to Gentile converts—V. 20.

1. “That they abstain from the pollutions of idols.” (V. 20) Of course, they could not worship the true God and other gods also. There is only one God. Him alone they should worship. ¹1 Cor. 10:19-22 is a commentary on this statement. Idol-worship is in fact doing homage to Satan; for “the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons.” (*“that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.”—1 Cor. 10:20 KJV*) By dividing up their devotions between idols and the Lord, they “provoked the Lord to jealousy.”

2. “And from fornication.” No man should have more than one wife,

¹ 1 Corinthians 10:19-22 “What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?”

and no woman should have more than one husband, because the husband symbolizes Christ, the Head of His Body, the Church, and the wife symbolizes the Church, or Body of Christ. How fitting that these two exhortations should be given. The first refers to God, the supreme object of worship, and the second, to the Lord, our exalted assembly Head. Each is rightfully jealous of His official relation to the saints.

3. “And from what is strangled and from blood.” (V. 20) These two last precautions stand together. The second gives the reason for the first. Flesh with the blood in it was forbidden to be eaten, not only under Moses’ law (¹Lev. 17:10-12), but long before—²Gen. 9:4. “The blood is the life.” (“*the blood of it is for the life*”—Lev. 17:14 KJV) If we drink blood, we are drinking the life and strength of the old creation. Here again, our God is jealous. He has provided that we should live by the life of His Son, who shed His blood for us. He identified Himself with us in our ruin, and died in our stead. In pouring out His life-blood, He emptied out all our old creation life and strength. God sees the blood, even the blood of animals, as corrupt and spilled on the ground. Therefore, we are not to drink any blood. Furthermore, strangled meat was not to be eaten, because the blood was still in it. And spiritually, we do not live by the life of one who was killed by strangling. Nay Jesus Christ laid down His life voluntarily. He said, “I lay down my life (psuchen, not zoen, Gr.) for the sheep. No man taketh it from me; but I lay it down of myself”—John 10:11, 15, 17, 18. We, who believe on Jesus, live by His resurrection life. Oh, what a wonderful and glorious truth is this.

Unanimous Acceptance and Co-operation

“Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas called Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren.” (v. 22) There were no pharisaical legalists among those chosen to carry the comforting news, the decision of the council. Oh, if our brethren, who are under law, or mix law and grace, would study the conduct and conclusions of that council, their law-keeping would flee forever. Alas! legal hearts refuse to read, lest they be converted from their error.

“And they wrote.” Read closely verses 23 to 29. They termed the judaizers, “troublers and subverters of souls,” (V. 24) and they had never given

15:22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

15:23 And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

¹ Leviticus 17:10-12 “And whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.”

² Genesis 9:4 “But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.”

15:24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment:

15:25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

15:26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15:27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth.

15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

15:29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

15:30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

15:31 *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

them orders to teach. In that conference, they “came to one accord” (V. 24) on the question. Note that they regarded Barnabas and Paul as “beloved,” and as having “hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (V. 26) Do not overlook this saying, “For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.” (V. 28) They put the Spirit first. It would be a joy indeed to attend a conference of leaders, led and controlled by the Holy Spirit, in perfect harmony with the Word of God. They did not mean by “necessary things,” that they were essential to getting saved, or to keeping saved, but in order to “do well.” Laxity in those practical matters would hinder growth in divine things. Hence, Paul wrote about them in his epistles later on, warning against everything that would impede progress in grace. “These necessary things” are not stern demands of law, or drawn swords of justice hanging over our heads; but they are finger-boards of love to guard and guide us on our present pilgrimage.

James, in his epistle, written doubtless after that invaluable conference, called this grace-way of salvation, “the perfect law of liberty.” Paul pronounced it “the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,” and admonished us not to be “entangled again with the yoke of bondage”—Gal. 5. On that council floor, Peter declared legality to be an unbearable “yoke.” If the two chiefest zealots for law-keeping, Peter and Paul, threw off that yoke of bondage with its clumsy brood of deadly doings, should we not shun it as a most deadly viper? If Spirit-filled apostles and elders and the first pentecostal assembly, met in a conference twenty years after Pentecost, and declared boldly that salvation is by grace only and always, should we not also hold a bold stand in its favor? If salvation by grace alone, wholly apart from human effort, was our beloved brother Paul’s doctrine before and after that conference, how can we proclaim any other gospel than that of absolute grace? And let us exclaim with Zechariah, “GRACE! GRACE!”

The Consolation Delivered

“So they, when they were dismissed came down to Antioch”—V. 30. The further importance of that recent conference is shown by the fact that Judas and Silas were sent with Paul and Barnabas, to deliver the conclusions reached. They exhorted the saints and confirmed them in the truth. It is worthy of note, that those Antiochan saints were already so deeply grounded in the truth of grace that the council did not bring them any added light. Its deliberations brought them “consolation” only, for which “they rejoiced.” When Paul’s Gospel is known and believed, there is little hope of anyone else bringing any further information. His message compasses all the truth. The revised version unwisely relegates verse 34 to the margin. By doing so, an interesting link in God’s wonderful chain of providence is cut out. “It pleased Silas to abide there still,” (V. 34) because the Lord gave him a special love for Paul and his Gospel.

15:32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*.

15:33 And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

15:34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

15:35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

15:36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do.

15:37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

15:38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

15:39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

15:40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

15:41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

God knew that Paul would soon need a new associate, or yokefellow, in the work. Observe that on the conference floor and when James spoke of them, the order was, Barnabas and Paul—Vs. 12 and 26. But when Luke records the proceedings of the conference and other events, the order is, Paul and Barnabas. Let the student notice chaps. 13:9, 13, 16, 43, 46 and 50, and 14:19. Was that by accident? Did Paul just happen to be called “the chief speaker?”—Chap. 14:12. Do you think that Paul, coming more and more to the front was easy for Barnabas to bear? For every effect there is a cause. Did it comfort dear, weary and tried Barnabas to see Silas staying close to Paul, and Paul reciprocating his attentions? You see, we are being prepared for the next lesson.

Paul's Second Gospel Tour

Chapter Sixteen to Eighteen

“And after some days, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city where we proclaimed the Word of the Lord, and see how they fare” (*“And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.” KJV*)—Chap. 15:36. From chap. 15:36 to chap. 18:22, we find recorded the second missionary journey of the Apostle Paul. It began about 51 A. D. He had a heart of warmest love for his converts. He felt responsible for the care and growth of the children born again under his ministry. Therefore, like every true, loving father, he purposed to visit them. However, before he could go on his journey, some difficulties arose. Ponder thoughtfully the closing verses of this chapter.

A Sharp Connection

Reader, are you perplexed at the separation of Barnabas from Paul in the way it occurred? Did not Paul write, “As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men?”—Rom. 12:18. Yes, but peace must lie in both parties. Barnabas was older than Paul, a man of wealth at one time and stood high among the Jerusalem saints, but always befriended Paul after the latter's conversion. When the Lord was pushing Paul to the front with a new distinctive message, Barnabas was slow to see that it was God. Why should He give such a revelation to one who had blasphemed and wasted the Church instead of one who had always been true to the truth?

God gets the greatest glory in choosing unlikely men to accomplish His purposes. Even Jesus was only the son of Joseph, a common carpenter and of Nazareth His despised home; said the critics. Reader, do not cast everything into the waste-basket as error because you have not seen it before, or because some reputed person has not taught it. Weigh it in God's scales. It may be the “scripture of truth.” Do not limit infinite God. The same Holy Spirit who has come to guide us into all the truth, can show you and me as well as Martin Luther, or John Wesley, new things in His Word. What man dare stand up and say that he has explored the limits and has delved into the deepest depths of divine truth? No doubt Barnabas thought, what Peter, James and John had not learned from Jesus and thru the Holy Spirit, by whom they were empowered, was not to be learned. Behold what mighty men they were, what miracles they wrought, etc.

Then added to his personal feelings, his nephew, John Mark, was ready to join them again: but Paul though it not good to take him who had left them when the work was so difficult and he was so greatly needed. You can see how easy it was for John to go along now. They were going to visit established

assemblies. Personal preferences, family ties, nothing should be allowed to come between us and the will of God. The sequel proves who was in the right. Barnabas took Mark, “the polite, shining one,” and went to Cyprus, “fairness,” his own home. Nothing is said of them till long after Paul made his second missionary journey. See ¹1 Cor. 9:6 and ²2 Tim. 4:11. But Paul chose Silas, the one “who considers,” and “being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God,” (Chap. 15:40) departed, not home, but to labor with and confirm the churches. God always proves who is in His will. All those men suffered. Paul, because he moved in the will of God, suffered with Christ. The other two, going in their own way, suffered defeat, suffered loss, and Mark had to serve Paul at last. See ²2 Tim. 4:11.

It speaks well of God’s ministers, when they go forth “recommended by the brethren.” Barnabas and Mark also went forth, but without a recommendation. The divine order always is, that we first have a divine conviction to go, impelled by the flaming truth within. Then we need the divine empowerment, the anointing with the Holy Spirit. Finally, we need divine cooperation and confirmation of the assembly of saints. Thus we can advance with confident certainty and unconquerable strength. The sequel proved the divinity of the course of Paul and Silas. Furthermore, observe that they were “recommended unto the grace of God.” That is no small item. Do you ever hear of such a send-off in modern times? “The riches of grace” was their unspeakable message everywhere they went. If you have a feeling of shyness, or laxity toward the grace of God, study the divine purpose of redemption thru grace. Paul declares that it was, “that in the ages to come (this age, the millennial age and the eternal age). He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in *his* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”—Eph. 2:6-8.

The Apostles on the Wing

Chapter Sixteen

“And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra; and behold, a certain disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a Jewess which believed; but his father was a Greek?”—Chap. 16:1.

Timothy was the product of Paul’s former visit to Derbe and Lystra. How do we know? He calls him his “son”—³2 Tim. 1:2. Being “well reported of by the brethren” (V. 2) there, Paul took him along; and he always afterward

¹ 1 Corinthians 9:6 “Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?”

² 2 Timothy 4:11 “Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”

³ 2 Timothy 1:2 “To Timothy, *my* dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Chapter 16

16:1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek:

16:2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

16:3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

16:4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

16:6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

16:7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

proved a loyal, faithful student and preacher of the Word. Why did Paul have him circumcised? Because, his mother was a Jewess, though his father was a Greek, or Gentile, This is an illustration of his teaching: "I am become all things to all men, that by all means I may save some." (*"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."*—1 Cor. 9:22 KJV) He knew that observing the shadowy rite would not affect Timothy's standing with God, but it would give him more freedom among the Jews who were still weak in the faith. Paul was "weak with them that were weak." (*"To the weak became I as weak"*—1 Cor. 9:22 KJV) You will remember that "the decrees for to keep," were delivered to Gentile believers only. See Chap. 15:19, 20, 24, 30 and 16:4.

"So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily"—V. 5. How different the report of the labors of those men from modern reports. They are always exceedingly brief. The character of their teaching and toils is seen by the two results. The first mentioned result—"strengthened in the faith"—most naturally leads to the second—"increase." There is criminal neglect today in this respect. Very few ministers have sufficient love for the saints to feed them on the life-sustaining Bread, the Word of grace, wisely taught. Most of them itch to precipitate big revivals, so as to get a big name and a big bag of greenbacks, or silver. Oh, how different were those men, who "hazarded their lives for the Gospel," Both will have rewards. The one have theirs here and now. Paul and his company will have theirs hereafter and it will be eternal.

A Lesson on Divine Guidance

Study the three means used here by the Spirit to show the apostles plainly the will of God. Back of them, hung the great command of Jesus: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." This they were heeding. But God has a certain time for each plan and person; for He is calling out a people for His Name, and He knows when the people are ready for the truth. These may seem like strange words, "forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach," (V. 6) "but the Spirit suffered them not." Happy for us to be so well acquainted with the Spirit's voice and be so yielded to Him that He can make us to know His will. Because of this lack, many a fruitless word has been spoken, many a vain trip made. It is not enough to say, "Well, He knows my heart." We get no reward for that. He gets no glory for that. We should know God's heart concerning us. If Paul knew it, we may know it. Let there be in us the persistent purpose to know and to do the perfect will of the Lord, no matter what the cost to us, or to others, and He will see that we have it. Then, too, we shall prove that it is exceedingly beyond all that we could have asked, or even thought. "Limit not the Holy One" by your own meager conception of His will.

First, the prohibition. Second, having yielded to that; then followed a practical vision, verse 9. Paul was not visionary; hence, God could reveal His

16:8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

16:10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

16:11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis;

16:12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

16:13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.

16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

16:15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

will to him in this manner if He saw fit. Third, they “assuredly gathered” (concluded) from these various experiences and providences, “that the Lord had called” them into Macedonia. The Holy Spirit employs the Word and providences and people, visions and dreams, as well as His own interior conviction, or voice, to direct our steps. Some folk imagine that they should never act, or speak unless they are seized by an irresistible impression, or power, as if God regarded us as machines. Nay! The life and walk in the Spirit is most natural, easy and simple. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”—Rom. 8:14.

A Church Planted in Philippi

“Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis, and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first (chief) of the district, a colony; and we were in this city tarrying certain days”—Vs. 11, 12. Samothrace, meaning, “sign of rags,” by its great need, might have detained the apostles. Neapolis, meaning, “new city,” with its promising features might have appealed to them. NO. They had heard a clarion call into Macedonia, and into Macedonia they went as soon as they could. Oh, what an example to us of prompt and persistent obedience. Observe, also, that they sought a central point, the chief city, from which to sound out the Gospel in that country. We do well if we follow their example.

What was the result of that definite leading? Days of discouraging waiting, a prayer meeting found, a demon cast out, imprisonment and stocks, an assembly in grace founded, and a most excellent and needful apostolic letter for our edification—The Epistle to the Philippians. We do not always meet with immediate success when we are led by the Spirit “We were in that city abiding certain days,” (V. 12) Saints often fail of a great victory, because they do not hold in faith, “abiding” till it comes. It is easier to run, than to abide. Men can go in their own strength; but they can never “stand still” save in God’s might, which is always at hand when we need and want it. Praise His Name!

Verse thirteen is rich and sweet. They found a prayer-band of sabbatarians; that is, those women were Jews, who had not yet heard of the first advent of Jesus and of the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they were observing the shadows. The apostles went to that prayer meeting on the sabbath, not to endorse sabbath-keeping, but that they might bring the truth to those women, the truth which was the fulfillment of what those women were needing. People who sincerely pray to God are sure to be heard. Indeed it was that prayer meeting which moved the Lord to send the apostles over to Philippi. Pray on; hope on; you shall have the answer to your prayer at last. Hallelujah! But what a small beginning for such faithful, untiring “servants of the most high God.” One would suppose, I mean the old man, that God would have led them to rent

16:17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

16:18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

16:19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace unto the rulers,

16:20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

16:21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

16:22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*.

16:23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

16:24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

16:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

16:26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

the largest hall in the city and advertise “the old time religion, etc.” No, not so with God’s best. Analyze the record—“out of the city, riverside, prayer, sat down, spake unto women.” (V. 13) Oh, Paul, are you not mistaken? Did the Spirit actually lead you?

Ah! yes. God led. Cowper wrote that “God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.” The first to receive the truth was not an inhabitant of that city, but “Lydia of Thyatira,” thru whom doubtless an assembly was afterwards founded in that town. See Rev. 2:18 to 29. Her “heart the Lord opened.” She received the Word and the apostles into her home. That was their first encouragement. They continued to attend the prayer meeting. Luke writes, “We went to prayer.” An apostle, or saint that does not love a prayer meeting, but wishes only to preach, or be preached to, is not reliable. It was on the way to prayer that a demon-possessed woman met them. Yes, too often believers turn back and go home again, and miss the mutual fellowship of the saints and of God. “Neglect not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is.” (*“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is”*—*Heb. 10:25 KJV*) Mary lingering at the empty tomb should be a lesson to us all, not be in a hurry, but wait—¹John 20:11-15.

How we need to try the spirits. The demons know the truth and God’s true men. Note verse 17. Comp. chap. 19:15. “A flattering mouth worketh ruin”—Prov. 26:28. Here learn the source of flattery, and its purpose. Spiritual believers sooner, or later sense it. “Many days” the soothsayer followed the apostles and annoyed them with her vain compliments. Finally, when moved by the Spirit, Paul rebuked the demon in the Name of Jesus Christ and cast it out. Why did the mighty Paul not act sooner? He was led by the Spirit. But whenever we loose one from satanic bondage, Satan puts us in bondage in turn, if God lets him. Hence, the disciples were imprisoned. Thank God! the hard place, the circumscribed condition, the opposition of darkness, is faith’s opportunity.

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening unto them; and suddenly there was a great earthquake”—V. 25. How insufficient is carnal security. God never sleeps; and tho’ faith always rests, yet it never sleeps either. While the jailor slept, the apostles wrestled and prevailed. Prayer turned to praise, and the victory was

¹ John 20:11-15 “But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”

16:27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

16:28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

16:29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

16:30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

16:32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

16:33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

16:34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

16:35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

16:36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

16:37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast *us* into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

won. An earthquake shook the building; divine glory shook the apostles, and conviction shook the jailor. Suddenly he knew that he was lost. Hence, he cried: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (V. 30) The simple and prompt answer, the apostles' remedy always for sin-sick souls, was: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (V. 31) An appropriate sermon on salvation by grace thru faith followed. "And they spake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." (V. 32) The prison house was made a place of liberty in Christ Jesus. The jailor expressed his faith in God by being "baptized, he and all his, straightway." (V. 33) He expressed his gratitude to the apostles by washing their stripes and by giving them an early breakfast. Of course, "he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (V. 34) Study the depth and immediateness of the conviction. Study the brief, simple, direct and all-sufficient mode of salvation. One word—Believe—at the beginning and end of the record, expresses the process. No human merit; all of grace. No works; all of faith. No human power; God alone saved the jailor—Vs. 31, 34.

When men are defeated, but do not wish to acknowledge it, they seek an easy way out. The authorities said: "Let those men go." (V. 35) But Paul being innocent, and deserving the protection of the government, would not be thrust out and have it go on record that they were troubling the cities. God gives us an inward courage that commands the respect of magistrates for His own glory, which we should seek continually. The last verse of the chapter is interesting. It will be of special profit to the student to read in this connection that valuable letter of Paul to the Church which grew out of his visit to Philippi at that time; namely, the Epistle to the church at Philippi.

16:38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

16:39 And they came and besought them, and brought *them* out, and desired *them* to depart out of the city.

16:40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of* Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Chapter 17

17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

17:3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

17:4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

17:5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

17:6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

Thessalonica to Athens

Chapter Seventeen

“Now when they had passed thru Amphipolis (meaning, around the city) and Apollonia (meaning, utter destruction), they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as, his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days, reasoned with them from the Scriptures”—Chap. 17:1-3.

Thessalonica means, victory over the tossing of law, or falsity. Such a victory is required to become an overcoming assembly as the saints in Thessalonica grew to be. As always, Paul’s theme in that city was the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which fundamental truths, he urged upon the worshippers in the synagogue from the Old Testament. Some of the Jews believed. A great multitude of Greeks believed. There, as usual, the truth met with bitter opposition. Truly as a modern poet has written, “This world is no friend to grace.” Observe, however, that the religious world is the champion of persecution. At Philippi, it was the devotees of “a spirit of divination,” whose possessor was used to make men rich. In Thessalonica, it was the professed people of God who did the persecuting. Note in both cases, how they deftly made use of the rulers of the city—Chap. 16:19-21 and 17:6-8. When the magistrates are against the saints, incensed especially by the religious populace, believers have the hardest time. The charge in verse six was exaggerated, thought it was true—“These that have turned the world upside down.” (V. 6) And yet, rather, sin has turned the world upside down; but salvation turns it right side up. Observe that national jealousy was the root of the persecution. The apostles preached “another king, one Jesus.” Thank God, the day is not far distant, when that Jesus will indeed be King.

“And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea, who, when they were come thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews”—V. 10. It is no sign of cowardice, or defeat to move on in the will of God. The mind of the Spirit is always victory, however humiliating it may appear. Their course of action fully agreed with chap. 15:14—“God visited the Gentiles to take out a people for His name.” (*“God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.”—Chap. 15:14 KJV*) The Lord never intended His church to erect costly, elaborate buildings for worship, as if they would stay here forever. Ours is a pilgrim life—“strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” (Heb. 11:13) Whom does Jehovah call “Noble?” “Those that receive the Word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.” (V. 11) In the eyes of the flesh, they are called noble, who can command attention and respect by their skill, affluence, pomp, eloquence, self-control and masterful leadership, intermixing enough of Christ to stamp it as Christian. Bosh! bunk! sham! Same on such pulpit dress-

17:7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus.

17:8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

17:9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews.

17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

17:12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

17:13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

17:14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

17:15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

17:16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17:17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

parade! What will the harvest be? “Wood and hay and stubble,” rolling up in blinding volumes of smoke, even as their ministry is blinding many eyes to the real truth. Oh, if we can induce people to search the Word of God daily and honestly for themselves, they will be convinced and believe, because they will thereby be enlightened thru the operation of the Holy Spirit, who always hovers over those who honestly delve into the Word. This is why Paul wrote to Timothy, just before he departed for heaven, saying “Preach the Word.” If we heed his admonition, we do well for time and eternity. Again being opposed, those dear men of God moved on.

Paul in Athens

“Now while Paul waited for them (Silas and Timothy) at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him, as he beheld the city full of idols”—V. 16. Young’s Concordance gives A. D. 51 as the date when Paul was brought before the supreme court in Mars’ hill, or the Areopagus. If that is correct, then it was six years from Paul’s commission (Chap. 13:1-3) till he came to Athens.

As His custom was, he first preached in the synagogue, because God’s order is, “to the Jews first and also to the Greek”—Chap. 3:26 and Rom. 1:16. Then daily he visited the marketplace with his new and burning message. In that city, the “Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him.” (V. 17) They were religious schools, directly opposed to each other, which sprung up over 300 years before Christ. Paul’s discourses on “Jesus and the resurrection” aroused them.

Epicurus, the founder of the Epicurean school, sought for happiness and pleasure at the expense of truth. He relied upon experience rather than reason as the test of his theory. The Epicureans held that the world was made by chance, that there is no providence, no resurrection, no immortality, and that pleasure is the chief good. The Stoic philosophy was founded by Zoan. It took its name from the Stoa, a porch in Athens, where the school met. The Stoics were lofty pantheists; that is, they claimed that the whole creation is God. Their chief religious boast was to be severely indifferent under all circumstances—neither rejoice over blessings and pleasure, nor wince under pain. Our English word stoical came from that religion.

Of course, both those religious theories had their roots in Cain’s self-effort. Self-will is at the bottom of all false religions. Is Cain’s doctrine still in evidence? Are there any Epicureans and Stoics around today? Yes. All self-made men are Cainites. All self-righteousness, all self-improvement, self-perfection, even tho’ it is styled “entire sanctification,” is Cainish, because it robs Christ of His glory. Stoicism, or self-killing, is another word for legality. Epicureanism is another way of spelling lasciviousness. Do as you please; have a good time; spare yourself, “eat, drink and be merry; for tomorrow we die.”

17:18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

17:19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

17:20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

17:21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

17:22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, *Ye* men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

17:23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

(*"let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die."*—*1 Cor. 15:32 KJV*) Both these religious philosophies have imbedded themselves in Christendom. If believers do not learn the precious secret of recognizing Christ within them as their life, they will almost invariably end up in one of these cults. Some saints grow weary of victories and defeats, and finally give up to a life of ease. Others, strong in themselves in certain things, seem to cultivate a self-control and graduate into an ascetic, make-believe piety. Both grieve our dear Lord, who deigns to be the victorious life in all His people.

"Men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious"—V. 22. When they had pulled him into the Aeropagus, the hill where the supreme court of justice met, he opened gospel fire on them. They accused him of setting forth strange gods, or demons; but he declared them to be "very reverend to demons in all things." Superstition means demon worship. How we should flee from it, therefore. The Apostle's proof of his statement was the inscription on their altars, "To an unknown God." Surely the world is full of Athenians today. They abound in Christendom. Oh, the sadness of it. Everybody is religious. Everybody goes to church on Sunday. But God is to the most of them unknown. They ignorantly worship, if the empty, hypocritical form may be called worship.

Study Paul's manner of teaching among the Gentiles. He did not first quote from the Old Testament, as when speaking to the Jews. He began with their own religious habits; then pointed out the true and living God and introduced unto them Jesus as the Savior of men. God made man to be a worshipper of Himself; but Satan induces him to worship himself. All false religions really eventuate in the worship of the devil. All error and all that is spurious in Christendom today, tho' it seem ever so pious, only glorifies Satan and robs Christ. The Apostle uttered an important truth in saying that "God dwelleth not in temples (or sanctuaries) made with hands, neither is He served with men's hands, as tho' He needed anything." (V. 25) They who believe on Jesus become the living sanctuaries for the habitation of the living and true God. Their eyes are not fixed on costly places of worship made of stone and steel. They who really understand God's grace plan do not serve Him and beg for His work as if He were poor. They trust Him as being rich and able to finance all His enterprises. They worship Him as the adorable One, whose love and help they need continually.

Paul was no evolutionist. He taught that God "made of one (Adam, the first) every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth"—V. 26. Adam did not evolve from some infinitesimal germ in the unmeasured distant past. Only the Satan-blinded wise (?) can try to believe such insanity. God "giveth to all life and breath and all things." (V. 25) If all have descended from Adam, why should white men be abusive to black men? Why should the rich

17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

17:27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

17:29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

lord it over the poor? Why should the learned despise the ignorant? “Why should mortal be proud?” All are black by nature, because of sin. They only are truly white, who are washed in Jesus’ blood. They who know the Lord are the only rich and wise in God’s reckoning. Praise His name!

“And hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord” (V. 26)—Deut. 32:8 must be considered in this connection—“The Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel; for the Lord’s portion is His people: Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” This is a wonderful truth. God always antedates His own. He knew how many Israelites there would be, and set the boundaries of all the nations in view of their comfort and welfare. Then the Lord has ordered the geography of the nations, not that they might become rich and great, and vie with one another and fight for one another’s territory, but that “they should seek the Lord.” God has sought to reveal Himself thru His Son Jesus Christ, to all the nations, that out of them He might gather a people for His name. But Satan has busied himself in blinding men to the truth in view of inducing them to follow and worship him.

“In Him we live and move and have our being”—V. 28. If that is true of all men, in the sense that all men are His creatures, “the offspring of God;” how much more radically true is it of those who are “His Offspring” by the new and heavenly birth. They live and move consciously in God. Their “life is hid with Christ in God.” The times of humanity’s ignorance up to the Cross, God overlooked; “but now” since Christ has redeemed men and made it possible for all to be saved thru faith in Him, “He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent.” (V. 30) This is why the Gospel has been published during this age thru-out the world—¹Rom. 10:18 and ²Col. 1:23. God has not left His Son without witness. Nations can never complain that they have not heard the Gospel. And why does God declare that men should repent? The next verse answers.

“Inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world (Gr. the inhabited earth) in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained”—V. 31. This also is proof that mankind has heard the glad tidings. Since the Holy Spirit has been poured out, He has been reproofing the world of

¹ Romans 10:18 “But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”

² Colossians 1:23 “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;”

17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

17:32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this *matter*.

17:33 So Paul departed from among them.

17:34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

sin of not believing on Jesus. Study ¹John 16:8-11. Therefore, judgment will be necessary, and that judgement will be just. It will be most fitting that Jesus Christ be the competent Agent of judgment, because He has proven Himself the competent Savior. Men are left without excuse. Here the Apostle adds a beautiful and significant statement, proving the certainty of the judgment—“Whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.” (V. 31) Jesus was declared, by His resurrection, to be the Son of God. He was raised from the dead for our justification. He offers full salvation to all who will receive Him. Therefore, as surely as He arose from the grave, so surely will He judge the world.

What was the result of Paul’s faithful ministry in that court room? Even as it is today. When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others (outwardly more polished), said, “We will hear thee concerning this yet again.” (V. 32) Ah, did they? No; for “thus Paul went out from among them.” (V. 33) The healthy, wealthy, wise and great of this world seldom accept the lowly Nazarene. They are self-sufficient and do not feel their need of a Savior. However Paul’s ministry in Athens was not altogether without fruit. “Certain men clave unto him and believed; among whom was Dionysius the Aeropagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them”—V. 34. Dionysius is styled the Areopagite, doubtless because he was a judge, or some other important personage about the court. The meaning of his name, “divinely touched,” agrees with his religious pedigree. Church history states of him, being at Heliopolis in Egypt at the time of Christ’s death, on observing the supernatural darkness, he exclaimed, “Either the God of nature suffers, or sympathizes with one who suffers.” He was burnt as a martyr for the truth in A. D. 95. The name Damaris means “little woman,” or “a yoke-bearing wife.” Damaris must have become a striking Christian character in that heathen city; else why does the Holy Spirit single her out and quote her in connection with Dionysius. Her name beautifully describes the Bride of Christ. She is little, apparently, when compared with the world’s women. She is not afraid of toil and burden-bearing. “Her price is above rubies” (“*for her price is far above rubies.*” *KJV*)—Prov. 31.

Recapitulation. We have just been studying very interesting visits to four different cities. We found religious people in all of them, and they were the chief persecutors. “A man’s foes are they of his own household,” (“*And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.*”—*Matt. 10:36 KJV*) applies to the “household of faith” as well as to a family in the natural. Spiritual saints learn this painful fact by experience. Later on, the Apostle wrote letters to

¹ John 16:8-11 “*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*”

Philippi and to Thessalonica, which we do well to read, ponder and heed. Why did he not write to the Berean saints, who were more noble than some others, searching the Scriptures daily while Paul was there? May be they ceased searching after he left. May be they were not as needy as others. Why did he not write to Athens? Possibly there was no assembly planted there. We might conjecture many things. One thing is certain—the Holy Spirit sovereignly led Paul to write certain epistles to certain assemblies, setting forth certain portions of truth, for certain divinely ordained purposes. All those epistles were written for the fullest enlightenment and highest good of all the Church during this age.

Chapter 18

18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

18:2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

18:3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

18:5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *was* Christ.

18:6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

18:7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

Chapter Eighteen

“After these things, Paul departed from Athens and came to Corinth.” (V. 1) There he found Aquila and Priscilla. Being Jews from Pontus, the north east province of Asia Minor, it is quite probable that they heard Paul when he preached in that country—Chap. 13:13, 14 and 16:6, 7. Were they present in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit was poured out?—Chap. 2:9. Did they sow the gospel seed in Rome? for they had just been driven from that city to Corinth—V. 2. No doubt they had already prepared the soil, in Corinth for the Apostles before their arrival. Paul and Silas did not find some of their own spiritual kinfolk in every new place, with whom they could lodge and have fellowship. We infer that Paul followed his trade of tent-making in Corinth as a side-line; but his chief business was to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and get men saved. If many young, ignorant fellows today were less ambitious to preach and more willing to make tents, or work otherwise with their hands, it would be far better for the people and the Gospel. And very few are willing to labor and give out the Word at the same time. They rather pose as evangelists, hold big meetings and get the hard earnings of the people, who very often know the Word and the Lord better than the evangelists. “The laborer is worthy of his hire;” (“*The labourer is worthy of his reward.*”—*1 Tim. 5:18 KJV*) but very many are not laborers, but loungers, or religious loafers.

“And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath and persuaded Jews and Greeks, * * * that Jesus was the Christ”—Vs. 4-6. As usual, his message was met with bitter opposition; therefore, “he shook his raiment,” and withdrew to the house of one Justus, near to the synagogue. Despite the persecution, the Apostles’ ministry was fruitful. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed the Lord with all his family; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized. Sosthenes, another ruler of the synagogue, also believed on Jesus, and became an apostle and was associated with Paul in writing a very valuable letter to the church at Corinth. Comp. ¹1 Cor. 1:1.

The enmity and persecution from the Jews must have been unusually strong, so as to cause Paul to be sorely tempted with fear, as verse 9 suggests. “The Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee and no man shall set on thee to harm thee; for I have much people in this city,” (V. 9, 10) The Apostle believed these comforting words. He boldly exclaimed to the Christ-rejecting Jews, “Your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean. From henceforth, I will go unto the Gentiles.” (V. 6) Having found a warm welcome in the home of Justus, he dwelt in that city a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

¹ 1 Corinthians 1:1 “Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,”

18:8 And 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.

18:9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, **Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:**

18:10 **For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.**

18:11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

18:12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

18:13 Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

18:14 And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O *ye* Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

18:15 But if it be a question of words and names, and *of* your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of such *matters*.

Literally, he sat down there; that is, he rested safely in the Lord, determined to continue there and teach his converts as long as God bid him so to do. What an example of patience and persistence in hard toil in the midst of stout resistance from Satan. Often ministers pack up and run, under the pretext of an urgent call elsewhere, by the people, or by the great need. However, if they are faithful to the truth, they will find a bug in the ointment in the new place. Distance lends enchantment to the eye: but facts tell the tale. Study the historian's words of Paul's ministry in Corinth. They suggest an outline to a great message. He reasoned, and persuaded, and testified, and wrought by day, and taught by night, and sat 18 months. God's Word filled him and fired him with unflagging zeal.

"Many believed and were baptized." Baptism in water was always observed by the Apostles immediately upon accepting Christ. Separation between the old and the new creations, between Egypt and Canaan, between the world and the Church, indeed, between Satan and God, is forcefully symbolized by water baptism. Death and resurrection, "the great gulf fixed" between these two eternal opposites, is very fittingly figured by immersion in water. Of course, any other so-called mode of baptism figures nothing. By immersion, we go down into death and the grave in symbol, and come up again alive in symbol. Water baptism is the first manifest act of reckoning ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God thru Jesus Christ. We begin to "Walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4) the moment we are born again. We begin to show it out by baptism, if we are baptized at once.

Did Paul contradict himself in saying, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel?"—1 Cor. 1:14-17. Oh, no. He simply held the memorial of baptism in its relative place and value, as a symbol. Undue stress is put upon it sometimes; therefore, the Apostle's caution is very timely. The writer was once a strong advocate of pouring and sprinkling, having been sprinkled at an altar-bench at the age of sixteen. But upon seeing by God's Word Rom. 6:6, that "our old man was crucified with Christ," ("*our old man is crucified with him,*" *KJV*) dead and buried with Him, there was no baptism for me but by immersion. Hence, I was buried in Lake Erie. But I was not any more fully saved, no more really justified before God, after being baptized, than I was twenty years prior, when God pardoned my sins; but I had "the answer of a good conscience," having observed the loving, memorial request of my Savior. Various queries come to us about water baptism. The Apostles all baptized in the name of Jesus, or Lord Jesus, because He is the divinely ordained Head, or Lord of the Church, or Body of Christ. We are asked if one has been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, must he be baptized again? We do not see any reason for so doing; but the candidate should decide that matter. If baptism in Jesus' name is the New Testament way, can anyone be saved if not thus baptized? I answer by putting

18:16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

18:17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

18:18 And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn *his* head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

18:19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

18:20 When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

a query to you. How did Jesus and Paul say we are saved? By grace, thru faith? or by grace, thru water? or by faith in water? Consult ¹John 3:16 and 5:24 and Acts 16:31 and ²Eph. 2:8.

Now if Bible students desire the fullest benefits of Paul's visits to Corinth, let then study diligently his two letters written to the Church of Corinth. The first Epistle is really a setting in order of the Church of Christ. The second Epistle is that well-ordered Church fulfilling her mission on earth—ministering as a company of priests in the things of God; for we are made “a kingdom of priests unto God” (*“hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” KJV*)—Rev. 5:10. (Write for our tracts, Water Baptism, The Name of Jesus).

Homeward Bound Again

“And Paul, having tarried after this yet many days, took his leave of the brethren and sailed thence for Syria”—V. 18. The Apostle left behind him in Corinth, nearly two years of a laborious and far-reaching ministry. His host and hostess went with him as far as Ephesus. He was hastening to the annual Jewish feast of Pentecost to be held in Jerusalem. He always longed to be there every year if possible. Did he need to meet the other apostles, or be at some large gathering to be refreshed and strengthened? Big meetings are too often the poorest place to obtain help. Nay! Christ was his freshness and strength. And the sheep of his own pasture brought him more comfort than any others. Why then be present at Pentecost? He sought every opportunity to bring the glad tidings to his own people, the Jews. Those Jerusalem gatherings afforded him a rare chance to reach many Jews at one time.

He visited the synagogue in Ephesus with his Gospel message. There he had an exceptional reception at first. They asked him to tarry longer; but he declined, saying, “I will return again unto you if God will.” It is to be observed that Paul always obtained the object of his expectations, because he could say as David did, “my expectation is from the Lord.” (*“for my expectation is from him.”—Psa. 62:5 KJV*) No doubt his hope of reaching Spain (³Rom. 15:28)

¹ John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

John 5:24 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

² Ephesians 2:8 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”

³ Romans 15:28 “When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.”

18:21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

18:22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

18:23 And after he had spent some time *there*, he departed, and went over *all* the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

18:25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

18:26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

18:27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

18:28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

was realized. He left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus to sow down that Asiatic town with Gospel seed, while he hastened on to Jerusalem. Later, we will see a very special reason for their tarrying.

“And when he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and saluted the Church, and went down to Antioch”—V. 22. Caesarea was a seaport town on the Mediterranean 70 miles north west from Jerusalem. From there he went inland, or up, to Jerusalem. Note that he barely “saluted” the assembly there. Did they not let him preach? Did they not invite him to give them a ten days campaign, “speak[ing] the mystery of Christ?”—Col. 4:3. If our beloved brother Paul ever had such an invitation from any of the churches in Judea, it is not so recorded. They allowed too much legality to give him a hearing with his transporting message of grace, even as is the case with legalists today. True it is, and pity ‘tis that it is true. Grace does not even have a chance to offer a salutation.

How differently it went with him at Antioch. There he “spent some time.” (V. 18) There he was welcomed warmly, as he was every time he returned. That was his spiritual home, his headquarters on earth. Thus Paul’s second Gospel tour was ended. The Assembly in Antioch had recommended him and Silas to the grace of God several years before—Chap. 15:40. Their believing prayers had followed them and sustained them during their absence. It speaks well for the Apostle that he never lost the confidence of the saints whom the Holy Spirit, used to launch him on his career—Chap. 13:1-4. He began his ministry in a gale of victory by the direct appointment and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. And he continued in the same fiery, intrepid, energetic manner thru another successful journey. There is not one lapse, or hint of failure recorded of Paul. We never read of him being sick, or daunted, or discouraged. Even in prison, he was the same buoyant, victorious soul as he was on the missionary field, as his letter indicated.

Paul wrote both letters to the Thessalonians from Corinth after Silas and Timothy returned from them—¹1 Thess. 2:17.

¹ 1 Thessalonians 2:17 “But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.”

Paul's Third Gospel Tour

Chapters Nineteen and Twenty

“And having spent some time there, he departed and went thru the regions of Galatia and Phrygia, establishing all the disciples”—Chap. 18:23. Paul's father-heart longed to have his children grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. He knew that they were weak, and had many heathen practices to be delivered from. He knew that Satan and self-seeking religious men would endeavor to ruin them. Therefore, he visited the churches with words of comfort and instruction. On this trip, he met the accursed heresy of the religion of works. He resolved to correct and safeguard the saints of Galatia against that destructive teaching. Hence, he wrote that masterpiece Epistle—Grace against Law—to the Galatians. The phrase in Gal. 1:2—“all the brethren which are with me,” together with Acts 20:2-4, where those seven brethren are named, indicate that the Apostle wrote that Epistle from Corinth, on this journey. Thank the Lord for that letter; for the most of us were once in Galatia in experience. All Christendom has needed it greatly; for all Christendom has been and is still in bondage, more, or less, to legality.

“Now a certain Jew, named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures”—Chap. 18:24. If the Holy Spirit eulogizes a person, who dare object? but we should not seek after eulogy from men. These five verses about Apollos are rather parenthetical. They are necessary, however, because that “certain Jew” was to perform an important part on the divine program with brother Paul. The Holy Spirit omits no necessary links and permits no superfluous ones.

Was that eloquent Jew saved before the tent-makers met him? Can a man be saved, “knowing only the baptism of John?” Can all the other things, recorded here of him, be said of an unsaved man? Let the Word answer. Chap. 19:4 declares that “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus.” (*“John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”—Chap 19:4 KJV*) By submitting to baptism in water, they acknowledged their sins (and hence, deserving death), and their faith in the One then coming. What was the result? Did they thus become saved? Zacharias, filled with the Spirit, said to his baby, John, “And thou, child, * * * shalt give knowledge of salvation unto His people in the remission of their sins” (*“And thou, child... To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,” KJV*)—Luke 1:76, 77.

According to that language, Apollos enjoyed the forgiveness of sins and the knowledge of salvation, if he believed on the One coming. No marvel, then,

that he had been “instructed in the way of the Lord” and was “fervent in the spirit” and “spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus,” (*“he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord”—Chap. 18:25 KJV*) tho’ he knew only the baptism of John. Remember that he was not in experience where Saul of Tarsus was when Jesus met him. Saul had not accepted the baptism of John; for he was self-sufficient and self-righteous. Apollos had heard of and accepted John’s glad tidings, but had not heard of the death and resurrection of Christ and of the descent Of the Holy Spirit until he met Aquilla and Priscilla in Ephesus. Do you see now why the Holy Spirit led Paul to leave them there while he went up to Jerusalem?

How unlike the fanatical stand of some today, who insist that no one is saved till he speaks in tongues. Aquilla and his wife gladly recognized what the young prophet enjoyed, and “expounded unto him the way of God more carefully.” (*“expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”—Chap. 18:26 KJV*) If they had been sectarian, they would have refused his fellowship till they had converted him and induced him to join their sect. There is a vast difference between pounding error into a man and expounding truth to him. Where is the modern enthusiast, who will retire to a lowly tent-shop and sit at the feet of those that are commonly called “laymen?” Most workers are content only when sitting at their own feet. “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted,” is always true. That was the beginning of days for the eloquent Jew from Alexandria. Henceforth, we read only good of Apollos, Paul associated him with himself in writing his epistles on church order (¹1 Cor. 3:4 and 4:6), and desired his companionship in visiting other saints—²1 Cor. 16:12.

“He powerfully confuted the Jews, showing publicly by the scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ,” (*“For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.”—Chap. 18:28 KJV*) or Anointed One. These last two verses indicate that Apollos accepted the tent-builders’ wise instruction and was anointed with the Spirit while with them. Only those who have experienced the pentecostal fulness can pass it on scripturally and effectively to others. No one can tell the difference between the tastes of a sunkissed orange and a Jonathan apple if he has not eaten them both. It is laughable how learnedly unanointed Bible students speak and write of Pentecost and its accompaniments, and condemn the Latter Rain, as fanaticism, or satanic. Poor fellows! What they miss! And what their followers also miss because of their learned ignorance.

¹ 1 Corinthians 3:4 “For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?”

1 Corinthians 4:6 “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”

² 1 Corinthians 16:12 “As touching *our* brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.”

Chapter 19

19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

19:2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

19:5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

“And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper country, came to Ephesus and finding certain disciples”—Chap. 19:1. Paul was in Corinth, 52 to 54 and in Ephesus, 54 to 57 A. D. The “about twelve” disciples, whom Paul met in Ephesus, were evidently the fruit of Apollos’ ministry there before he had received the Spirit under the tent-makers’ added light. By some means, Paul perceived that they were saved; but there was in his mind a doubt as to them having the Spirit. Therefore, he said unto them, “Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?” (V. 2) Paul knew that people did not then receive Christ and the Spirit by one act of faith, as many today claim. Otherwise, his question would have been impertinent. Hence, the authorized version expresses the Apostle’s meaning exactly—“Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?” (V. 2) That those twelve had believed on Jesus unto salvation, there can be no doubt. Their answer, therefore, proves that they had not yet received the Spirit. They said, “Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given.” (V. 2) The Greek word “ei,” translated “when” (A. V. and “since” (R. v.), is translated “whether” in the same verse. Let the critic consider.

Like all believing Jews, they knew that the Spirit had been promised in the Old Testament and should be sent sometime; but they had not learned that the promise had been so graciously and wonderfully fulfilled. They had not heard that the anti-typical Pentecost had come. Beyond doubt, they were thirsting for the fulness of the Spirit, as newly born babes in Christ usually are. Therefore, as soon as they heard from Paul’s lips that the promised Messiah and Holy Spirit had come, they gladly “were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.” (V. 5)

There is no hint here that those today, who have been baptized under the formula of ¹Matt. 28:19, must be baptized again. The value of water baptism to the candidate does not depend upon the words used by the baptizer, but upon what baptism means to the one being baptized. Those twelve had been baptized into John’s baptism only, which pointed forward to Christ. Now that He had come, it was most proper that they should acknowledge their belief in that fact, and express their faith in the fact of His death, burial and resurrection in their behalf. Would they say an eternal goodbye to Judaism with all its forms and ceremonies and accept the despised Nazarene as their Savior and Lord forever? If so, they would be baptized in this new name; and so they were. It is sad how ignorant teachers bewilder ignorant saints on this subject. They think to undo

¹ Matthew 28:19 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”

one baptism by being baptized under another formula. It is all child's play. Baptism into Christ did not contradict and aim to undo John's baptism. Nay, it supplemented and confirmed it. Sectarianism and man-rule are the roots from which spring modern modes of baptism. Men itch to be leaders and make a vain show. They seek their own glory, and not the glory of God. If ministers make the meaning of water baptism plain to the people, no one will be able to muddle them on the subject.

Twelve Anointed Ones

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied; and they were in all about twelve men”—Vs. 6, 7. This agrees with chap. 8, where Peter and John prayed that the Samaritan converts might receive the Holy Spirit. In neither case did they pray for the Spirit to come from heaven; for He had come already: but they laid on hands and prayed that the saints might receive Him. And it is our privilege to do the same. Observe also, that here as in chap. 8, the Spirit did not come on sinners, but on believers, or disciples. Children only have a right to a father's gifts. Our heavenly Father never promised the Comforter to sinners, but to His own dear children. This is the fifth instance of the Gift of the Spirit recorded in our study book, and in every case, they were consciously saved prior to receiving the Spirit.

Who received the Holy Spirit? Were they sinners? Or had they believed beforehand? We ask and answer these queries because many ministers teach that all who believe on Jesus unto salvation receive the Holy Spirit also at the same time. This is both unscriptural and unexperimental. The four Gospel Records show clearly that the 120 apostles and disciples were whole-hearted believers long before Pentecost came. They had been with Jesus and were taught by Him. To the twelve (Judas Iscariot excepted) He said, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you”—John 15:3. His prayer to the Father (John 17) bristles with a dozen, or more positive proofs that the eleven were all saved men before Pentecost. The women and the seventy were no less devoted to Him. Furthermore, all the other recorded instances of the anointing with the Spirit teach the same satisfying truth—they had believed unto salvation as a definite experience, then received the Holy Spirit afterwards as a distinct experience. In Samaria, they “had received the Word,” which resulted in “great joy in that city”—Chap. 8:5. Peter and John went and prayed for them, not that they might be saved, but “that they might receive the Holy Spirit.” (*“that they might receive the Holy Ghost.”—Chap. 8:15 KJV*) Ananias was sent to Saul, not that he might be saved, but that he might receive his sight and “be filled with the Holy Spirit” (*“be filled with the Holy Ghost.” KJV*)—Chap. 9:17. We saw other evidences of Saul's two distinct experiences that

Cornelius was a true believer before Peter visited him and the Spirit came upon him.

This plain interpretation offsets another error, akin to the above, viz., that no one is saved until he is filled, or baptized with the Spirit, as they term it. Bible teachers ought to understand that sinners cannot receive the Spirit, for He is not the Savior. Nowhere is it written, except in some men's minds, "Believe on the Holy Spirit, or receive the Holy Spirit and thou shalt be saved." (Chap. 16:31) Nay, for Jesus is the Savior. He died for sinners. He is God's "unspeakable Gift" to a lost world—¹John 3:16 and ²2 Cor. 9:15. But the Holy Spirit is the Promise of the Father (chap. 1:4 and ³Luke 24:49) and the distinctive Gift of the Father to His own people—⁴John 14:16. Peter's words in chapter 2:39 declare the same truth—"The promise is unto you," that is, to Israel, "and to your children," Israel's offspring that would believe on Christ. And that promise was extended to "all that are afar off," that is the Gentiles. Israel were "nigh" because of God's promise to Abraham; but the Gentiles were "far off" until they were "made nigh by the blood of Christ"—Eph. 2:13, 17. All men were brought near to God provisionally by the death of Christ on the Cross. God gives the Holy Ghost to them that obey Him (chap. 5:32), and people must be saved before they can obey Him.

"And they spake with tongues." (V. 6) Shall we pass over this statement because speaking in tongues is not popular? When once we become small enough and weak and needy enough to be willing to be anointed with the Holy Spirit as were the saints in the beginning, we do not disdain and belittle the scriptural sign of other tongues. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Brainy men claim to have the Spirit; but the strong rebuttal of their own spirit against the Holy Spirit's invariable sign proves that they have never even tasted the Pentecostal pudding. The Holy Spirit in one fellow cannot be against the same Holy Spirit in another.

Did Peter and John speak in tongues when the Spirit fell on them? Did those in Cornelius' house speak in tongues?—Chap. 10:46. Did Paul speak in tongues?—1 Cor. 14. Is there any recorded instance of learned opposition to speaking in new tongues in the beginning? There is no honest way out of the perplexity, but to acknowledge that the Bible anointing with the Spirit requires

19:6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

¹ John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

² 2 Corinthians 9:15 "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

³ Luke 24:49 "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

⁴ John 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;"

the sign of speaking in new tongues. The writer wanted the Holy Spirit; but his little head (not THE Head) wanted him to believe that he could be filled without “the Bible evidence of speaking in tongues.” However, faith finally ascended the throne, ruled reason out, and the dear Comforter, the mighty Holy Spirit, the Dove Divine, came in to abide forever as Jesus had promised. Yes, and I spoke in a tongue and magnified God with a glory, a depth and height and rapture of glory, altogether unknown to me before. Truly I ate of the pudding and was filled. And I am still eating and speak in new tongues.

“And they were in all about twelve men.” (V. 7) What does Luke mean? Were they all bachelors? Were there no women in that company anointed with the Spirit? The verse does not say that all who were filled were about twelve men, but all the men (that were filled) were about twelve. Why is Luke not specific in this instance as he is usually? Quite likely there were more than twelve, or he may not have been certain as to the number. The Holy Spirit was leading Luke and controlling his pen. The answer to these queries is suggested by ¹Rev. 21:12, 14. The holy city will have a great wall, having 12 gates and upon them 12 angels, and the names of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel inscribed thereon. That wall will have also 12 foundations and in them the names of the 12 apostles. This shows that the foundations and wall of the holy city will be wholly of Israel; while the city itself will be “out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9), “neither Jew, nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male, nor female” (*“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female:” KJV*)—Gal. 3:28. The number of the bride company, or city, is not given. The kingdom, or Israelitish number is 12, or a multiple of 12. Now consider that the church in Ephesus was designed to be the model. Therefore, in Paul’s letter to her, we find outlined her calling, her wealth, her bridal qualifications, her warfare, her armor. Eph. 5:24 to 33 is entirely bridal teaching, informing us as to who will compose the holy city. If “the saints at Ephesus” are the foregleam of the holy city, then the foundation of that church should be of Israel as the foregleam of the foundation of the holy city. Remember always in studying the Acts, that we are not studying history and biography only, but prophecy and types also. The basis of the church in Ephesus was of the stock of Israel; but the assembly as a whole was of Gentile stock. Note ²Eph. 1:12, 13 and 2:11 and 3:1.

¹ Revelation 21:12, 14 “And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel...And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

² Ephesians 1:12, 13 “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”

Ephesians 2:11 “Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;”

Ephesians 3:1 “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,”

19:7 And all the men were about twelve.

Paul Plowing and Prospering

19:8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

“And he entered into the synagogue and spoke boldly for the space of three months reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God”—V. 8. That was God’s order and the Apostle’s custom. He continued three months; for that was sufficient time for a clean-cut ministry of the Word to decide the attitude of the Jews. The Word of God spoken in the wisdom and power of the Spirit softens the hearts of those who believe, but hardens them that believe not. This Paul separated the disciples from those who boldly opposed the truth. Too often saints make a mistake in remaining where the truth is not wanted, because the professed people of God assemble there. Because of their name and profession, they entertain an unscriptural regard for them, and generally become ensnared, cool off and compromise with error, or with the flesh. “From such turn away,” saith the Lord—2 Tim. 3:5. We may learn from the conduct of the Apostles what to do and what not to do and how to do.

The phrase, “concerning the kingdom of God,” is quite significant. Paul spoke first to Jews, the kingdom people. He sought to assure them that their promised Messiah and King had come. He could not speak in the synagogue of church truth. A church must first be planted. Many workers unwisely talk to sinners about an overcoming life and of the bride of Christ. You cannot approach nominal Christians thus as a rule. They will not understand you; how much less the unsaved. Always find where your auditor stands; then address him accordingly. “Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”

19:9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

“In the school of Tyrannus.” Those twelve disciples, with Aquilla and Priscilla doubtless and others, were standing by Paul as he proclaimed the truth for three months in the synagogue. When some of the Jews spoke “evil of The way before the multitude,” (V. 9) he accepted the invitation of Tyrannus’ to conduct his meetings in his school building. Tyrannus is a Greek word, which means prince, Lord, etc. Our English words tyrant, tyranny, etc., are derived from it. It is not likely that he was a Jew, but a Greek, hence not one of the particular twelve. Tyrannus had a private school evidently in which he taught rhetoric and kindred studies. The holy Spirit opened his heart to the glad tidings and led him to open his school house to Paul’s ministry for two years. We may infer that he became one of the faithful and useful members of that assembly. From that place, “all they which dwelt in Asia (the Roman province) heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks”—V. 10.

19:10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Ephesus was the most prominent city of that province and the center of its trade. The Apostle likewise made it the center of his operations for Christ. That assembly is a type of the most fully developed believers; therefore Paul wrote to them as he did, and they are the first on the list of the seven representative churches to which John wrote. Reader, have you studied the two letters addressed to that congregation?

19:11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

19:13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

19:14 And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, which did so.

19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul, insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body (skin, “chrotos,” Gr.) handkerchiefs, or aprons, and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirits went out”—V. 12. That city was the center of witchcraft and magic, by which the sorcerers claimed to work miracles. The Lord proved Himself to be the real miracle worker by delegating to His servant, Paul, special power against sickness and demons. The devil had such mighty entrenchments there thru the magic arts and thru the Moon-god, Diana, and her temples that extraordinary divine dynamics were necessary to awaken the people. And be it remembered that such a ministry was granted to the “chief speaker” of the matchless message of divine grace.

Our own assembly took hold of this same power, being imitators of Paul as he bid us to be (“Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.”—1 Cor. 4:16 and “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.”—Phil. 3:17), and many people have been delivered from Satan’s power thru the laying on of kerchiefs sent to different points, near and far. Oh, no; Paul did not cease to work miracles when he became spiritual and was teaching the deep things of God, as some erroneously claim. If men knew the Scriptures with the heart and the power of God by experience, they would not speak so silly. The age of miracles is past to those only who do not avail themselves of divine miracle working power. What a joy it is to lay our hands on a kerchief and pray over it, and then send it thru the mail, believing with the suffering one that he shall be healed. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to day and for ever”—Heb. 13:8.

Counterfeit Miracles

“But certain also of the strolling Jews; exorcists, took upon them to name over them, which had the evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth”—V. 13. Satan seeks to counterfeit the work and power of the Lord, and he uses duped men to do so. Apparently it is the flesh imitating the Holy Spirit. There were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish priest, whom the devil employed at that time. That narrative of defeat is a fulfillment of Jesus’ words—“a house divided against itself cannot stand.” (*“And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand”*—Mark 3:25 KJV) If those would-be devil-drivers had succeeded against the demon-possessed man, Satan would have had occasion to crow over the truth. The evil spirit was wiser than the priest’s sons. He said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?” (V. 15) What a rebuke to the professed people of God. Yes, the devil and his imps know indeed who has the real genuine spiritual goods. That is why our wrestling is as described in ¹Eph. 6:12.

¹ Ephesians 6:12 “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

19:16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

19:17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

19:18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

19:19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

19:20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Let us learn a lesson here, not to attempt by our own strength to repulse demons, or cast out sickness. Let us not make a fleshly use of the name of Jesus. Yelling at demons with multiplied words of apparent authority, stamping the floor vehemently, gesticulating as in a frenzy, etc., is not necessarily the power of God. That only provokes a grin from evil spirits. Spiritual forces must be met with spiritual weapons. “Faith is the victory,” faith in God’s Word; faith employing the “Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God,” (*“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”*—Eph. 6:17 KJV) defeats the foe. “The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strong holds” (*“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds”* KJV)—2 Cor. 10:4. Therefore, we need to “walk in the Spirit,” lest we attack the enemy at the wrong time, or in a wrong manner. Paul waited and did not grapple with the spirit of divination till the Holy Spirit led him—Chap. 16:16-18.

Let us learn also not to have anything to do with the occult religions which claim to have power over sickness in Jesus’ name. Christian Science (?), Unity (?), Spiritism, Theosophy, and the like, are all of the devil. Their deliverances glorify the devil, and not the Lord. Some people innocently and ignorantly fall in with these cults and obtain healing, but not by the cult. Their faith in God’s promise, which the evil system often quotes, brings the victory. Sooner, or later such honest hearts are made to understand that they are in the wrong atmosphere and walk out. They get deliverance from devilish doctrine and false prophets as well as from disease. Let us not condone these evil systems by saying, Well, they do lots of good. No, they do great harm.

“So mightily grew the Word of the Lord and prevailed”—V. 20. The defeat of the sons of Sceva was very signal. It was a great victory for the truth among both Jews and Greeks. “Fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.” (V. 17) Many who had practiced magic made a bonfire of their curious books, valued at “fifty thousand pieces of silver.” The Greek word “argurion,” a piece of silver, was the common term for money in general. In a number of citations (e.g. ¹Matt. 25:18) it is translated money. The phrase, “pieces of silver,” occurs very many times in the Old Testament, and agrees with the same phrase in the New Testament. This is evident by comparing ²Zech. 11:11, 12 with ³Matt. 27:9. In Hebrew, it was sometimes called a “shekel,”

¹ Matthew 25:18 “But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money.”

² Zechariah 11:11, 12 “And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the LORD. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.”

³ Matthew 27:9 “Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;”

whose value was equal to about 55 cents U. S. money. Consider Abraham's purchase of a burying ground—¹Gen. 23:15, 16. If that is correct, then \$27,400.00 went up in smoke that day. What a financial loss to the flesh; but what a financial triumph to the Holy Spirit and the truth. Is that not a little material picture of the gigantic spiritual bonfire which will roll up as a monument of religious folly when the building of wood and hay and stubble shall be burned by the fire of God's Word?—²1 Cor. 3:12-16. Over against that conflagration will stand "a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21), made up of "living stones," each on "a building from God," a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens (³2 Cor. 5:1), even "the holy city," a majestic monument proving that "the Word of the Lord has prevailed." OH, GLORY!

Observe three interesting statements concerning the progress of the truth as recorded in this book. About the beginning of Stephen's ministry (35 to 40, A. D.) "the Word of God increased"—Chap. 6:7. That was under the powerful ministry of Peter, James, John and Stephen and others working with them. During the next nine years, great persecution arose against the disciples, who were scattered in various directions. Stephen was stoned to death by the Jews. James, one of the twelve apostles, was slain by Herod. "But the Word of God grew and multiplied," says our historian—Chap. 12:24. Saul of Tarsus was saved and trained for his life work, which began about 45 A. D. After a dozen years of pioneering with the Gospel of grace amidst the most adverse conditions, Luke chronicles that "So mightily grew the Word of the Lord and prevailed." (*"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."* KJV) (V. 20) From increase to growth, from growth and triumph was the astounding power and progress of the Word. Note that the last citation declares that it was "the Word of the Lord" (*"the word of God"*—V. 20 KJV) rather than the Word of God. That is, the Church message, the Gospel as revealed to Paul, was the one which especially grew and prevailed. And his Gospel must again grow mightily and prevail in these closing days; because thereby the saints are built up and obtain an inheritance—Chap. 20:32.

¹ Genesis 23:15, 16 "My lord, hearken unto me: the land *is worth* four hundred shekels of silver; what *is* that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current *money* with the merchant."

² 1 Corinthians 3:12-16 "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

³ 2 Corinthians 5:1 "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The city of Ephesus was the capital of Asia Minor. It was its greatest city and the chief point of trade for that country. Ephesus and Smyrna were termed the eyes of Asia. It was under the Roman government, but a free city. It was ruled by its own magistrates.

That was the city, which Paul chose as the center of a very effective ministry. History records that the Assembly in Ephesus was a very influential one. It is said that Asia Minor became the stronghold of Christianity. The heathen temples were deserted. The animals of sacrifice could not be sold. Apparently all the people became Christians. We need not marvel then that Luke says, “So mightily grew the Word of the Lord and prevailed” (*“So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.” KJV*)—V. 20.

Five times, Paul speaks of the Gospel of grace and glory, as contrasted with the Gospel of the kingdom, preached by Peter and his co-workers, and calls it “My Gospel,” or “Our Gospel.” To the Church in Rome, he wrote, saying, God is able “to stablish you according to my Gospel.” He said also to them, “God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.”—Rom. 16:25 and 2:16. How can believers slip slightly over such solemn statements? He said to the Thessalonians, God “called you (to salvation) by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ,” reminding them also that “our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance” (*“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;” KJV*)—2 Thes. 2:14 and 1 Thes. 1:5. To the Corinthians the same faithful Paul wrote, saying, “if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are perishing, in whom the god of this age (the religious god, the devil), hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (*“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” KJV*)—2 Cor. 4:3, 4.

Therefore, we need not marvel at his self-sacrificing language in Acts 20:24. And God must have some unflinching heralds of “our Gospel” in these end time days. Shall brother Paul be the only one to say, “Neither count I my life dear unto myself?” Shall not we too “finish our course with joy and the ministry, received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God?” (*“finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”—Chap. 20:24 KJV*) What higher honor can one have? What nobler purpose, than to believe and declare the glad tidings which he proclaimed? What greater reward for service can be expected than for making known the full Gospel of divine grace and of

heavenly glory? Certainly, it must be recorded again, even with the culmination of this evil age, that “so mightily grew the Word of the Lord and prevailed.” (*“So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.”—V. 20 KJV*)

Fierce Persecution Waged

“And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way; for a certain man, named Demetrius, a silversmith which made silver shrines of Diana, brought no little business unto the craftsmen; whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth”—Vs. 23-25.

Paul was looking toward Rome. However, he desired to see the saints again in Jerusalem before going thither. Therefore, he sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, by which way he intended to reach Palestine. After those brethren had gone, Demetrius began his mob raid against the Apostle and his friends. Paul’s untiring service in the Gospel was effecting the most lucrative enterprise in the city and country. Demetrius and others might soon be minus a job. Observe by verses 35 to 41 that the city officials were not the aggressors in the opposition; but the craftsmen were alarmed. The disciples were seized by mob violence. And as is always the case in such gatherings, the crowd was in confusion; for the more part knew not wherefore they were come together—V. 32. How blessed of the Holy Spirit that He restrained the Apostle from leaving Ephesus any earlier. He was greatly needed just then to comfort and strengthen the saints.

“Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” That was the frenzied whoop of the angry worshipers of their goddess Artemis, or Diana. The craftsmen, however, were not so much concerned about the goddess as about their pocketbooks. “Our wealth, our trade” was being severely interfered with, something like the swine raisers in Jesus’ time, who bid Him leave their coasts. The burning of the books of magic no doubt caused the first note of alarm. The following statements indicate somewhat of the greatness of their business.

The “shrines” (“naous,” Gr.) were the cells, or inner part of a temple in which the image of the god was placed. It is said that those shrines were models of various sizes of the temple of Diana and had on them an image of the goddess. They were made of terra-cotta, or marble for the poor people, and of bronze and silver for the wealthy. Many of the cheaper kind are still found in that region it is said. The shrines were worn as charms on the body, or set up in the house and worshipped. They were supposed to ward off sickness and trouble. History records that the Apostle John and Mary the mother of Jesus spent their last days in Ephesus. The shrines were dedicated as offerings to the goddess Diana and put into her temple. Today in some parts of the East, offerings are placed about the image of the virgin Mary as thank offerings for

19:21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

19:22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

19:23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

19:24 For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

19:25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

19:26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:

19:27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

19:28 And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

19:29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

19:30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

19:31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

19:32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

her favors, or as peace offerings which are supposed to obtain answers to prayer. It is no more idolatrous in God's sight to worship the goddess Diana than to make a goddess of Mary?

The name Diana is the Latin of the Greek Artemis. It is said that the Ephesian Diana was a distinct goddess from the Greek Diana. The latter was a virgin, a huntress, and was a personification of the moon even as Apollo was of the sun. The former was like an erect idol. The upper part of the front of the body was covered with rows of breasts, symbolizing her as the universal mother of all life. The lower part was merely an upright block, rudely representing robes, covered with symbols and figures of animals. The worship of the goddess was of course abominable. Farrar says, "Many a time must Paul have heard from the Jewish quarter the piercing shrillness of their flutes and the harsh jangling of their timbrels. Many a time must he have caught glimpses of their detestable dances and Corybantic processions, as, with streaming hair and wild cries and shaking torches of pine, they strove to madden the multitude into sympathy with their drunken worship, which was but too closely connected with the vilest debaucheries."

The temple of Diana was considered the crowning glory of Ephesus. It was known worldwide as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Her influence was far-reaching. Many people came from distant points to behold her shrine and to do her homage. Of course they purchased the portable shrines of silver, or terracotta, which occasioned a large manufacturing enterprise.

"They rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel"—V. 29. Concerning the two companions, see notes on chap. 20:4. The Greek word "theatron," here rendered theatre, occurs only here and in 1 Cor. 4:9, where it is rendered spectacle. It means either the performers, or the place where the actors perform. That theatre was the great Colosseum, whose capacity was 50,000 people, it is said. It was built for men to have combats with wild beasts, or other men. It was also used for public meetings of various kinds. Let us consider 1 Cor. 4:9 in this connection. "I think, God has set forth us (Paul and Apollos) the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death; for we are made a spectacle (theatre) unto the world, both to angels and to men." (*"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."*—1 Cor. 4:9 KJV) (See the four verses also that follow.) The Diaglott offers the following interesting note on this and the succeeding verses. It suggests that Paul is alluding to those last exposed on the theatre, to fight with wild beasts, or with one another, and who were devoted to certain destruction. The *atimoi* (despised ones, verse 10) were held to be outlaws, and might be slain as well as ill-treated with impunity. The words (verse 13), *perekatharmata* (filth) and

19:33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

19:34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

19:35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, *Ye* men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter?

19:36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

19:37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

19:38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

19:39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

19:40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

19:41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

peripseema (offscourings) are thought to allude to those human expiatory sacrifices which were offered to infernal deities among the Greeks and Romans, selected from the lowest of the people and loaded with curses, affronts and injuries. "I fought with beasts at Ephesus" (1 Cor. 15:32), doubtless the Apostle has reference to the combats in the Arena, to which he likens his contests with Satan in the form of wicked men.

Worship of the Image Forecast

"The city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter." (V. 35) "Whom all Asia and the world worshippeth"—Vs. 27 and 35. What a contrast! In Ephesus lived the highest type of believers, who had learned from Paul the deepest New Testament teaching. The Ephesian Assembly was the model Assembly. But Ephesus also had the shameful dishonor of being a great center for devil-worship. Verses 23 to 41 foreshadowed the seven years of national and ecclesiastical rebellious usurpation, commonly called "the last week of Daniel"—Dan. 9:27. The anti-Christ and false prophet of Rev. 13 are intimated by "the beasts at Ephesus," with which Paul fought.

Who is Jupiter but Satan himself? The heathens named their gods after the planets in heaven. And those Ephesian citizens believed Jupiter to be somewhere in heaven. The devil is there now—Rev. 12. And the image which they worshipped, they supposed had fallen as a boon to them from heaven. All Asia (that is, Asia Minor) and the world did homage to that image. John has informed us that an image of anti-Christ will be set up by Satan's authority and power—¹Rev. 13:14, 15. That will be "the abomination of desolation...stand in the holy place," of which Daniel and Jesus spoke—Matt. 24:15. All the world will wonder after the beast, the anti-Christ, and worship his image, or be slain. History informs us that in Rome there is a full-length and complete image of the goddess Diana. What a forecast of that seven years of a counterfeit, or mock millennium. How remarkable that the devil should have a fore-runner of the coming image in Rome, the probable home of the beast and false prophet. Oh, let us "flee the wrath to come." Let us look up and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

¹ Revelation 13:14, 15 "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means* of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

Chapter 20

20:1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

20:2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

20:3 And *there* abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

20:4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

20:5 These going before tarried for us at Troas.

“And after the uproar was ceased, Paul, having sent for the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of them and departed for to go into Macedonia”—Chap. 20:1. The Holy Spirit was pulling the indefatigable soldier of Christ on toward the capital city of the then world empire. However, before going thither, he must see once more his dear children in the Lord in various parts and once more witness to his own nation in Jerusalem. Concerning the latter he said “I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart * * * for my kinsmen according to the flesh” (*“I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart... my kinsmen according to the flesh:” KJV*)—Rom. 9:1, 2. Chap. 24:17 gives a good reason for his trip to Jerusalem. Hence, he journeyed in that direction. After visiting different points he returned and sailed by Miletus, a seaport town of Ephesus, where the elders came out to bid him a last farewell. That was doubtless in 58 A. D.

Assembly in Philippi, the chief city of that state. To them he wrote a sweet and comforting epistle afterward, from Rome. He called on other saints in those parts also. He loved them all and gave “them much exhortation,” or comfort, as in ¹1 Thess. 4:18. Then he went to Greece, where he spent three months. His purpose was to sail directly east, then southeast toward Tyre, where he arrived later. But because the Jews laid a plot for him, he turned north again. Their bitter hatred for the dear Messiah had not subsided. Oh, what a glorious day for the Jews is just about to dawn.

“And there accompanied him as far as Asia, Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus and Gaius; (see Chapter 19:29), and of Derbe, Timothy; and of Asia Tychicus and Trophimus”—V. 4. Those were seven faithful men who had received the Gospel message from Paul, and loved him dearly.

While in Corinth, Greece, Paul evidently wrote that valuable and needful letter to the churches in Galatia. During his three years in Ephesus, he either visited them from there, or learned otherwise of them falling into the snare of legality. Or he may have cabled on them on this last trip into those parts. We have strong suspicion, if not proof, that he wrote to them from the house of Gaius in Corinth; for in Rom. 16:23, he calls “Gaius mine host.” And the clause in Gal. 1:2—“all the brethren which are with me,” that is who were with him when he was writing that splendid letter, must mean the seven men with him in Corinth and who went with him to Asia. At that same time also, he wrote that unique epistle to the Assembly in Rome, announcing his coming

¹ 1 Thessalonians 4:18 “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

thither. How do you know? you ask. We gather it from the names of those who send greetings to Rome with Paul's epistle—¹Rom. 16:21 to 23. First Gaius whom Paul baptized in Corinth—²1 Cor. 1:14. (This Gaius is not one of the seven named above.) Second, Erastus, who abode in Corinth—³2 Tim. 4:20. Third, Lucius, or Luke, who joined Paul in Philippi when he came into Macedonia as stated in Acts 20:1. Fourth, Timothy was one of the seven named above. Fifth, Jason was of Thessalonica, tho' not named with the other two from there. Sixth, Sosipater was the Sopater of Berea. Seventh, Quartus was doubtless also of Corinth.

A further word about Luke and Gaius. The last mention we had of Luke was Acts 16:11-17. Note the change of pronouns. In those seven verses, we find "we" and "us." After that it is "they" and "them" until Acts 20:5, 6, where again we read the pronouns "us" and "we." We infer therefore that Luke remained in Philippi, possibly as shepherd of that young flock, during that time, about six years. They were highly favored indeed by having him, whose name means "Light," with them.

Gaius is given in our text as from Derbe; but 1 Cor. 1:14 and Rom. 16:23 indicate a Gaius from Corinth, whence those seven men started for Syria. Timothy is the only one of the seven in verse 4, whose home is not mentioned. The Greek construction of that verse admits us to read of those two men in direct connection with the two preceding, thus—"Of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus and Gaius; and of Derbe, Timothy." (*"of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus;"*—V. 4 KJV) Thereby the Gaius of Macedonia (Chap. 19:29), who was rushed with Aristarchus into the theatre, becomes this same Gaius of verse 4. Furthermore, why should we assign Gaius to Derbe, and find no nativity for Timothy, when we know that Timothy was from Derbe, or Lystra, near by?—Chap. 16:1. This Gaius traveled with Paul. The Gaius who resided in Corinth (²1 Cor. 1:14) was Paul's host while he tarried there three months—¹Rom. 16:23. He probably did not travel. He joined the Apostle in sending greetings to Rome; but the other Gaius was one of the seven brethren with him, when he wrote to the Galatians. The Gaius of 3 John is evidently Paul's host in Corinth. Verses 6-8 of that epistle suggest that he was hospitable to God's servants.

¹ Romans 16:21-23 "Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord. Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother."

² 1 Corinthians 1:14 "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;"

³ 2 Timothy 4:20 "Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick."

The Apostles on the Wing

“And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days, where we tarried seven days”—V. 6. The seven brethren of verse 4 went ahead and waited at Troas for Paul and Luke. The time of the year of their visit in those parts was spring, indicated by the phrase “days of unleavened bread.” Probably that was the Spring of 58 A. D. That visit to Corinth was the fulfillment of Paul’s hope expressed in ¹2 Cor. 12:14 and 13:1. What an unselfish and fatherly spirit all his writings breathe. Pity those who can read them without deep delight and great profit.

The narrative of their stay in Troas is especially interesting and instructive. Should one day be regarded as more sacred than another? If the custom of the disciples settled the question, we might think that the first day of the week demanded the preference, rather than the seventh day; for “upon the first day of the week, they were gathered together to break bread.” (V. 6) However, in Rom. 14, we learn that the days are esteemed alike to those who know the truth and have grown up in Christ. Do you remember that Christ arose from the dead on the first day of the week? Do you know that the Holy Spirit descended upon the waiting ones in Jerusalem on the first day of the week? Study Acts 2:42 with ²1 Cor. 16:2. The first day of the week, being the resurrection day, thus became the eighth, or new creation day. The new creation was begotten on the first day of the week. Eternity will be the eighth dispensational day. “Behold, I make all things new”—Rev. 21:5. It is therefore fitting that the first day of the week be observed as a special day of worship; but that does not make it more sacred than other days. Is it proper to call Sunday, or the first day of the week, “the Lord’s day?” By no means. Call it Sunday, even as we call the day before it, Saturday, and the day after Monday. “The Lord’s day,” is 1000 years long. Study ³2 Pet. 3:8. See our notes on Revelation.

The Apostle’s brief ministry in Troas that time, is a beautiful pen-picture of his whole ministry thru-out this age. Knowing that he would not again pass that way in person, he seems to have endeavored to crowd much truth and service into a small compass. Consider the following statements—“ready to depart on the morrow;” “continued his speech until midnight;” “was long preaching” and “talked a long while, even till break of day.” He yearned

20:6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

20:7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

¹ 2 Corinthians 12:14 “Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.”

2 Corinthians 13:1 “This *is* the third *time* I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.”

² 1 Corinthians 16:2 “Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

³ 2 Peter 3:8 “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

20:8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

20:9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

20:10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him* said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

20:11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

20:12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

20:13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

20:14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

to give them as much truth as possible in the limited time allotted to him. That was all typical of the perpetuation of his message, which came down to the midnight of his age, the beginning of “the dark ages,” 500 to 1500 A. D. The age began in the upper room—Chap. 2:1-4. Paul lived in the higher upper room, “the heavenlies in Christ.” Eutychus, meaning fortunate, well to do, sat in a window and was borne down with deep sleep. Yes, as Peter declared, this Pauline Gospel is “hard to be understood.” People become drowsy when reading, or hearing it, because they do not believe it. If they believed with all the heart that it is God’s Word, they would keep wide awake. While asleep, Eutychus fell from the third loft.

“And Paul went down and fell on him, and embracing him, said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him”—V. 10. The Church fell from her exalted position in the heavenlies in Christ. Ephesus “left her first love.” (*“thou hast left thy first love.”—Rev. 2:4 KJV*) Four movements downward from Paul’s doctrine—drowsiness, sleep, a fall, then death (fellowship severed). But Paul was not asleep. He seized the opportunity of displaying God’s mighty grace. He went down with intent to raise the lad from the dead, but found that his life was still in him. He did not lie about him, nor even exaggerate, in view of a big headline in the papers. Grace is never ambitious for numbers. Grace never pronounces men unsaved, or on the way to perdition, in order to swell her report. NEVER! Grace falls in pity over them and embraces them in mercy. Grace recognizes life, if there is any; or seeks to impart life to those dead in trespasses and sins. Grace greatly blesses, but boasts not in the least.

As the Apostle presented the fallen lad alive to the joy of the saints in Troas; just so his message of grace aroused the slumbering life in the Church about 1400 A. D. In 1500, Martin Luther began to proclaim justification by faith alone, wholly independent of works. Eutychus was alive. The real Church was “not a little comforted.” The very message, whose rejection brought a sleepy condition, descends to the deepest need of the lowest and weakest, and presents them alive. Truly, the fruits of divine grace are “alive.” What men hope, and vainly hope to do by their own efforts, the announcement of wondrous grace actually does.

The meanings of the names of the six points touched from Troas to Ephesus may be of profit to the Bible student. Assos means approaching. Mitylene means Purity. Chios—opening. Samos—sandy bluff, full of gravel. Miletus—scarlet, the association of these names holds in its grasp some beautiful spiritual lessons Luke says, “When he (Paul) met us at Approaching (Assos), we took him in, and came to Purity (Mitylene).” (V. 14) Grace is on the lookout for hearts who are coming near to the right way. Instantly such hearts take grace on board, they are brought to purity of doctrine and on to purity of practice and power. “And the following day,” (V. 15) how short the

20:15 And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus.

20:16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

20:18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

20:19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

journey, they arrive “over against Chios,” an opening into vast areas of truth and divine riches. No marvel that the “next day” after that, Samos, a sandy, gravely bluff should loom before them; but they only “touched” that point; because it is no stopping place for the spiritually minded. Trogyllium meaning a hole in the ground for preserving food, was considered too insignificant by the Revisers, so they pushed it into the margin. But saints pass along the way of such enticements, and have to get the victory over the earthly receptacles of earth’s treasures. And many a person has been snared by the contents of an outdoor cellar. Of course those Gospel soldiers “tarried at Trogyllium” long enough only to get their supper and breakfast, present necessities for these bodies of humiliation. Their objective was Miletus, the place of safety and plenty, purchased by the “scarlet line, or blood of the Lamb.” They were there before; for they all started by faith in the cross.

Interview with Ephesian Elders

“And from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the Church: and when they were come to him, he said unto them”—Vs. 17, 18. Miletus was a seaport town of Ephesus. There the Apostle had his last conference with those representatives of the Ephesian Assembly, which he loved so deeply. The record of that conference is full of interest and profound instruction. It falls nicely into seven divisions.

1. Paul’s past career in Ephesus—Verses 18 to 21, 27, 33-35.
2. Paul’s objective—Verses 22, 23.
3. Paul’s fortitude under trial—Verse 24.
4. Paul’s forecasts—Verses 25, 29, 30.
5. Paul’s exhortation to the elders—Verses 28, 31.
6. Paul’s committal of the elders—Verse 32.
7. The parting moments—Verses 36-38.

1. The Apostle must have been an overcomer in his walk and proficient in his work. Else how could he so boldly remind the elders of his past life in their midst? He calls attention to twelve telling items of his conduct and toil, and fairly challenges them to gainsay them. The preface to his review gives a gist thereof—“After what manner I was with you all the time.” (V. 18) The first item is rare—“Serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind,” (V. 19) a trait that ministers should covet as an absolute prerequisite for usefulness in God’s work. The “many tears” indicate the reality and depth of the Apostle’s humility. He barely mentions the fact of “the trials which beset him by the plots of the Jews.” (*“and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:”*—V. 19 *KJV*) How few men dare say, “I shrunk not from declaring unto you anything

20:20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

20:22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

20:23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

that was profitable.” (V. 20) Truth was truth with him, and he wished only to know the mind of the Spirit, and he obeyed, whatever consequences. “The whole counsel of God” (“*all the counsel of God.*” KJV) had to be proclaimed—V. 27. We cannot doubt that Paul did in his own person “teach publicly and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and Greeks, etc.,” (V. 21) and not simply by means of others, as one has suggested. He did literally what he exhorted others to do; and thus he could say, “Be ye imitators of me, as I imitate God.” (“*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*”—1 Cor. 11:1 KJV)

We must not overlook verses 33 to 35. “I coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel.” (“*I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.*—V. 33 KJV) Let no one chide the Jews for their thirst after wealth. What Gentile Gospel herald is free from “the love of money?” What means the bleating of the sheep? The herald insists on having his bread and butter, yet, and up to date furnishings, whether the sheep have sufficient of the bread of life, well buttered, or not. Who can exclaim, “I have not coveted?” Point out a Gospel minister who dares say, “Ye yourselves know that these hands (holding them up, no doubt) have ministered unto my necessities.” (V. 34) Most men are unwilling to do that, out they want to speak and teach only, and to large crowds. Where is their humility of mind? But Paul’s own hands ministered also “to them that were with him.” (“*to them that were with me.*”—V. 34 KJV) As in the natural, the father and mother work for the children, so Paul did for his helpers. He became servant of all. “In all things, I gave you an example,” (“*I have shewed you all things,*”—V. 35 KJV) he added, and exemplified the words of Jesus, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (V. 35) Did Paul hear Jesus utter those words when he was teaching?—¹2 Cor. 5:16. Or did the Holy Spirit reveal them to him as the Master’s saying? Not only did the elders from Ephesus hear those words of reminiscence, but the eight itinerants, who were with him. Not one could gainsay any of them.

2. Paul’s objective. “And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there.” (V. 22) In the next chapter, we learn that he was warned of coming trouble. Also he knew by past experience and by the witness of the Holy Spirit, that “bonds and afflictions” awaited him in every city. But did anything daunt him?

3. His fortitude was wonderful. “But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, in comparison with accomplishing my course and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.” (V. 24) Oh, Reader, let these words speak deeply to our hearts. “Go, and do likewise,” (“*Go, and do thou likewise.*”—Luke 10:37 KJV) as Jesus said.

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:16 “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.”

20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*.

20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

20:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

20:31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

4. The Apostle's forecasts are two. First. He announced to the elders that they were looking upon him then for the last time. God had made him to know that fact, tho' not all the future was revealed to him. One of the missions of the Holy Spirit was "to show us things to come." (*"he will shew you things to come."*—*John 16:13 KJV*) Second. He gave a shuddering warning—"Grievous wolves, enter in among you, not sparing the flock." (V. 29) The Nicolaitanes thrust in their deeds—¹Rev. 2:6.

They were self-appointed religious rulers of the people. Pretending to come in as shepherds, they lorded over the flock. Instead of feeding them, they fleeced them. Did the "grievous wolves, the Nicolaitanes" (V. 29) all die in the first century? NO! They abound all around today. Assemblies should be very cautious about receiving strangers. Better go on without a pastor, having simple prayer meetings and Bible readings alone, than be torn and left bleeding by unprincipled religious run-arounds.

"And from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them"—V. 30. Were those perverters before him then? Or were they others in the assembly? In either case, how can men, knowing Paul's self-sacrificing life and his wonderful Gospel of grace and glory with its attendant rewards, stoop to the groveling plane of turning saints from known truth, even acknowledged and proclaimed, for the one purpose of personal gain, or advantage? Echo answers, HOW? Of course such workers do not count the old man dead and out. Christ is not practically their life. They have no scruples of conscience before men, and no fear before God.

5. The Apostle's counsel to the Ephesian elders is of especial value. Let us not pass over it lightly. "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the Church of the Lord, which He purchased with His own blood" (*"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."* *KJV*)—V. 28. The failure of God's servants, whether bishops, or evangelists, is due chiefly to not hearkening to the first part of this entreaty. They do not take heed to themselves in the proper way. They consult their own feelings, seek their own comfort, follow their own reasonings, or that of some other brainy fellow. As ministers, whether local, or general, we should take heed to ourselves in several basic particulars.

First. We need to learn the way of victory over the world and sin; else we cannot help others over hard places. "Flee youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22) has a ministerial meaning as well as a physical meaning. Some who have been on

¹ Revelation 2:6 "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

the way for years, still yield to carnal clerical desires. Sometimes the temptations are stronger in later years than at the beginning. Note that Paul wrote those words in his second epistle to Timothy.

Second. We need to learn the Word of God as to doctrine and practice, so as to make full proof of our ministry. Most brethren are criminally careless about their knowledge of the Truth. Study is hard work. Hence, they yield to laziness, preferring to give to the people the opinions of others, without investigating closely whether their teachings or interpretations are correct or not. Paul could say, “We are not ignorant;” therefore, half a dozen times he exclaimed, “I would not have you ignorant.” And we ought to be able to say the same things.

Third. We should exemplify the Gospel we preach, and demonstrate the doctrine we teach by our own holy walk, even by “walking in the Spirit.” Some men and women are fine talkers in public. They can gather and hold a crowd; but their daily walk contradicts their Sunday talk. They teach the power and joy of the Holy Spirit boldly in public; but in private they fail to walk in the Spirit, but “walk after the flesh.” The Holy Spirit is not only to be yielded to and be filled with in meeting; but He is to be trusted and yielded to out of meeting also. He is a practical Guide and every day Comforter. We bishops and evangelists must know Him thus practically in our every day shoes. “Be thou an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity” (*“be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” KJV*)—1 Tim. 4:12. If we teach divine healing to the people, they ought to rebuke us if we go around the corner to a drug store for a plaster, or pill. A gospel which is not practical is a weak gospel. A gospel that is not sufficient for the dispenser of it, is not worth dispensing. While the barber was shaving a customer, he waxed eloquent in praises of a hair remedy which he had for sale. Suddenly, the customer saw that the barber himself was bald. Hence, he exclaimed, “Why don't you use some of it on your own head?”

The Purpose and Place of Service

“To feed the flock of the Lord.” (*“Feed the flock of God”—1 Peter 5:2 KJV*) Oh, yes! That is the supreme purpose—“to feed the flock.” Jesus said to Peter, “Feed my lambs; feed my sheep.” The foregoing is absolutely necessary for us to become good feeders. A smooth tongue, a hold front, an attractive air, a smiling, flattering face, are all that is needed to entertain the masses, especially in this shallow time. But to “feed” hungry hearts of the new creation, to nurture and foster and build them up, requires a heart full of unselfish love and of the truth on the part of God’s servant. There is a cry from every direction for real soul food. “Send us someone to feed our hungry hearts,” comes to us again and again. It is a burning shame that men dare to claim to preach the Gospel and be shepherds of flocks, and yet have little, or nothing to bring them

from God's Word. Why is it? Are they never impressed with the exhortations of Jesus and of Paul? Or have they never read them?

And whose flock is it? Let us consider the question. "The flock of the Lord, which He purchased with His own blood." (*"to all the flock, ... which he hath purchased with his own blood."*—V. 28 KJV) "My lambs, my sheep," said Jesus. He died to redeem them. He poured out His life in their behalf. Surely, if men would only take it to heart, whose their people are, and what infinite price purchased them, they would seek with all their heart and soul to feed and care for them.

"The Holy Spirit hath made you bishops." (*"the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers"*—V. 28 KJV) The word "bishop," or "overseer," is "episkopos" in Greek. It occurs seven times in the New Testament. Once (1 Pet. 2:25) it is applied to Jesus Christ. In ¹Luke 19:44, it is translated "visitation." The word literally means an overseer, a watcher, a guardian; especially, a public officer sent as inspector or overseer of a subject state. Observe the close relationship between the elders, or presbyters ("presbuteros," Gr.) and the bishops. Verse 18 records that the elders were summoned from Ephesus, and this verse states that the Holy Spirit had made them bishops, or overseers. The term "presbuteros" (elders) was borrowed from the Jewish synagogue. It was in common use under both the Old and the New covenants. Etymologically it implied that, as a rule, the person so designated was pretty well advanced in life. The term, "episkopos" (overseer) was borrowed from the polity of the Grecian States and indicated the responsibility of the elder to look after the spiritual welfare of the Church. Peter expressed the gravity of the office in calling Jesus "the Bishop of your souls" (*"the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."* KJV)—1 Pet. 2:25.

The office of bishop, or overseer, was no doubt, either local, or general. The bishoprick of the apostles was general—Chap. 1:20. Their office was not limited to one place. Hence, Peter and John were called to Samaria to pray that Philip's converts might receive the Holy Spirit—Chap. 8. Peter was used of the Lord to introduce Pentecost among the Gentiles—Chap. 10. Paul never named himself an overseer by that term; but he really did so by announcing himself as a "steward" ("oikonomos," Gr.), or house-keeper of divine things—²1 Cor. 4:12. His words in Titus 1:7 conveys the same meaning—"The bishop must be blameless as God's steward." (*"For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God;"*—KJV) The overseership of those elders in Ephesus was probably

¹ Luke 19:44 "And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

² 1 Corinthians 4:12 "And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:"

local. Paul's and Titus' were general. Consider also "the bishops and deacons" of Phil. 1:1.

Not all who are called bishops are bishops by divine appointment. The sacred office has been made an instrument of carnal authority and even wicked lordship. It was never God's purpose that men be ecclesiastical overseers. Organization is sure to develop lords, who exalt themselves at the expense of their weaker fellows. This is just as certain in religious organizations as in those of the world. What a precious caution Peter gave to the elders over whom his apostleship extended. "Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock" (*"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock."* KJV)—1 Pet. 5:3. With such profound and solemn entreaties from those who had laid down their lives for the people and verified them by their unselfish conduct, we marvel that verses 29 and 30 could ever come to pass. See verses 33-35. But if the old man in preachers is not judged, he becomes the meanest old man of all, capable of doing the greatest harm.

6. How tender and loving was the Apostle's committal of those elders. "And now I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified"—V. 32. To my mind, this is one of the most powerful portions of Holy Writ. Its huge importance is magnified by the criminal oversight and vaunting neglect thereof by the brethren. Paul did not flatter those elders because they were made overseers by the Holy Spirit. He did not make them feel that they were full-grown; but he put them back on the only means of up-building, or edification, even the sure Word of grace. One is surprised at how much is said about being built up in Christ. Nine citations mention the word "building," as referring to the saints. Twenty times the same Greek word is translated, "edify, or edification." Either exhortations to edification are given, or warnings as to how men should not build on the sure foundation. Being built up, or edified by the blessed Word of God is absolutely necessary in order to obtain the promised inheritance.

Salvation Not an Inheritance

There is an inheritance for believers. Salvation from sin is not the inheritance. Salvation is God's free gift to underserving, guilty men, when they repent, and believe the Gospel. A rich young ruler came to Jesus, thinking to inherit eternal life by doing something—Luke 18. The Lord showed him at once what he would have to do, if he would gain it by his own works. He was

20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

20:33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

20:34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

20:35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, **It is more blessed to give than to receive.**

very sorrowful; for he was very rich. He would not trade his wealth for the lasting riches of eternal life. No, he would not if he could—"the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God"—1 Cor. 2:14. He could not if he would—"for by grace are ye saved through faith...not of works, lest any man should boast"—Eph. 2:8, 9. Jesus proceeded to show him and the disciples that salvation is not obtained by inheritance, but by faith in Himself, the world's Sin-bearer. By faith in Jesus, we become children of God (¹John 1:12, 13); "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together"—Rom. 8:17. Children justly inherit, or fall heir to, their parents' riches. Likewise God's children are His rightful inheritors. But parents divide their possessions to their children usually upon certain deserving conditions, as good behavior, etc. Likewise God's children will come into the divine inheritance upon certain prescribed scriptural conditions. Sinners are saved by faith upon the merit of Christ, because of His death in their behalf; but believers will obtain an inheritance because of their own merit, by divine enabling, of course. If this is not the truth, why Paul's exhortation to give heed to the Word of grace? If eternal life is the inheritance; if believers shall all obtain an inheritance by the fact only of their being saved, there is no meaning to the Apostle's words here. Observe closely that the joint heirship with Christ hereafter, depends upon joint suffering with Him here. Being glorified together with Jesus, depends upon our suffering and groaning in fellowship with Him on earth. Rom. 8:17 to 39 teaches that, or nothing at all. Study also 2 Tim. 2:9 to 14.

Let no Christian worker imagine that he will inherit alike with others, and be rewarded on a par with others, no matter how he lives, or labors, or what he teaches. Let no believer think that he can live after the flesh, and expect an inheritance and a reward after the Spirit. Impossible! unreasonable! unjust! unscriptural! Children cannot remain dwarfs and receive an inheritance. They would not appreciate and enjoy it, if they did receive it. Just so it is in the spiritual. Neither can dwarfs be of much use in service; therefore, for them there is little reward. "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever any man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7)

What is the Inheritance?

Someone may ask. Rev. 21:7 answers the question in a comprehensive way, giving also the chief condition upon which the inheritance is obtained. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." There is a present inheritance for those who are born again. All that the death of Christ has purchased, as for

¹ John 1:12, 13 "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

20:36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

20:37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

20:38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

example, divine healing for the body and the anointing with the Spirit. The latter is the earnest of our inheritance in its fulness—¹Eph. 1:14. Thru faith and patience, saints inherit the promises—²Heb. 6:12. Now if you wish to know what the full inheritance of the Church is, study Paul's epistles. If you would know the rewards of the saints, study also the seven letters to the seven churches in Asia—Rev. 2 and 3. In those various writings, we learn also upon what conditions both will be obtained.

7. The parting scene. These last three verses scarcely need any comment. They are self-explanatory. A praying Apostle produced a love-bound eldership, in hope of a self-denying bishoprick. That was the last time that Paul prayed with them; but it was not the last time that he prayed for them, nor was it the first time. Whoever interceded in behalf of a flock as did dear Paul? "The care of all the churches" always bore heavily upon his father heart—2 Cor. 11:28. Let us as deacons, elders, pastors and bishops be imitators of him.

Such was the finale of the third and last evangelistic tour of the heroic herald and pioneer of the invincible Gospel of grace and glory. We have barely touched the narration of events which we may ponder with profit all our days. We have glanced at the sample missionary and at sample modes of missionary operations. May we walk in Paul's steps in our surrender to Christ and in our love for the truth and in our unselfish devotion to the edifying and nurturing of God's people.

¹ Ephesians 1:14 "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

² Hebrews 6:12 "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Chapter 21

21:1 And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

21:2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

21:3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

21:4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

21:5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

21:6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

21:7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

21:8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him.

21:9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

Paul in Jerusalem

Chapter Twenty One to Chapter Twenty Three

“And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present”—Chap. 21:17, 18. The date of these events was the Spring of 58 A. D. Luke, the recorder of these thrilling happenings, was with the Apostle all of those days. No delay was allowed enroute from Miletus to Jerusalem. His purpose to visit Jerusalem once more and then see Rome (Chap. 19:21) was burning in his bones. He was glad to find a freight ship, heading for the country of Phoenicia, which landed them in Tyre.

There certain disciples sought to hinder him from going up to Jerusalem. But he and his crew pressed on their way. At Caesarea, they met evangelist Philip and his four gifted daughters. Who dare say that women may not proclaim the Word of grace? Did Paul rebuke them? There is no account of it, if he did. Why has the Spirit recorded the fad of their public ministry, if they were out of divine order? Ah, they simply fulfilled the prophecy of ¹Joel 2:28. Condemn them who dare.

The prophet Agabus (meaning grasshopper), leaped down from Jerusalem and showed the Apostle how he would be bound if he went thither. His fellow-journeymen and the disciples there sought to dissuade him from going to the city; but he would not be hindered. Does verse 4 contradict verse 14? Apparently, it does. Sometimes the Lord seems to set before us two objects of choice, informing us of the outcome of both. He lets us take either one, not condemning us, whichever one we choose. In either case, we would move in God's will. Paul would have been in God's will if he had yielded to the pulling back of the Spirit thru the disciples in Tyre. He would have reached Rome, no doubt, without the two years' imprisonment in Caesarea. But who dare arise and condemn Paul? Sometimes God speaks thru abject silence. Moreover, God's word to Ananias was thus fulfilled—“Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my Name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel; for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake” (*“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.” KJV*)—Chap. 9:15. Neither did the Lord condemn, nor censure the Apostle for his visit to Jerusalem and for his conduct there; but He comforted him—Chap. 23:11. The attitude of Luke and the other workers who traveled with Paul is a

¹ Joel 2:28 “And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:”

21:10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

21:11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, 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.

21:12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

21:13 Then 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.

21:14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

21:15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

21:16 There went with us also *certain* of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

21:17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

21:18 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

21:19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

fine example for us. They said, "The will of the Lord be done." Agabus signified what suffering and persecution Paul would have to endure if he persisted in going to Jerusalem; but Paul knew that for greater suffering, and for hotter persecution, he would obtain a greater reward; therefore he would not be dissuaded from going thither. When we do not understand; when we cannot quite agree, let us say as did they, "The will of the Lord be done;" for we might be wrong. How much trouble and strife will then be avoided.

Paul's Reception in Jerusalem

There were some brethren in Jerusalem who received Paul and his message concerning "the mystery of God." When he interviewed James, all the elders were present. Were Peter and John there? It not so recorded. When Barnabas and Paul were there eight years before to discuss whether salvation is by law, or by grace, "they were received of the church and the apostles and elders" ("*they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders,:* *KJV*)—Chap. 15:4. Had the Jerusalem saints then thrown off the yoke of legality and discarded the shadows, Paul would not have had such a fearful fight on this last visit there.

We are here confronted with a most powerful and conclusive demonstration of legality. How unconquerable it is. James was the pastor of the assembly there. This James wrote "The Epistle Of James." He was one of the 120 filled with the Spirit at Pentecost, and a very prominent participant in the conference just referred to above—Chap. 15. He then agreed that salvation is by grace alone apart from works. Yet, he seemed to be swayed more, or less by law-keepers. Oh, the daring subtlety and binding power of that religious witchcraft, legalism, that hydra-headed ghost, self-righteousness. Is it any wonder that Martin Luther wrote a book of 1,000 pages against it—his notes on Galatians? Can we blame the Apostle Paul for shouting out, "I am set for the defence of the Gospel?"—Phil. 1:17.

"And when he had saluted them, he rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry." (V. 19) He taught the same Gospel of grace which had been his theme before the former meeting, the conference. He could report the same wonderful results. Indeed, he could say, as Luke wrote (Chap. 19:12), that God had wrought special miracles by his hands. When they, James and the elders, heard it, they "glorified God." What else could they do? But they also had a report. Do you ever hear people say, "Yes, but?" They admit your testimony, but in the same breath add, "Yes, but." Beware of the "yes, but" folk. They will entangle you and get you into dire trouble, if possible.

"Many thousands there are among the Jews of them which have believed; and they are all zealous for the law." (V. 20) The same thing can be

21:20 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

21:21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs.

21:22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

21:23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

21:24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

21:25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written *and* concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

said today of the Gentiles. How strange! What a conglomeration! Men believe on Jesus, the embodiment of grace, the Savior by His grace, the absolute fulfillment of the Mosaic code, but are zealous for the very law, of which “Christ is the end for righteousness to them that believe” (*“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” KJV*)—Rom. 10:4. Oh, how ignorance and self-righteousness rob Christ of His dearly-bought glory. Paul did not teach, either Jews, or Gentiles to “forsake Moses;” but he taught everywhere that Christ was the living Substance of which Moses’ dead letter was only the shadow. Why go on with a type, a shadow, when the real satisfying Substance had come? Cold, cruel legality habitually carries a pail of paint and brush, seeking to blacken the pure, white truth of divine grace. We are often accused of saying, or writing things which are absolutely false. Christ is our theme, from whom we never deviate, but seek to glorify Him to the uttermost.

Today people do not continue the Mosaic rites and ceremonies, or “walk after the customs;” but they continue the spirit of the types and shadows. Some insist on water baptism, or sabbath keeping, or feet washing, etc., as necessary to salvation. Others insist that after we are born again thru faith in Jesus (¹John 1:12, 13), we must keep the law of Moses, or be damned at last. Reader, how often have you broken the law since you were saved? And did you mend that break by keeping the law afterward? Or did you come to the Father thru the “Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous One?” (*“we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:” KJV*)—1 John 2:1. Do you know that if you break God’s law, you must be forgiven of Him, and no keeping of it afterward can atone for, nor pardon that offence? Why not rest forever on Heb. 7:24, 25?—“But He (Christ), because He abideth for ever, hath His priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore also He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God thru Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (*“But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”—Heb. 7:24, 25 KJV*) Oh, thank God for the efficacy of the death of Christ and for the constancy and sufficiency of His intercession in our behalf. All that is grace, needed grace, abounding grace.

Paul in the Temple

Paul stemmed the tide of legality, “the enemy of the cross,” at the expense of his life. He died daily for the Gospel of grace. Peter had declared boldly for it eight years before, saying, “Now why tempt ye God, to put a yoke

¹ John 1:12, 13 “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

21:26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

21:27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

21:28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all *men* every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

20:29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, nor we were able to bear?" (*"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"—Chap. 15:10 KJV*) But afterwards, when in Antioch, he compromised and Paul had to reprove him—¹Gal. 2:11-14. James advised, at the conference, that no one should trouble the Gentile converts with legal requirements. But here he too fails and compromises. They who "seemed to be pillars" of the truth, weakened and cringed in the crucial hour.

That James and the Jewish elders still observed the Mosaic rites is evident. They besought Paul to prove to the multitude that he practiced circumcision, walked orderly after the customs and kept the law of Moses. They knew that he did not, but practiced what he preached. If he had been doing so, he would have been building again the things which once he destroyed. Thus he would have been making himself a transgressor and Christ the minister of sin—²Gal. 2:17, 18.

Verse 26 stumbles Bible students. How could Paul permit an offering to be offered up for him after announcing Christ for over twenty years to be the one only real sin-offering? Had he not preached Him as "the Lamb of God?" In very deed he had. How then could he go back to the shadows? We must note the Apostle's motive; for God looks on the heart. Abraham offering Isaac was apparently an act of murder; but it was actually an act of "worship," because God bid him do it. "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." (Rom. 14:23) Likewise Paul "went up to Jerusalem to worship," and to bring alms and offerings to his nation—Chap. 24:11, 17. He "purifieth himself," because he sought to "become all things to all men that he might by all means save some." (*"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."*—*1 Cor. 9:22 KJV*) For a similar reason, he had Timothy circumcised, because of the Jews in those parts—Chap. 16:3. He did those outward shadowy things, not as a compromise, not because he feared the Jews (as Peter did—Gal. 2:12), but that he might explain them and give their spiritual application.

No Compromise in Paul

It is very evident that the Apostle was unswerving for the truth. His address before Felix twelve days later proves it. The inference is, that he waxed

¹ Galatians 2:11-14 "Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;"

² Galatians 2:17, 18 "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

bold near the end of the seven days, in declaring the resurrection of Christ. Comp. verse 27 with chap. 25:19 and 26:8, 9, 23. To Felix he said, “This I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law and which are written in the prophets, having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust.” (*“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”—Chap. 24:14, 15 KJV*) He must have declared to them that Christ had come, and had died and been raised from the dead. What did he tell the governor that had stirred the Jews? Simply that he stood and cried, saying, “Touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question this day” (*“Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.” KJV*)—Chap. 24:14 to 21. But his remarks about the resurrection would not have aroused their hatred if he had not shown them that there could be no resurrection except thru the death and resurrection of the promised Messiah, which he declared was Jesus Christ. Felix afterward said to Agrippa concerning Paul, that the accusers “had certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, who Paul affirmed to be alive.” (*“But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.”—Chap. 25:19 KJV*) Finally Paul’s own words before Agrippa are unanswerable evidence that he never flinched, nor swerved from the truth for one moment. Note them—“Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection from the dead, should proclaim light both to the people (Israel) and to the Gentiles” (*“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” KJV*)—Chap. 25:19 and 26:22, 23, R. V.

Do you think for one moment that the fiery Apostle Paul, with the vision of Christ and fellowship he had with Him, could spend seven days in the temple without defining his position? Unthinkable! And the sequel proves that, for whatever reason he purified himself in the temple, he was firm for the truth. Study the shameful treatment the Jews gave him—similar to that they gave to Christ. If he had compromised, would they not have hailed him with wild delight? Would they not have announced it far and near? And would not the Holy Spirit have recorded divine censure against him somewhere? Nay, there

is not even a hint of it, nor an intimation that Paul ever regretted his visit to Jerusalem, or his conduct in the temple. Indeed, we have the positive proof of divine approval—And the night following (second night after he was taken from the temple) the Lord stood by him and said; “Be of good cheer Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome”—Chap. 23:11. This ought to place his integrity and the divinity of his conduct beyond all dispute. After reaching Rome, he wrote that invaluable letter to the Hebrews and sent a copy to them in Jerusalem. Comp. ¹Heb. 10:32-34 and 13, 23, 24 with ²2 Pet. 3:15, 16.

Furthermore, after Jesus will return and the Jews receive Him they will again offer sacrifices, not in unbelief as if He had not come, but as a memorial of faith that He has come (³Isa. 60:6-8 and ⁴Zech. 14:21); even as we observe the memorials of baptism and the Lord’s supper today. Most conscientiously could Paul allow those sacrifices to be offered for him, as a type of how the Jews will offer them in memoriam of Him who had come. Study the seemingly ridiculous things that God required of His prophets to symbolize the condition of His people and His dealings with them—Ezek. 4 and Hos. 1, 2.

Paul Arrested and Tried

“And all the city was moved and the people ran together, and they laid hold on Paul and dragged him out of the temple; and straightway the doors were shut”—Chap. 21:30. It was the last offer of mercy to the Jews. It was their last

21:30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

21:31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

21:32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

21:33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

¹ Hebrews 10:32-34, 13, 23, 24 “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance... From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool... Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:”

² 2 Peter 3:15, 16 “And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

³ Isaiah 60:6-8 “The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory. Who *are* these *that* fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”

⁴ Zechariah 14:21 “Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.”

21:34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

21:35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

21:36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

21:37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

21:38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

21:39 But Paul said, I am a man *which am* a Jew of Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

21:40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

opportunity to accept, or reject Paul's message of grace. In rejecting that, they rejected Christ Himself. Any wonder that "straightway the doors were shut?" (*"forthwith the doors were shut."*—V. 30 KJV) They thought to close the doors of the temple to the Apostle; but in doing so, they shut themselves out from Jehovah. Oh, how sad, that men either walk away from the light, or chase the light out from them.

The Jews rendered Paul the same treatment they had given his Lord nearly thirty years before. No doubt they were the same parties. The multitude cried, "Away with him."

Chapter 22

22:1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you.

22:2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

22:3 I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

22:4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

22:5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

22:6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

22:7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?**

22:8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, **I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.**

22:9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

Paul's Defense Before the Mob

Chapter Twenty Two

At the Apostle's own request, the chief captain allowed him to speak to the people from the stairs leading up to the castle. Mark the respectful manner of his address always—"Men, brethren and fathers." That should have softened their hearts toward him. He named the place of his birth and his early religious training. He recited his persecution of the followers of Jesus; then described the nature of his conversion. This account and also that in chap. 26 are his own public testimony. Each records some items omitted by the others; hence the importance of studying them together. Before considering the Apostle's testimony here, therefore, read Luke's account in chap. 9:17-19, and the notes thereon. Here we read that Ananias said,

"And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on His name" ("*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" *KJV*)—V. 16. Does this notation contradict that of chap. 9? By no means. Some quote this verse to prove that water baptism is essential to salvation. It is the only Scripture that seems to teach that; and the whole tenor of Scripture teaching is against it. Salvation is by faith in the blood of Christ apart from any works, even wholly apart from the beautiful symbol of baptism in water. By comparing the three records, we find that the chief point emphasized is, that God chose him to be a witness of what he saw and heard and should hear. Two of the accounts declare that Ananias came to Paul that he might receive his sight; and one, that he might be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Be it remembered that in this chapter, Paul is recorded as addressing his own people, the Jews. Compare Peter's words in chap. 2:38—"Repent ye and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." ("*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*"—*Chap. 2:38 KJV*) Observe that the exhortation to "repent," was distinctly to Israel because of their stout reluctance to accept Christ as their Messiah. Study Matt. 3, Mark 1, Luke 3 and Acts 3 and 26:20. Baptism in water was the one bold and convincing expression of real repentance. An unwillingness to be baptized was equivalent to saying, "I do not believe in Jesus Christ; I will not have Him to be my Messiah and King." Baptism to a Jew means an eternal cutting off from the shadowy forms and ceremonies of the old covenant. It means an acknowledgement that all was fulfilled in the despised Nazarene, whom they had crucified with wicked hands. Ananias' question implies that Saul of Tarsus hesitated to be baptized, not because he had not yet believed on Jesus, but because he knew what persecution would follow his baptism in water. He shrank from the suffering.

22:10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord?
And the Lord said unto me, **Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.**

22:11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

22:12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*,

22:13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

22:14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

22:15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

22:17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

22:18 And saw him saying unto me, **Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.**

22:19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

22:20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

22:21 And he said unto me, **Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.**

The moment he settled that point, saying yes to whatever consequences, “he received sight forthwith and arose and was baptized”—Chap. 9:18. Note that his sight came before he was baptized, as God’s witness to his full surrender and wholehearted acceptance of His Son. His baptism was his own witness thereto and his bold confession of faith. Study Paul’s own interpretation of baptism—Chap. 19:4. Let us look at the exact grammar of verse 16, as given in the Diaglott. “And now why dost thou delay? Having arisen, be thou dipped and wash thyself from the sins of thee, having invoked the name of Him.” (*“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”—V. 16 KJV*) Ananias exhorted Saul to do two things, viz; “be baptized” and “wash.” The participial phrase, “having invoked,” etc., of necessity modifies the verb “wash,” which immediately precedes it. Observe also, that the invoking, or calling on the Lord, is in the past perfect tense. That means, that Saul had called fully on the name of the Lord before he was exhorted to be baptized. His sins were really washed away when he called on the Lord, not when he was baptized. This same Saul, afterward called Paul, taught this doctrine, saying, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”—Rom. 10:13. Also he wrote that we are “cleansed by the washing (laver) of water with the Word” (*“cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,” KJV*) (Eph. 5:26), “saved thru the washing (laver) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (*“saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,” KJV*)—Tit. 3:5. He does not once intimate baptism as a means of salvation. Instead he speaks positively against it (1 Cor. 1:17), saying, “Christ sent me NOT to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.” Elsewhere he writes of baptism in water as a “baptism of repentance” (Chap. 19:4), a “baptism into Christ, into death, a burial into death” (*“were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death:” KJV*)—Rom. 6:3-5. It follows, therefore, that Ananias meant nothing more by his entreaty than that Saul should symbolize the washing away of his sins by being baptized in water, and boldly and publicly confess that he believed his sins to have been cleansed away when he before invoked the name of the Lord. Peter wrote of baptism as a “figure”—¹1 Pet. 3:21.

Furthermore, if the above view is not correct, and if water is essential to salvation, then the Holy Spirit must have been unwise in coming upon the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius before they were baptized—Chap. 10. And Peter was unscriptural in endorsing it. How unworthy of the blessed Comforter is such a thought, and how unkind toward the Apostle to whom were given the keys of the kingdom. But such is the inevitable conclusion to which undue

¹ 1 Peter 3:21 “The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:”

22:22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

22:23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

22:24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

22:25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

22:26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

22:27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

22:28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

22:29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

22:30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

stress of baptism brings us. Every truth is precious when held in right relation to all other truth; but any truth is weakened and brought into ill repute, when it is pushed beyond its proper limits. Saints become confused; divisions arise; the Spirit is grieved, and Christ is robbed of His glory. And then, error never travels alone. Unspeakable harm has been done thru magnifying water baptism out of its beautiful place as a symbol, and exalting it as a savior. If Christ by Himself alone could not save a sinner, He would be a puny savior indeed. It is a deplorable fact that not one person in five hundred understands the import of water baptism, because the ministers themselves do not understand it. Very often the common people, in their simplicity, grasp its meaning; but some fanatical ignoramus turns them away from the plain truth. When believers clearly and fully see the purpose and meaning of this beautiful memorial, they will suffer no one to put them under the water three and four times. They will not be confused as to whether they should be dipped face foremost, or back downward, whether dipped once, or thrice. And their faith will not be in the formula, which the baptizer may pronounce, but in the Savior, who saves by grace and not by water.

Chapter 23

23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

23:2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

23:3 Then said Paul unto him, 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?

23:4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

23:5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

23:6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

23:7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

23:9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

23:10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.

23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, **Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.**

Paul Before the Council

Chapter Twenty Three

After reciting his conversion, Paul related a vision, in which the Lord gave him a call to minister to the Gentiles. The enraged mob cried out, "Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live." Then the chief captain ordered him to be brought into the castle (of Antonia) and be examined by scourging, an experience similar to our Lord's experience in the same place about 25 years before. When they learned that he was a Roman, they left off the scourging and gave him leave to speak—Chap. 22:22-29.

The satanic hatred of the Jewish officers was terrific. Paul began his address by saying that he had lived in all good conscience before God, which they knew that they had not done. Then the high priest commanded him to be smitten on the mouth; whereupon he exclaimed, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." (V. 3) The bystanders called out, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" (V. 4) Then Paul with ironical courtesy replied, "I wist not, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." (V. 5) The Apostle no longer recognized Ananias as the high priest, because his priesthood ended when Christ's priesthood began. Jesus Christ was the only real High Priest. They were speaking evil of Him, God's acknowledged Ruler of the people in the synagogue. Smiting Paul was equivalent to smiting Him, for Paul was His representative.

Then a division arose between the Pharisees and Sadducees, because Paul exclaimed that he was called in question on account of his hope of the resurrection of the dead, which the latter did not believe, tho' they were supposed to be orthodox Jews, as well as the rest. Of course there arose a great clamor.

"And the night following, the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer; for as thou testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (*"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" KJV*)—V. 11. This verse proves God's good pleasure toward Paul while in Jerusalem. The dear persecuted warrior of grace needed those comforting words; for the enemy was plotting his death. How good and wonderful it is that the Lord knows all that men are doing. He goes before and is also the rearward of His holy ones. Above forty blood-thirsty foes of the cross banded themselves together under a great curse to eat nothing till they had slain him. Paul's nephew heard of it, and at once informed his uncle, who had him brought before the chief captain to make him know of the plot. Therefore, the captain dispatched the Apostle by night to Caesarea by means of 200 soldiers, 200 spearmen and 70 cavalrymen. They conveyed him

23:12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

23:13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

23:14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

23:15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

23:16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

23:17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

23:18 So he took him, and brought *him* to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

23:19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?

23:20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

23:21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

23:22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, See

directly to Felix the governor, the captain also addressing a letter to him concerning Paul and the Jews' attitude toward him. Verses 26 to 30 record the letter.

thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

23:23 And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

23:24 And provide *them* beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor.

23:25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

23:26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix *sendeth* greeting.

23:27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

23:28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

23:29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

23:30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what *they had* against him. Farewell.

23:31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.

23:32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

23:33 Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

23:34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that *he was* of Cilicia;

23:35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he

Paul Imprisoned in Caesarea

Chapters Twenty Four to Twenty Six

The Apostle Before Felix

Chapter Twenty Four

“And after five days, the high priest Ananias came down with certain elders and an orator, one Tertullus; and they informed the governor against Paul” (*“And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.” KJV*)—Chap. 24:1. At that time, God’s word to Ananias, that Paul should witness to kings (Chap. 9:15), began to be fulfilled. He never forgets his own, nor His promises to them. Therefore, the Apostle appeared before Felix, the governor.

The Jews brought with them an orator, whom they supposed would overpower Felix with his eloquence and persuade him against Paul. He began his oratorical flight by endeavoring to flatter the governor. He accused Paul of being a pestilent fellow and an insurrectionist and of trying to profane the temple. But Paul was absolutely innocent of all those charges. Therefore, he spoke boldly in his own defense, for he had no attorney to plead his cause, save Jesus Christ, who of course was on his side. He had come to Jerusalem to worship, but not to make trouble. He bought alms and offerings to his suffering brethren there, even as he did before—Chap. 11:27-30. A famine was occasioned by the fact of the Jews not accepting Christ as their Messiah. When once they receive Him, the world will no longer know want and sorrow.

The Apostle freely acknowledged his doctrine, showing why he was arrested. Thus he made the governor hear his wonderful Gospel. He said, “After the Way which they call a sect (or heresy), so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law and which are written in the prophets; having hope toward God, which these (Jews) also accept, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust.” (*“after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”—V. 14, 15 KJV*) His enemies admitted those truths, but did not believe them with the heart; but Paul did: therefore, they were bitter against him. His testimony convicted them, to which they had to yield, or walk away from, or fight against. Because Paul believed the Bible with all his heart and sought only the good of his people, he could frankly say, “Herein do I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men alway.” (*“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void to offence toward God, and toward men.”—V. 16 KJV*) They could accuse him of

commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

Chapter 24

24:1 And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator *named* Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

24:2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse *him*, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,

24:3 We accept *it* always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

24:4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

24:5 For we have found this man *a* pestilent *fellow*, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

24:6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.

24:7 But the chief captain Lysias came *upon us*, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands,

24:8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

24:9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

24:10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

24:11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

only one thing, that he “cried, standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question this day.” (*“cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.”*—V. 21 KJV) Of course that was no accusation. It seems that his fervent testimony silenced the orator and all his foes.

“But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter.” (*“And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.”*—V. 22 KJV) Felix knew that Paul was innocent; but he did not have the courage to dismiss the case and release him, because he “desired to gain favor with the Jews” (*“willing to shew the Jews a pleasure,”* KJV)—V. 27. We do not read that Lysias ever came; but Felix came later, bringing his wife Drusilla, and heard Paul concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. As the invincible herald “reasoned of righteousness and temperance and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified;” (*“reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled,”*—V. 25 KJV) but he did not repent and believe the Gospel. He had a number of interviews with him, not because he was interested in Paul, nor in his doctrine, but he hoped that Paul would give him money and thus purchase his deliverance. Paul had many friends in many parts, who doubtless visited him and brought him provisions and money. The governor was impressed with the fact that he had alms to take to his brethren in Jerusalem. But Paul rested in God’s hands. He would bribe no one to obtain freedom. When in prison, he was God’s free man; when free, he was God’s bond slave.

24:12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

24:13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

24:15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men.

24:17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

24:18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

24:19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.

24:20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

24:21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

24:22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

24:23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

24:24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

The Apostles Before Festus

Chapter Twenty Five

“Festus sat on the judgment-seat and commanded Paul to be brought.” (*“he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought”—V. 6 KJV*) After Paul was kept imprisoned by Felix for two years, Festus became governor. He visited Jerusalem, and the principle men of the Jews brought complaint against Paul and desired him to bring him back to Jerusalem, for a trial. But they were still lying in wait to kill him. Festus, however, said that they should appear before him in Caesarea, whence he was going in a few days. That they did. “They stood round about him, bringing against him many grievous charges, which they could not prove.” (*“the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.”—V. 7 KJV*) Paul denied all the charges. Festus, desiring to gain favor with the Jews (no doubt they offered him large sums of money if he would deliver Paul up to them), asked Paul if he were willing to be judged before him in Jerusalem. The Apostle answered frankly and firmly, saying,

“I am standing before Caesar’s judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest. If then, I am a wrong-doer and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if none of these things is true, whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Caesar” (*“I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.” KJV*)—Vs. 10, 11. After conferring with the Jewish council, he granted to Paul his request.

Many days afterward, Felix informed king Agrippa and Bernice of Paul. Verse 19 shows how the Apostle witnessed of Jesus in his presence; for he lost no opportunity to proclaim his glorious Lord. His primary purpose was not to defend himself, but he was “set for the defence of the gospel,” as he wrote later from another prison cell—Phil. 1:17. Festus said to the king, that the Jews had “certain questions against him of their own religion (or superstition), and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.” (*“had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.”—V. 19 KJV*) Festus knew of Jesus and of his death; but doubted His resurrection; hence, he said that Paul affirmed Him to be alive. This testimony of Festus concerning Paul is strong evidence that the Apostle was uncompromising while in the temple. He purified himself only in view of explaining to the Jews the purpose of all those Old Testament

24:25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

24:26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

24:27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Chapter 25

25:1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

25:2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

25:3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

25:4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*.

25:5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

25:6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.

25:7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

25:8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.

types and shadows, and that they had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, he could not speak effectively of the resurrection of the dead without bringing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, as stated before, the Lord God found no fault in His beloved servant, but gave him comfort again and again.

“So on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and they were entered into the place of hearing with the chief captain and the principle men of the city, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in” (*“And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.” KJV*)—V. 23. It must have been humiliating to dear Paul to be ordered around by wicked men so many times; but he knew that he was there in his Father's will. All the time, he was fulfilling the Lord's words to Ananias—Chap. 9:15. Yes, “with great pomp,” the king and wife appeared, because they were to hear the defense of a noted prisoner, of whom they had heard so many conflicting reports, and who seemed to be a very unique character. And Festus felt that he could not send him to appear before the Emperor, the Augustus, without signifying well-grounded charges against him.

25:9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

25:10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

25:11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

25:12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.

25:13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus.

25:14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

25:15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, desiring to have judgment against him.

25:16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

25:17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth.

25:18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:

25:19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

The Apostle Before Agrippa

Chapter Twenty Six

“And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand and made his defense” (*“Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:” KJV*)—V. 1. Still the Apostle had no human attorney. All those days of severe trial, continuing over two weary years, he had to plead his just cause himself. And who could do it more effectively than he? He was filled with the Spirit; fired with the truth; strengthened by the Lord’s presence; impelled by the need and ignorance of the people, and pulled on by the same eternal reward which comforted his Master, “Who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (*“who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”—Heb. 12:2 KJV*) Following is his masterful address.

“I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defense before thee this day, touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews.” (*“I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:”—V. 2 KJV*) How could one speak thus, after those many months of unabated cruelty against him, if he were not absolutely innocent and empowered by the comforting Holy Spirit. Again he declared that for the very hope, which was dear to every honest Jew, he was brought to trial, that is, the hope of the resurrection of the dead. His question to the king is clear and pointed. “Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?” (*“Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”—V. 8 KJV*) as if the king had questioned it. Then he related how that he had once persecuted the Jesus Way. Then he gave the experience of his arrest by the Lord—Vs. 9-18. Note his comprehensive commission—“To open their (Gentile’s) eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me,” (*“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”—V. 18 KJV*) that is, faith in Christ, who had spoken thus to him.

“Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem and thruout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.” (*“Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: But shewed first unto*

25:20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

25:21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar.

25:22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

25:23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

25:24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and *also* here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.

25:25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

25:26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

25:27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

Chapter 26

26:1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

26:2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.”—V. 20 KJV) The Apostle waxed eloquent in the Spirit. He feared neither the king, nor the governor, nor the others of high estate. He was fulfilling God's Word, that he should witness before kings. His testimony confirmed his former fiery witness, and proves that in Jerusalem, as well as everywhere else, he showed by the Old Testament that “the Christ must suffer” and be raised from the dead—V. 23. Festus was stirred to the depths and accused Paul of being mad. But Paul answered, “I am not mad, most excellent Festus, but speak forth words of truth and soberness.” (“*I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.*”—V. 25 KJV)

The man in bonds was the real king. He was “rein in life by One, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:17), as he wrote a short time before. His anointed message of grace silenced the world rulers and commanded them to extend to him the highest respect, and well nigh converted Agrippa. In the council of the rulers, it was settled that God's man was innocent, and had done nothing worthy of death, or even of bonds. More than two years rolled around in which infuriated Jews had sought by every conceivable manner to wipe “the chief speaker” the giant of divine grace, the housekeeper of the mystery of God, off the map; but all in vain. He that does the will of God, is as safe as God Himself; for his “life is hid with Christ in God”—Col. 3:3. Finally, Agrippa remarked, “This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Caesar.” But God had said to Paul, “So must thou bear witness also at Rome”—Chap. 23:11. And the Lord made the Roman government pay Paul's traveling expenses.

26:3 Especially *because I know* thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

26:4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

26:5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

26:6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

26:7 Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

26:8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

26:9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

26:10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*.

26:11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

26:12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

26:13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

26:14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.**

Paul's Visit to Rome

Chapter Twenty Seven

“And when it was determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius” (*“And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.” KJV*)—V. 1. What humiliating means the Lord often employs to accomplish His purposes. Paul had an ignominious escape from Damascus—let down from a window in a basket. We do not read that God's great man ever rode in a Pullman sleeper; neither did His own well beloved Son. Both of them were despised and rejected of men. Satan would often have cut them off if the Father had not protected them supernaturally.

Paul's trip to Rome was an exceedingly perilous one. It was also one of the most meaningful types in this book of Acts. It is a very prolific picture of the journey of the Church from Pentecost to the coming of Jesus. Julius, meaning “downy,” at first seemed to figure the Holy Spirit as a tender, heavenly Porter, He gives us liberty and makes life pleasant for us. Our bondage to Jesus Christ is a serfdom of warmest love, thru the comfort and joy of the Spirit. Rome, meaning “strength,” was the capital city of the then world empire. Thence Paul and his friends were now embarking. However, he had embarked years before the Rome of the universe, the city of real strength, the throne-room of Him whose name is “Strength,” Jehovah Almighty. Adramyttium, meaning “the court of death,” or “not in the race,” was the ship in which the Apostle started for Rome. What a pronounced picture of ecclesiasticism, which invariably has induced spiritual decline and finally death to its passengers. No, indeed, it is not in the race for the Prize of the high calling. They who would win Christ as Bridegroom must sail in an entirely different ship. A spiritual and heavenly race, demands a spiritual ship. In such a one, Paul embarked and sailed for glory. He never rode on any religious, or ecclesiastical Adramyttium. He was always absolutely free.

Luke, meaning “a light,” was a passenger with Paul, as the phrase “with us” (V. 2) indicates. He was true indeed to the meaning of his name, and became an accurate chronicler of two great careers—those of Jesus and of His chief imitator, Paul. Aristarchus, meaning “a good prince, or the best ruler,” was another passenger and a fellow prisoner with Paul, He was one of the three Jews who were a “comfort” to him while he was imprisoned in Rome—¹Col. 4:10, 11. He shared the Apostle's persecutions and sorrows for Christ's sake.

¹ Colossians 4:10, 11 “Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only *are* my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.”

26:15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, **I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.**

26:16 **But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;**

26:17 **Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,**

26:18 **To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.**

26:19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

26:21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

26:22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

26:23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

26:24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

26:25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26:26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are

Will he not also share in his glory? And may we not choose a similar place of fellowship with Paul as those brethren had?

By knowing the meanings of the proper names here, the Bible student may derive some sweet spiritual lessons. Sidon means “hunting.” Cyprus means “love, blossom, fairness.” Cilicia means “haircloth.” Pamphylia signifies “many tribes.” Myra means “myrrh, myrtle juice, I flow.” Lycia signifies “wolfish.”

“And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria, sailing into Italy; and he put us therein” —V. 6. Many people have started for heaven, as they supposed, in some religious organization, an ecclesiastical Adramyttium, but became disappointed and dissatisfied with it and left it. Not understanding God’s perfect and safe way of travel, they went aboard another organization. Some ministers have done so taking with them their crew, or congregation. Alexandria means “helper of men.” Of course a religious institution, that promises to help and defend mankind, always appeals to people. Newly born babes in Christ readily run into a church like that. Julius, who seemed before to typify the Comforter, now proves to be simply a wise (?) human influence, which always sets bounds around the saints of God instead of letting God Himself be the boundary.

“And he put us therein,” has proved the beginning of unspeakable bondage and grief to thousands of the children of God. The history of the sects tells the tale of religious woes. The meanings of the names of the various points touched on the voyage, all agree in figuring the tempestuous history of Christendom during this age. Cnidus means “dedicated to Venus,” hence, also “nettled.” They could not reach that port because “the winds were contrary.” The citizens of such a town of course become nettled at the very sight of a Gospel ship. Crete means “fleshy.” Salmone signifies “from the surging.” Lasea means “rocky, shaggy.” With difficulty they came to Fair Havens, where Paul advised them to winter, because the Holy Spirit showed him what would befall them if they went on toward Phoenix, or Phenice, which means “palm land.”

The Fair Havens of Paul’s Gospel is the only place of real and lasting safety. But the Church feared the waves of persecution that were splashing and surging about them. The rugged, rocky, shaggy heights did not appeal to the leaders. It is just so today. “Because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they could reach Phoenix. And the south wind blew softly.” (*“And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, ... the south wind blew softly,”*—V. 12, 13 KJV) If you want to get nowhere, or to the wrong where, just vote on your movements. “The more part” will advise you contrary to the Apostle every

hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

26:27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

26:28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

26:29 And Paul said, 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.

26:30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

26:31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

26:32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

Chapter 27

27:1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

27:2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; *one* Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

27:3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

27:4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

27:5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia.

27:6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

time. God has ordained that certain members of the Body of Christ should be “eyes” to the assembly and have “the word of wisdom.” The Holy Spirit makes the Father’s will known to the whole crew by means of one, or a very small few, who have the burden of responsibility.

Paul, The Real Pilot

God appointed the Apostle Paul to be the house-keeper of the Church of Christ thruout this age. His doctrine and practice should have been allowed to pilot the saints over the sea during the past 1900 years. His writings are preeminently to and for the assemblies of Christ. Alas, how foolhardy men have been to reject, or even to neglect them. The deceiving “palm lands” and the “soft south wind” of ease and compromise with the world overcome those who fear the surging of opposition around the shaggy cliffs of divine truth—Paul’s “some things, hard to be understood”—2 Pet. 3:16. But oh, what revelations of grace and what experiences of peace and glory envelope those who receive his doctrine. Tongue can never tell the depth and height and breadth of the present wealth and joy which flows into the heart that accepts his Gospel and goes on with him. God rides on the billowy crest of Salmone to our help, and sits on the dizzying pinnacles of rugged Lasea inviting us to dwell above the fog and mist of an ease-loving church and enjoy His deep, abiding fellowship. To those who go on with Paul, there can come no real “hurt and much damage,” which Christendom has actually suffered.

The “palm trees” of Phenice, or “palm land,” always appeal to the carnal. One of the most subtle features of self-righteousness is an aspiration for a glorified state on earth. Some claim that their flesh is so dead that they suffer no pain, have no longer any “natural affection,” but have nothing to do save to enjoy the cool, balmy shade of self-congratulation and mutual admiration. Some people become “over much righteous,” (“*righteous over much*”—Ecc. 7:16 KJV) too holy (?) to serve others, or mingle with other saints. No one can actually, daily follow dear Paul and shrivel up into pusillanimous religious vanity, which has no boast except its own hard sanctity, obnoxious attire and legal tenets of doctrine, before which Graces blushes and flees away.

Our Pilot Encouraged

“Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar, and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee”—V. 24. Wonderful! The so-called Christian system goes to pieces—there is “loss of the ship;” but “there shall be no loss of life among you.” (“*there shall be no loss of any man's life among you*”—V. 22 KJV) Here, in symbol, is the truth of eternal life. If God saw to it that not one of those prisoners perished; how much more will He see to it that not one who believes on His Son will ever perish forever? Brother, with whom are you sailing? And do you say with him: “Sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe

27:7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone;

27:8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

27:9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished *them*,

27:10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

27:11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

27:12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there* to winter; *which is* an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

27:13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed close by Crete.

27:14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

27:15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.

27:16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:

27:17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

27:18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship;

27:19 And the third *day* we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

God, that it shall be even as it was told me?" (V. 25) Happy all those who do. How unbelieving men are, even tho' they are convinced by actual experience and observation that God is with Paul. "The shipmen were about to flee out of the ship." (V. 30) Yes, the majority of saints keep their distance from Paul, the very man whom Jehovah has ordained to bring to us the greatest truths and the fulness of blessing. Nevertheless, here is a marvelous statement—"Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." There was no physical salvation from drowning that day except by obeying Paul's word; neither is there any salvation for any man save be believing Paul's Gospel. The curse rests upon those who preach any other gospel—¹Gal. 1:8, 9. Hence, "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel" (Rom. 2:16), said Paul. The place and power of his message is tremendous; it is incalculable, invaluable.

Oh, let us "cut off the ropes of the boat" (V. 32) of apostatized Christianity. "The day was coming on." Let us freely "take some meat; for this is for your health." Take it from Paul's hand. Men are writing about "meat in due season;" but they either reject man's teachings, or "wrest them to their own destruction." ("*wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*"—²2 Peter 3:16 KJV) Beware of them. "They are all of good cheer," who receive Paul's wonderful message. The calamity awaiting those who refuse it will be appalling. They "will be saved...as by fire." Their works, their unsavory teaching, "will be burned." See 1 Cor. 3. The two gigantic religious seas—Catholicism and Protestantism—meet at the end of this present period. They are practically one now. The former has "stuck fast and remained unmovable." The Catholic church remains undivided to this day. The latter has been "broken with the violence of the waves" of religious heresies, or unscriptural doctrines. Protestantism is divided into many sects, all claiming to be right systems. They all will perish at the hand of divine justice. Comp. ²Rev. 3:16 with chaps. 17 and 18. But all believers will be saved. "Those who can swim," ("*they which could swim*"—V. 43 KJV) or who trust God absolutely, depending only upon His grace, "first get to land." ("*first into the sea, and get to land.*"—V. 43 KJV) Paul was a good swimmer. He was accustomed to the water—³2 Cor. 11:25. Comp. ⁴Phil. 3:11, 14. Reader do you choose to be in his

¹ Galatians 1:8, 9 "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 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."

² Revelation 3:16 "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

³ 2 Corinthians 11:25 "Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;"

⁴ Philippians 3:11, 14 "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead... I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

27:20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

27:21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

27:22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

27:23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

27:24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

27:25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

27:26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

27:27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;

27:28 And sounded, and found *it* twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms.

27:29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

27:30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

27:31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

27:32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

rank? “And the rest, some on boards and some on pieces of the ship,” (*“And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship”—V. 44 KJV*) or basic fragments of the whole truth get to land.

27:33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

27:34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

27:35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.

27:36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.

27:37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

27:38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

27:39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

27:40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

27:41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

27:42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

27:43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast *themselves* first into the sea, and get to land:

27:44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

The Final Revival Foreshadowed

Chapter Twenty Eight

“And when we were escaped, then we knew that the island was called Melita” (“*And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.*” KJV)—V. 1. Paul and his crew reached Melita about February 61, A. D., where they continued several months. Then they arrived in Rome in the Spring. We should expect the translation of the full overcomers to take place some year before Easter; because Jesus will take His throne in heaven just before the passover, and the overcomers must meet Him in heaven at the time of His enthronement. The Jewish year begins at that time. See Ex. 12. Methinks the Archangel is standing now on the veranda in heaven, polishing His trumpet and getting ready to blow. Oh, let us keep our ears clean and polished also, that we may not fail to hear the home call. Paul’s arrival in Rome typifies the translation.

Melita means “affording honey.” How significant! Our bitter experiences in God’s will are followed by sweetness. A life of hard, bitter toil here will be rewarded by sweet fellowship with God and all the holy ones in heaven forever, of which our fellowship on earth is only an earnest. What a glorious hope is ours in Christ! I fear that very few really appreciate it.

The Apostle’s experience on the island of Melita foreshadowed a revival of the truths of Grace and Pentecost at the close of this age. During his three months stay there, the Gospel went forth effectively. The signs of ¹Mark 16:17 followed in confirmation thereof, as at the beginning. Thus, wherever Christ is preached, not in word only, but in the power and joy of the Holy Spirit, the whole counsel of God is made known and the fulness of divine blessings is experienced. Some modern teachers condemn Luke for emphasizing divine healing, in his record, instead of salvation. How wise the natural man poses to be when he turns religious. It is still the “wisdom of this world,” however pious it may seem to be, which the Lord abominates. Jesus Christ secured the attention of the people by the healing of their maladies. Paul and the other apostles followed in His steps. And we do well to learn God’s plan and manner of ministering to the world, by studying their conduct as recorded by the Spirit. Another huge blunder is foisted against Paul by some would-be Bible teachers. They claim that he became so spiritual after reaching Rome, that he discarded divine healing altogether. Their only evidence of such conjecture is his silence on healing in his letters written to the churches from Rome. Do they not know that those epistles were written to saints who had learned long before to trust God for their bodies and knew the truth of divine healing? Of course they do

¹ Mark 16:17 “*And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;*”

Chapter 28

28:1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

28:2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

28:3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

28:4 And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

28:5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

28:6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

28:7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

28:9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

not, because they themselves have not yet learned that valuable lesson. They prefer to patronize some carnal, skeptical doctor in time of sickness. Not only had those saints learned the art of divine healing, but they learned Christ as their very life. Of course, healing is a part of salvation.

Furthermore, how dare any sane man intimate that Jesus Christ was not spiritual at any time? Let them consider ¹Luke 4:1, 14, 15 and ²Acts 10:38 and ³Matt. 17:5. What colossal conceit and high handed effrontery, which presumes to say that dear Paul was not moving in the Spirit during those many years of pioneering. If that were true, how could we accept the epistles as divinely inspired, which he wrote at different times within those years, as for example, Galatians, Corinthians, Thessalonians and Romans? And the Apostle did not leap suddenly from carnality to spirituality after arriving in Rome. See Rom. 1:11. We grow in spirituality as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. Men who reject the Latter Rain, and hence, are not filled with the Holy Spirit, ought to blush before Jesus and Paul, if not before those who are now walking in the Spirit and living true to God's Word. No one today can be spiritual, who has not received the Spirit as did the apostles. By their own folly, such teachers put themselves in the class of "five foolish virgins," who will miss the rapture of the last rank of those that shall be caught away to be at the wedding in the air. Reader, beware, oh, beware!

Paul Reaching Rome

"We came to Puteoli, where we found brethren, and were entreated to tarry with them seven days; and so we came to Rome" ("*we came the next day to Puteoli: Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.*" *KJV*)—V. 14. Puteoli means "abounding in wells, or mineral springs." The natural surroundings seemed to be in harmony with the supernatural; for there they "found brethren." The brethren in Rome heard that the Apostle and his company were nearing the city; hence, they came out to meet them at Appia Forum and The Three Taverns. Yes, the people who are in fellowship with God's springs of living water, always learn

¹ Luke 4:1, 14, 15 "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness... And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all."

² Acts 10:38 "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."

³ Matthew 17:5 "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

28:10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded *us* with such things as were necessary.

28:11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

28:12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days.

28:13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

28:14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

28:15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

28:16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

28:17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men *and* brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

28:18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, because there was no cause of death in me.

of Paul's coming. Here is the only mention made of the Church in Rome. Paul had written to them, several years before, of his coming. He was not the founder of that assembly; yet he desired to visit them. In his letter, he said, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established"—Rom. 1:11.

The remainder of the 28th chapter of Acts records the Apostle's instructions to the Jews concerning the kingdom of God and teaching of Jesus Christ. There is a typical suggestion here that Paul's Gospel must be proclaimed to Israel after the rapture of the Church. Compare ¹Matt. 24:14 with ²Rev. 16:6, 7. In his letter to the Church in Rome, he writes as if his chief purpose in going thither was for the sake of that Church; but in these closing verses in Acts, he seems to be oblivious to the Church, but instead is occupied with Israel. Of course, being in prison, he could not minister to the Church.

Paul had purposed to go to Spain after visiting Rome—³Rom. 15:24, 28. There is no positive proof in the Word that he ever realized that hope. Verse 28 of this chapter, however, suggests that he did. Church history testifies that he was released from his first imprisonment in Rome, and reached Spain. There are abundant circumstantial evidences that Paul was delivered from prison once, and went abroad to proclaim his wonderful Gospel. First. His faith expected it as expressed in ⁴Phil. 1:25 and 2:23, 24 and Philemon 22. ⁵Heb. 13:23 implies that he was released. Second. The Apostle's letters to Timothy and Titus do not seem to have been written during the period recorded in the Acts. His language in Second Timothy concerning his imprisonment is so different from that in his other epistles. In it, he expressed no hope of release. He knew that his life work was ended and the time of his home-going had come. Finally. The following quotation from Plumptre about Josephus (Life c, 3) is at least suggestive and interesting. "Josephus came to Rome about the second year of Paul's confinement. He was shipwrecked on his voyage, picked up by a ship

¹ Matthew 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

² Revelation 16:6, 7 "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments."

³ Romans 15:24, 28 "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*... When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain."

⁴ Philippians 1:25 "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;"

Philippians 2:23, 24 "Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."

⁵ Hebrews 13:23 "Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you."

28:19 But when the Jews spake against *it*, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

28:20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

28:21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

28:22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

28:24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

28:25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

28:26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

28:27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

of Cyrene, landed at Puteoli and made his way to Rome. His main object in coming was, he says, to obtain the release of certain priests, who had been sent to Rome by Felix as prisoners, and he accomplished his purpose thru the influence of Poppaea.” God may have used that very providence to deliver His servant. Infuriated Jews occasioned his bondage, and a Jew, Josephus, may have released him.

End of Paul’s Journey

Is it not a significant fact, that the people of Israel, on whom the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost, came from the very regions which Peter, Paul and John visited, and where Paul founded Christian assemblies? Parthia, Mede and Elam, lying east of Palestine, and Mesopotamia northeast, were the only exceptions—¹Acts 2:9-11. We believe that Paul’s visit to Rome is typical of his Gospel going to all Christendom, for religious Rome is the mother of Christendom. He yearned to minister to his Israelitish brethren as God yearns over His scattered people. Consider the following language. “I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away...for ye are not my people and I will not be your God.” (Hos. 1:6, 9) But note the apparent contradiction that immediately follows. “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered.” (Hos. 1:10) Observe now exactly where this will occur. “And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God”—Hos. 1:6-10.

The last two verses of Acts indicate the freedom with which the real Gospel will yet reach the people, tho’ its devotees are handicapped. Tho’ the servants of God are bound, “The Word of God is not bound.” When Paul was free, he ministered to all men: but as “the prisoner of Jesus Christ,” he brought to the whole Church, for all this age, the richest, deepest and sweetest portion, even that which was necessary to prepare the Bride of the Lamb for her Bridegroom. The epistles to the assemblies in Ephesus, Philippi and Colosse, and to Philemon and the second one to Timothy, were written by Paul while in Rome.

Once more. Note that Acts ends without a benediction. Why? Because it records the beginnings of the operations of the Spirit thru His people, as samples and types for this entire age and probably the millennial age. Note the word “began,” chaps. 1:1 and 2:4 and 8:25 and 10:37. We must wait till ²Rev. 21:5 for the benediction.

¹ Acts 2:9-11 “Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.”

² Revelation 21:5 “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

28:29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

28:30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

28:31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

The Gospel of the Kingdom

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people, etc.”—Matt. 4:23-25. As I read these verses, I am impressed with their typical meaning and purpose. They are a wonderful pen-picture of the present worldwide revival, and especially of the wide spread healing wave, which is the last great phase of the Latter Rain movement that began about 1907. The Lord Jesus Christ did those things when He was on earth in person, as did also His disciples, and today He is doing the same things thru representatives.

Observe that Jesus “preached the gospel of the Kingdom,” not the gospel of the Church. The healing of the people by His mighty power and by the power of God thru the disciples was a preparation of Israel for a new age, which was just about to dawn. Immediately after Jesus was crucified and taken back to heaven; the Holy Spirit was poured out, and a new age was introduced. Apparently it was the millennial age, which it would have been if Israel had received Jesus then as their Messiah. For several years, the mighty miracle working power of God, which will grace the beginning of the millennium, was displayed. Until God showed them differently, the apostles believed that the reign of Christ was due, and that He would return immediately. But the Jewish nation rejected Christ; therefore, He had to postpone His coming to reign. Instead thereof, this church age, like a vast parenthesis, was introduced.

Now, what Jesus and His disciples wrought before Pentecost is again before us on a far larger scale. The “greater works,” which He foretold, are being accomplished. As their ministry prepared Israel and the world for an earnest of the millennial period; so His ministry today, thru representatives, is preparing the people for the actual, soon-coming millennial age, the new age of which we hear so much said. Today the many are preaching “the gospel of the Kingdom,” rather than the gospel of the Church. Comparatively few are really looking for and qualifying for translation; and many who are expecting translation, also expect to return and reign on the earth.

I want to emphasize this fact, that Jesus did not preach the gospel of the Church. He did not declare the doctrine of the “upward calling” and of “the heavenly kingdom.” Neither did the twelve apostles even after Pentecost. It was not then time for that message. That was left for Paul, who should bring on the stage another line of gospel ministers. Jesus announced the gospel of the Kingdom of God on earth; for His message was preeminently to an earth-dwelling people who entertained terrestrial hopes and glory. Peter, James and John also preached the same kingdom gospel, and no other; for they knew no other. This church gospel was “a secret hidden in God” (*“the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,” KJV*)

(Eph. 3:9), and afterwards revealed to Paul. God confirmed the ministry of Jesus and of the apostles by granting mighty signs and wonders. Returning to our text notice—

“Jesus went about all Galilee.” Galilee means “circuit;” hence, it represents the world, or at least where God has a people. Thru His Spirit-filled ministers, Jesus Christ has been going everywhere the last few years, working mighty signs and wonders, getting the people ready for His advent and thousand years reign. At this point, consider a remarkable statement of our Lord’s. “Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come”—Matt. 10:23. That was fulfilled; for He was transfigured before them sometime afterwards—Chap. 17. But that transfiguration was “the power and coming” of Jesus in type, as ¹2 Pet. 1:16-18 shows plainly. Now mark this and marvel: the verse before (²Matt. 10:22) proves that Jesus spoke of the end of this age; for He said “He that endureth to the end shall be saved,” (*“he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”*—Matt. 24:13 KJV) which identical words He uttered in His end-time address—Chap. 24:13. Furthermore, if His transfiguration was typical of His revelation; then also those local cities were typical of saint-inhabited cities today thru-out the world, and the career of Jesus and His apostles before Pentecost was typical of the great revival now on. And as they failed to reach all the cities of Israel before His transfiguration; likewise before all the modern cities of Israel can be reached with the kingdom gospel, the Lord will have come. It is a common thing to read, or hear saints exclaim, We must hurry and give the gospel to the world before Jesus comes.

“Healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” (Matt. 4:23) You may believe me or not; but the great majority of pentecostal preachers are emphasizing the kingdom message. I repeat it: their message is the gospel of the Kingdom. They little understand Church truth. They little comprehend the purpose and plan of God concerning the Church, the Body of Christ. They little know what it means to be joined to Christ and be actually one with Him. I dare say that this is a strange doctrine with most of them. The oneness of Christ with His people—what a precious truth; but who grasps it? Therefore the precipitation of pentecostal power and the healing of the sick are the supreme task with the ministers generally. They are fitting men for the advent of the Lord.

¹ 2 Peter 1:16-18 “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”

² Matthew 10:22 “**And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.**”

“His fame went throughout all Syria.” (Matt. 4:24) Syria represents the Gentile world. In like manner today, the fame of Jesus, as the all-sufficient Healer of men’s bodies, is spreading world-wide. Truly He deserves the honor. God will see to it before the awful judgments fall upon the world, that men will find absolutely no excuse for rejecting His dear Son. “And they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them.” Is that not what is happening today? Are they not bringing to the famous evangelists all those who are sick of divers diseases and torments? And are they not being cured? Oh, I praise God that the same mighty works are being wrought today as in the beginning. That is why Paul wrote to us, saying, “Rejoice if Christ is preached, whether of good will or of envy.” (*“Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good wil... whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”—Phil. 1:15, 18 KJV*) Whatever the motive of the preacher may be; if he preaches Christ, let us rejoice. If he calls the attention of the people to Jesus Christ, even by announcing only part of the gospel; we ought to rejoice. When we consider that in the pulpits today, ministers stand and blaspheme God and His Son and His word, belittle the atonement and set aside the inspiration of the scriptures, deny the Deity of Jesus Christ and His resurrection; when we know that so-called Christian ministers blasphemously insult and reject the Holy Spirit; we should be glad that there are some who still hold fast to the fundamentals, and preach Christ sufficiently to get men saved and healed in body.

“And there followed great multitudes.” (*“And there followed him great multitudes”—Matt. 4:25 KJV*) He fed as many as fourteen thousand at one meeting. This explains why large companies gather to hear some men today. That was a picture of the end time. God’s infinite grace is back of it all to bring this wicked age face to face with the mighty Redeemer, Savior and Physician before the end comes. This explains the phenomenal success of some world-famed evangelists today. They preach Christ as the Savior from sin, sickness and hell, in view of the soon coming of Him whose right it is to reign. And God seems to wink at some of the methods which they use, methods that more spiritual workers could not employ. He takes advantage of every providence to attract a lost world to His dear Son that men may be saved and escape the terrible things that are about to envelope this world. Oh! wondrous grace. Oh! boundless love.

There are many false prophets and false remedies and false healers everywhere. It is even being announced that within this very year, the world’s emancipator will arise. Do you wonder that God is moving men to sound out the Name of Jesus, the only Name that can save and heal? Jesus only is the true Emancipator. He will not arise from somewhere. He will come from heaven,

flashing forth like the lightning. “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God.” (2 Thess. 1:7, 8)

A New Program in Disguise

Jesus did not always address large gatherings. Now and then He spoke to a select company, invariably very small. Near the end of His career, He intimated a different order of things. What did Jesus mean by “My Church?”—Matt. 16 and 18. Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42) are figures of two grades of believers in evidence today. What is the meaning of Mary sitting at Jesus’ feet, “learning His word?” A later visit with Martha and Mary (John 12:1-9) (not in Martha’s house, however, as in the other cases), plainly pictures the heavenly banquet, which we hope soon to enjoy.

Likewise, there are those here now, who preach, not alone the gospel of the Kingdom of God on earth, or Christ’s reign with Israel over the nations: but they preach also the gospel of “His heavenly Kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:18), “the high (or upward) calling of God” (Phil. 3:14), “the gospel of the glory” (“*the glorious gospel*” *KJV*)—1 Tim. 1:11, R. V. They expect to meet the Lord “in the air” and sit with Him on His “throne set in heaven”—Rev. 4:1, 2. Some saints do not expect to return from heaven and sit on a throne in Jerusalem in Palestine. They hope to occupy “the new Jerusalem” (Rev. 3:12), and reign “over” the earth, thru other believers who will be under them in Christ.

Accordingly, the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness brings far more than salvation from sin and healing for the body. It brings more than the pentecostal anointing and power from on high. Yes, it means far more than receiving the various gifts of the Spirit-speaking in tongues, gifts of healings, working of miracles, etc. None of these, nor all of them together are the sufficient test of growth in grace and of the knowledge of God and of deep spirituality. Nor will such saints obtain the highest reward. Suffering with Christ is the price of rulership.

When the Latter Rain fell and people were being filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in other tongues; it was thought that they were then perfect and full grown. We supposed that we had reached the pinnacle of the possibilities of grace. Alas! very soon, we found that tho’ we were endued with power from on high: we were only babes in Christ. We had only received a new spring suit (proof of Christ’s resurrection) and were dressed up to go to school. We were ready for the primary department and began to take lessons from our heavenly Tutor, the Holy Spirit. Oh, glory to God! A deep longing was awakened in some of us to know the Scriptures, and thereby “grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord.” (“*grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*”—2 Ptr. 3:18 *KJV*)

As we went on to study the Word, we saw that so it was in the beginning of this age. First, many people were filled with the Spirit and mighty miracles were wrought, and all were looking for the Lord to return and set up His kingdom. But there came a radical change in the great panorama. Another scene, hitherto unknown, was soon enacted. Another group of actors were brought upon the stage. The Great Director arrested a man enroute for Damascus, called him aside for a private course of training and set him on the stage as the chief actor with an entirely new play. That man was Saul of Tarsus, “the chief of sinners,” who afterward was known as Paul the “chiefest apostle.”

Therefore, that same Paul commenced to teach that Christ is the Head of His Body, which is the Church, and that the Church is the fulness of Christ, and that Christ and the Church “fill all things.” He taught that in Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily and that God Almighty dwells in His people by the Holy Spirit during this age. Then we saw that the Holy Spirit was given to us to “guide us into all the truth and show us things to come.” (*“he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”—John 16:13 KJV*) The Holy Spirit was given to unfold unto us the Word of God that we might “grow up into Christ in all things;” (*“grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”—Eph. 4:15 KJV*) because God had planned that a company of saints should constitute the Bride of the Lamb: but before there could be this Bride there must be a Body, just as in the case of Adam and Eve. Eve was a rib “builded” out of Adam’s side. A deep sleep came on Adam and God performed the first operation that was ever performed on a human being. He took a rib out of Adam’s side and builded that rib into a woman. That woman became Adam’s wife, his bride. I want you to notice: God did not constitute Adam’s whole body a wife. He just used a rib.

People are teaching that the whole Church is the Bride of Christ. If that figure back there means anything, it contradicts such teaching. Note another illustration from the Word, which shows that the whole Church is not the Bride of Christ. In a family are husband and wife, father and mother and children. A large family has many children. Here is a man that is looking for a throne. He is also looking for a wife; for a king needs a queen. Does he marry all the girls in that family? No; one at a time is enough for him. They are all in the family, one family; but he selects one woman out of that family and she becomes his bride. Just so, here is “the family of God, the household of God, the household of faith.” Jesus Christ is going to choose a company that will constitute His Bride; but He will not marry the whole family of God. Do you see how sensible is that? It is scriptural; that is why it is sensible. Not all the children in a family are of marriageable age. Sometimes they lack wifehood qualifications, even tho’ they are old enough. It is just like that in God’s family. Jesus will certainly not marry a babe. None that are loose in their habits, selfish in their living,

worldly or carnal in their walk, cold and distant toward Him in their fellowship and critical in their spirit toward other saints—none such need expect to be in the bridehood of the Lamb. Most surely they will be disappointed, for Christ will marry a chaste virgin—2 Cor. 11.

Furthermore, the Church, the Body of Christ, has a different destination than the citizens of the Kingdom on earth. Mark that. Put that down on your tablet. The citizens of the earthly Kingdom of God will dwell on the earth. To them, God has promised “a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” But the citizens of the Church shall dwell on high. They shall enjoy the “new heavens,” of which “the New Jerusalem” will be the capital city. Ours is “a high calling, (or the upward calling) of God in Christ Jesus”—Phil. 3:14. That is, we are called to go up. We are not called to stay on the earth. That is why Peter and James, in their writings, never speak of the translation of the, saints, nor of the glory on high. They wrote especially to people who shall dwell on earth. They never spoke of our union with Christ, nor of our wealth in Him. They wrote nothing of bridal hopes, or relationships. Confusion reigns in Bible study where these facts are not observed.

My friends, this will explain to you why there are so many companies of believers on earth and they do not seem to agree and get along well together. It is something like an incident of which I heard. A widower with several children wedded a widow who had several children. To this newly married couple, other children were born. One day the wife exclaimed very excitedly, “Husband, your children and my children are quarreling with our children.” That is the way it is in Christendom. There are different sets, or grades of children. Yet, they all belong to the same great family, “the household of God.” It seems like the saints fight and bite one another, and that they cannot agree. They fail to “see eye to eye.” James said, “Brethren, these things ought not so to be.” But the Holy Spirit made Paul to know that so it would be; because some will not seek the Lord with all the heart.

I want to tell you that the people that really are filled with the Holy Spirit and under His tutorage fill up on the word of God, according to Paul’s doctrine: these people understand all other grades of Christian experience; because they are seated in the heavenlies and believe it. If you want to look all over the city and see all the sky scrapers and the manufactories of Kansas City, just get in an airplane and go up a few hundred feet and look down. Well, that is just the way it is in this spiritual realm. Some saints have learned by Paul’s writings, that they are seated in the heavenlies in Christ. By faith, they accept it. “If ye be raised with Christ, why as tho’ living on earth are ye subject to ordinances?” (*“if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,”*—Col. 2:20 KJV) That implies that we are not living on earth, we are living in heaven, raised up

together and seated together with Christ Jesus in the heavenlies. We look at things as God looks at them. Tho' we are not there in our bodies, we are there in our spirit by faith. Instead of sitting down here and looking up, we are up there and looking down and we understand what is going on. "He that is spiritual discerneth all things." (*"he that is spiritual judgeth all things"*—1 Cor. 2:15 KJV)

I want you to know that I understand something of what is going on in Christendom. I am little and unknown, as far as this great world of Christianity is concerned; but I know what is going on. I understand the signs of the times, and by this Book I am able to tell what is coming to pass and just about when it is going to come to pass.

That is the profit now of being seated in the heavenlies. And it is wonderful when we grow up into Christ and are led by the Spirit of God and get our teaching and training from this Book. I say, it is wonderful how we can locate other Christian people. We classify them instinctively. Their "speech betrayeth them." We are not with them very long; we do not read much of their writings, till we know in what class they belong. We cannot help ourselves. Discernment is instinctive, I say. A rose smells differently from a lilac, and both of them differently from a potato blossom; and you cannot help noting the difference. I say it humbly, not critically—Men in the Lot class cannot understand us. Why not? Because they live on too low a plane. They reject the Gift of the Spirit, or if they receive Him; they fail to walk in the Spirit and conform to God's word. They do not "grow up into Christ in all things." (*"grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"*—Eph. 4:15 KJV)

Some even admit that they are still babes in Christ, as if that were humility; whereas the word rebukes those who are always babes and have need of milk, when they ought to be teachers—Heb. 5:12-14. "Everyone that useth milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe," (*"For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe."* KJV) even tho' he claims to be a teacher. It is to be feared that the land abounds with ministers, who are yet only prattling babes. They ought to be what they are supposed to be, viz, "teachers;" but because they are only milk-bottle Christians, "they have need that one teach them what are the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God." (*"ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God"*—Heb. 5:12 KJV) That is, they need "milk" instead of "solid food." What a shame!

Such believers are so ignorant of the truth that they do not know that they are infants; or they refuse to yield absolutely, unconditionally to the Spirit of God. They turn away from the word, when they read it or hear it. When we surrender absolutely to God and let the Spirit have His full way in our lives; then He begins to lift us up and illuminate our minds. As we continue to yield

to Him He leads us on. The higher up we go in the scale, the smaller our company, until finally it culminates in Jesus Christ and His Bride. Jesus will have the highest place; yet there is a company of believers, joined so closely with Him, which is His Bride, that will share all His glory. They are the ones that understand what is going on now on the earth. It is just wonderful, friends. We need to be charitable towards people that do not see what we see. We need to pray for them. We see things that the majority of Christians do not see. God has not revealed it to them. Often they are to blame, because when He has revealed light to them they refuse to walk in it. If He gives you a ray of light today and you turn away from it, you probably will not get another ray of light tomorrow; because each ray of light prepares for another step. I am so glad that God has revealed all His truth to us and we can preach the same gospel that the Kingdom gospelizers preach, but far more. We believe in the fundamentals. We agree with the fundamentalists. We have no fault to find with Doctor Torrey, nor the Plymouth Brethren, nor the Moody Institute as to foundation truth. They preach the grace of God as to the fundamentals, the Virgin birth of Jesus Christ and the resurrection. We agree with them; but we go way beyond all those things. Every house has a superstructure as well as a foundation. We take in more and give out more. The building must be complete and perfect. We ought to be glad that God has shown us more, not be mad at them, but glad that God has done it; Praise the Lord!

Finally, Beloved. To which company do you belong? Are you chiefly interested in the things of the Kingdom on earth, or in the “heavenly Kingdom?” What are your aspirations—to do and see big things accomplished here, or to know and have fellowship with the Big Man in the glory? Which do you love most? What is your supreme desire—to see many Christians, or to see Christ? What is your highest ambition—to win men to Christ now, or to gain Christ as your “exceeding great reward” in the glory? What is your eternal hope—simply to be saved from hell, or dwell with Christ in glory? To be with the vast throng who shall wave palms of victory, or with a smaller group who shall wear crowns of gold? Do you long only to stand before the throne in heaven? Or are you yearning to sit with the King of the ages and reign as His queen conjointly with Him forever?

You may have your choice, my brother.

At the depot take a stand,

You may reign on earth with Jacob,

Or with Christ in glory land.

Choose this day the highest calling;

Choose to bear the heavenly brand.