

THE LIFE OF SAINT PAUL

by

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THE FIRST JOURNEY

79. Paul's Companions - From the beginning it had been the wont of the preachers of Christianity not to go alone on their expeditions, but two by two. Paul improved on this practise by going generally with two companions, one of them being a younger man, who perhaps took charge of the traveling arrangements. On his first journey his comrades were Barnabas and John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas.

80. We have already seen that Barnabas may be called the discoverer of Paul; and, when they set out on this journey together, he was probably in a position to act as Paul's patron; for he enjoyed much consideration in the Christian community. Converted apparently on the day of Pentecost, he had played a leading part in the subsequent events. He was a man of high social position, a landed proprietor in the island of Cyprus; and he sacrificed all to the new movement into which he had been drawn. In the outburst of enthusiasm which led the first Christians to share their property with one another, he sold his estate and laid the money at the apostles' feet. He was constantly employed thereafter in the work of preaching, and he had so remarkable a gift of eloquence that he was called the Son of Exhortation. An incident which occurred at a later stage of this journey gives us a glimpse of the appearance of the two men. When the inhabitants of Lystra mistook them for gods, they called Barnabas Jupiter and Paul Mercury. Now, in ancient art Jupiter was always represented as a tall, majestic and benignant figure, while Mercury was the small, swift messenger of the father of gods and men. Probably it appeared, therefore, that the large, gracious, paternal Barnabas was the head and director of the expedition, while Paul, little and eager, was the subordinate. The direction in which they set out, too, was the one which Barnabas might naturally have been expected to choose. They went first to Cyprus, the island where his property had been and many of his friends still were. It lay eighty miles to the southwest of Seleucia, the seaport of Antioch, and they might reach it on the very day they left their headquarters.

81. Cyprus - Change of Name - But, although Barnabas appeared to be the leader, the good man probably knew already that the humble words of the Baptist might be used by himself with reference to his companion, "**He must increase, but I must decrease.**"

At all events, as soon as their work began in earnest, this was shown to be the relation between them. After going through the length of the island, from east to west, evangelizing, they arrived at Paphos, its chief town, and there the problems they had come out to face met them in the most concentrated form.

Paphos was the seat of the worship of Venus, the goddess of love, who was said to have been born of the foam of the sea at this very spot; and her worship was carried on with the wildest licentiousness. It was a picture in miniature of Greece sunk in moral decay. Paphos was also the seat of the Roman government, and in the Proconsular chair sat a man, Sergius Paulus, whose noble character but utter lack of certain faith formed a companion picture of the inability of Rome at that epoch to meet the deepest necessities of her best sons. In the Proconsular court, playing upon the inquirer's credulity, a Jewish sorcerer and quack, named Elymas, was flourishing, whose arts were a picture of the lowest depths to which the Jewish character could sink. The whole scene was a kind of miniature of the world the evils of which the missionaries had set forth to cure.

In the presence of these exigencies Paul unfolded for the first time the mighty powers which lay in him. An access of the Spirit seizing him and enabling him to overcome all obstacles, he covered the Jewish magician with disgrace, converted the Roman governor, and founded in the town a Christian church in opposition to the Greek shrine. From that hour Barnabas sank into the second place and Paul took his natural position as the head of the mission. We no longer read, as heretofore, of "**Barnabas and Saul,**" but always of "**Paul and Barnabas.**" The subordinate had become the leader; and, as if to mark that he had become a new man and taken a new place, he was no longer called by the Jewish name of Saul, which up to this point he had borne, but by the name of Paul, which has ever since been his designation among Christians.

82. The Mainland of Asia - The next move was as obviously the choice of the new leader as the first one had been due to Barnabas. They struck across the sea to Perga, a town near the middle of the southern coast of Asia Minor, then right up, a hundred miles, into the mainland, and thence eastward to a point almost straight north of Tarsus. This route carried them in a kind of half circuit through the districts of Pamphylia, Pisidia and Lycaonia, which border, to the west and north, on Cilicia, Paul's native province; so that, if it be the case that he had evangelized Cilicia already, he was now merely extending his labors to the nearest surrounding regions.

83. At Perga, the starting-point of this second half of the journey, a misfortune befell the expedition: John Mark deserted his companions and sailed for home. It may be that the new position assumed by Paul had given him offense, though his generous uncle felt no such grudge at that which was the ordinance of nature and of GOD. But it is more likely that the cause of his withdrawal was dismay at the dangers upon which they were about to enter. These were such as might well strike terror even into resolute hearts. Behind Perga rose the snow-clad peaks of the Taurus Mountains, which had to be penetrated through narrow passes, where crazy bridges spanned the rushing torrents, and the castles of robbers, who watched for passing travelers to pounce upon, were hidden in positions so inaccessible that even the Roman arms had not been able to exterminate them. When these preliminary dangers were surmounted, the prospect beyond was anything but inviting: the country to the north of the Taurus was a vast tableland, more elevated than the summits of the highest mountains in this country, and scattered over with solitary lakes, irregular mountain masses and tracts of desert, where the population was rude and spoke an almost endless variety of dialects. These things terrified Mark, and he drew back. But his companions took their lives in their hand and went forward. To them it was enough that there were multitudes of perishing souls there, needing the salvation of which they were the heralds; and Paul knew that there were scattered handfuls of his own people in these remote regions of the heathen.

84. Can we conceive what their procedure was like in the towns they visited? It is difficult, indeed, to picture it to ourselves. As we try to see them with the mind's eye entering any place, we naturally think of them as the most important personages in it; to us their entry is as august as if they had been carried on a car of victory. Very different, however, was the reality. They entered a town as quietly and as unnoticed as any two strangers who may walk into one of our towns any morning. Their first care was to get a lodging; and then they had to seek for employment, for they worked at their trade wherever they went. Nothing could be more commonplace. Who could dream that this travel-stained man, going from one tentmaker's door to another, seeking for work, was carrying the future of the world beneath his robe!

When the Sabbath came round, they would cease from toil, like the other Jews in the place, and repair to the synagogue. They joined in the psalms and prayers with the other worshipers and listened to the reading of the Scriptures. After this the presiding elder might ask if anyone present had a word of exhortation to deliver. This was Paul's opportunity. He would rise and, with outstretched hand, begin to speak. At once the audience recognized the accents of the cultivated rabbi: and the strange voice won their attention. Taking up the passages which had been read, he would soon be moving forward on the stream of Jewish history, till he led up to the astounding announcement that the Messiah hoped for by their fathers and promised by their prophets had come; and he had been sent among them as His apostle. Then would follow the story of JESUS; it was true, He had been rejected by the authorities of Jerusalem and crucified, but this could be shown to have taken place in accordance with prophecy; and His resurrection from the dead was an infallible proof that He had been sent of GOD: now He was exalted a

Prince and a Saviour to give repentance unto Israel and the remission of sins.

We can easily imagine the sensation produced by such a sermon from such a preacher and the buzz of conversation which would arise among the congregation after the dismissal of the synagogue. During the week it would become the talk of the town: and Paul was willing to converse at his work or in the leisure of the evening with any who might desire further information. Next Sabbath the synagogue would be crowded, not with Jews only, but Gentiles also, who were curious to see the strangers; and Paul now unfolded the secret that salvation by JESUS CHRIST was as free to Gentiles as to Jews. This was generally the signal for the Jews to contradict and blaspheme; and, turning his back on them, Paul addressed himself to the Gentiles. But meantime the fanaticism of the Jews was roused, who either stirred up the mob or secured the interest of the authorities against the strangers; and in a storm of popular tumult or by the breath of authority the messengers of the Gospel were swept out of the town. This was what happened at Antioch in Pisidia, their first halting-place in the interior of Asia Minor; and it was repeated in a hundred instances in Paul's subsequent life.

85. Sometimes they did not get off so easily. At Lystra, for example, they found themselves in a population of rude heathens, who were at first so charmed with Paul's winning words and impressed with the appearance of the preachers that they took them for gods and were on the point of offering sacrifice to them. This filled the missionaries with horror, and they rejected the intentions of the crowd with unceremonious haste. A sudden revolution in the popular sentiment ensued, and Paul was stoned and cast out of the city apparently dead.

86. Such were the scenes of excitement and peril through which they had to pass in this remote region. But their enthusiasm never flagged; they never thought of turning back, but, when they were driven out of one city, moved forward to another. And, total as their discomfitures sometimes appeared, they quitted no city without leaving behind them a little band of converts - perhaps a few Jews, a few more proselytes, and a number of Gentiles. The Gospel found those for whom it was intended - penitents burdened with sin, souls dissatisfied with the world and their ancestral religion, hearts yearning for divine sympathy and love; **"as many as were ordained to eternal life believed;"** and these formed in every city the nucleus of a Christian church. Even at Lystra, where the defeat seemed so utter, a little group of faithful hearts gathered round the mangled body of the apostle outside the city gates; Eunice and Lois were there with tender womanly ministrations; and young Timothy, as he looked down on the pale and bleeding face, felt his heart forever knit to the hero who had courage to suffer to the death for his faith.

87. In the intense love of such hearts Paul received compensation for suffering and injustice. If, as some suppose, the people of this region formed part of the Galatian churches, we see from his Epistle to them the kind of love they gave him. They received him, he says, as an angel of GOD, nay, as JESUS CHRIST Himself; they were ready to have plucked out their eyes and given them to him. They were people of rude kindness and headlong impulses; their native religion was one of excitement and demonstrativeness, and they carried these characteristics into the new faith they had adopted. They were filled with joy and the HOLY GHOST, and the revival spread on every hand with great rapidity, till the word, sounding out from the little Christian communities, was heard all along the slopes of Taurus and down the glens of the Cestrus and Halys.

Paul's warm heart could not but enjoy such an outburst of affection. He responded to it by giving in return his own deep love. The towns mentioned in their itinerary are the Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe; but, when at the last of them he had finished his course and

the way lay open to him to descend by the Cilician Gates to Tarsus and thence get back to Antioch, he preferred to return by the way he had come. In spite of the most imminent danger he revisited all these places, to see his dear converts again and cheer them in face of persecution; and he ordained elders in every city to watch over the churches in his absence.

88. The Return - At length the missionaries descended again from these uplands to the southern coast and sailed back to Antioch, from which they had set out. Worn with toil and suffering, but flushed with the joy of success, they appeared among those who had sent them forth and had doubtless been following them with their prayers; and, like discoverers returned from the finding of a new country, they related the miracles of grace they had witnessed in the strange world of the heathen.

THE SECOND JOURNEY

89. In his first journey Paul may be said to have been only trying his wings; for his course, adventurous though it was, only swept in a limited circle round his native province. In his second journey he performed a far more distant and perilous flight. Indeed, this journey was not only the greatest he achieved but perhaps the most momentous recorded in the annals of the human race. In its issues it far outrivalled the expedition of Alexander the Great, when he carried the arms and civilization of Greece into the heart of Asia, or that of Caesar, when he landed on the shores of Britain, or even the voyage of Columbus, when he discovered a new world. Yet, when he set out on it, he had no idea of the magnitude which it was to assume or even the direction which it was to take. After enjoying a short rest at the close of the first journey, he said to his fellow-missionary, "**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.**" It was the parental longing to see his spiritual children which was drawing him; but GOD had far more extensive designs, which opened up before him as he went forward.

90. Separation from Barnabas - Unfortunately the beginning of this journey was marred by a dispute between the two friends who meant to perform it together. The occasion of their difference was the offer of John Mark to accompany them. No doubt when this young man saw Paul and Barnabas returning safe and sound from the undertaking which he had deserted, he recognized what a mistake he had made; and he now wished to retrieve his error by rejoining them. Barnabas naturally wished to take his nephew, but Paul absolutely refused. The one missionary, a man of easy kindliness, urged the duty of forgiveness and the effect which a rebuff might have on a beginner; while the other, full of zeal for GOD, represented the danger of making so sacred a work in any way dependent on one who could not be relied upon, for "**confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth or a foot out of joint.**"

We cannot now tell which of them was in the right or if both were partly wrong. Both of them, at all events, suffered for it: Paul had to part in anger from the man to whom he probably owed more than to any other human being; and Barnabas was separated from the grandest spirit of the age.

91. They never met again. This was not due, however, to an unchristian continuation of the quarrel; for the heat of passion soon cooled down and the old love returned. Paul mentions Barnabas with honor in his writings, and in the very last of his Epistles he sends for Mark to

come to him at Rome, expressly adding that he is profitable to him for ministry - the very thing he had disbelieved about him before. In the meantime, however, their difference separated them. They agreed to divide between them the region they had evangelized together. Barnabas and Mark went away to Cyprus; and Paul undertook to visit the churches on the mainland. As companion he took with him Silas, or Silvanus, in the place of Barnabas; and he had not proceeded far on his new journey when he met with one to take the place of Mark. This was Timothy, a convert he had made at Lystra in his first journey; he was youthful and gentle; and he continued a faithful companion and a constant comfort to the apostle to the end of his life.

92. Unrecorded Work - In pursuance of the purpose with which he had set out, Paul began this journey by revisiting the churches in the founding of which he had taken part. Beginning at Antioch and proceeding in a northwesterly direction, he did this work in Syria, Cilicia and other parts, till he reached the center of Asia Minor, where the primary object of his journey was completed. But, when a man is on the right road, all sorts of opportunities open up before him. When he had passed through the provinces which he had visited before, new desires to penetrate still farther began to fire his mind, and Providence opened up the way.

He still went forward in the same direction through Phrygia and Galatia. Bithynia, a large province lying along the shore of the Black Sea, and Asia, a densely populated province in the west of Asia Minor, seemed to invite him and he wished to enter them. But the Spirit who guided his footsteps indicated, by some means unknown to us, that these provinces were shut to him in the meantime; and, pushing onward in the direction in which his divine Guide permitted him to go, he found himself at Troas, a town on the northwest coast of Asia Minor.

93. Thus he had traveled from Antioch in the southeast to Troas in the northwest of Asia Minor, a distance as far as from Land's End to John O' Groat's, evangelizing all the way. It must have taken months, perhaps even years. Yet of this long, laborious period we possess no details whatever, except such features of his intercourse with the Galatians as may be gathered from the Epistle to that church. The truth is that, thrilling as are the notices of Paul's career given in the Acts, this record is a very meager and imperfect one, and his life was far fuller of adventure, of labors and sufferings for CHRIST, than even Luke's narrative would lead us to suppose.

The plan of the Acts is to tell only what was most novel and characteristic in each journey, while it passes over, for instance, all his repeated visits to the same scenes. There are thus great blanks in the history, which were in reality as full of interest as the portions of his life which are fully described.

Of this there is a startling proof in an Epistle which he wrote within the period covered by the Acts of the Apostles. His argument calling upon him to enumerate some of his outstanding adventures, "**Are they ministers of Christ?**" he asks, "**I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once was I stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day have I been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.**"

Now, of the items of this extraordinary catalogue the book of Acts mentions very few: of the five Jewish scourgings it notices not one, of the three Roman beatings only one; the one stoning it records, but not one of the three shipwrecks, for the shipwreck so fully detailed in the Acts

happened later. It was no part of the design of Luke to exaggerate the figure of the hero he was painting; his brief and modest narrative comes far short even of the reality; and, as we pass over the few simple words into which he condenses the story of months or years, our imagination requires to be busy, filling up the outline with toils and pains at least equal to those the memory of which he has preserved.

94. Crossing to Europe - It would appear that Paul reached Troas under the direction of the guiding Spirit without being aware whither his steps were next to be turned. But could he doubt what the divine intention was when, gazing across the silver streak of the Hellespont, he beheld the shores of Europe on the other side? He was now within the charmed circle where for ages civilization had had her home; and he could not be entirely ignorant of those stories of war and enterprise and those legends of love and valor which have made it forever bright and dear to the heart of mankind.

At only four miles' distance lay the Plain of Troy, where Europe and Asia encountered each other in the struggle celebrated in Homer's immortal song. Not far off Xerxes, sitting on a marble throne, reviewed the three millions of Asiatics with which he meant to bring Europe to his feet. On the other side of that narrow strait lay Greece and Rome, the centers from which issued the learning, the commerce and the armies which governed the world. Could his heart, so ambitious for the glory of CHRIST, fail to be fired with the desire to cast himself upon these strongholds, or could he doubt that the Spirit was leading him forward to this enterprise? He knew that Greece, with all her wisdom, lacked that knowledge which makes wise unto salvation, and that the Romans, though they were the conquerors of this world, did not know the way of winning an inheritance in the world that is to come; but in his breast he carried the secret which they both required.

95. It may have been such thoughts, dimly moving in his mind, that projected themselves into the vision which he saw at Troas; or was it the vision which first awakened the idea of crossing to Europe? As he lay asleep, with the murmur of the AEgean in his ears, he saw a man standing on the opposite coast, on which he had been looking before he went to rest, beckoning and crying, "**Come over into Macedonia and help us.**" That figure represented Europe, and its cry for help Europe's need of CHRIST. Paul recognized in it a divine summons; and the very next sunset which bathed the Hellespont in its golden light shone upon his figure seated on the deck of a ship the prow of which was moving toward the shore of Macedonia.

96. In this passage of Paul, from Asia to Europe, a great providential decision was taking effect, of which, as children of the West, we cannot think without the profoundest thankfulness. Christianity arose in Asia and among an Oriental people; and it might have been expected to spread first among those races to which the Jews were most akin. Instead of coming west, it might have gone eastward. It might have penetrated into Arabia and taken possession of those regions where the faith of the False Prophet now holds sway. It might have visited the wandering tribes of Central Asia and, piercing its way down through the passes of the Himalayas, reared its temples on the banks of the Ganges, the Indus and the Godavery. It might have traveled farther east to deliver the swarming millions of China from the cold secularism of Confucius. Had it done so, missionaries from India and Japan might have been coming to England and America at the present day to tell the story of the Cross. But Providence conferred on Europe a blessed priority, and the fate of our continent was decided when Paul crossed the AEgean.

97. Macedonia - As Greece lay nearer than Rome to the shore of Asia, its conquest for CHRIST was the great achievement of his second missionary journey. Like the rest of the world it was at that time under the sway of Rome, and the Romans had divided it into two provinces - Macedonia in the north and Achaia in the south. Macedonia was, therefore, the first scene of Paul's Greek mission. It was traversed from east to west by a great Roman road, along which the missionary moved, and the places where we have accounts of his labors are Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea.

98. The Greek character in this northern province was much less corrupted than in the more polished society to the south. In the Macedonian population there still lingered something of the vigor and courage which four centuries before had made its soldiers the conquerors of the world. The churches which Paul founded here gave him more comfort than any he established elsewhere. There are none of his Epistles more cheerful and cordial than those to the Thessalonians and the Philippians; and, as he wrote the latter late in life, the perseverance of the Macedonians in adhering to the Gospel must have been as remarkable as the welcome they gave it at the first. At Berea he even met with a generous and open-minded synagogue of Jews - the rarest occurrence in his experience.

99. Women and the Gospel - A prominent feature of the work in Macedonia was the part taken in it by women. Amid the general decay of religions throughout the world at this period, many women everywhere sought satisfaction for their religious instincts in the pure faith of the synagogue. In Macedonia, perhaps on account of its sound morality, these female proselytes were more numerous than elsewhere; and they pressed in large numbers into the Christian Church. This was a good omen; it was a prophecy of the happy change in the lot of women which Christianity was to produce in the nations of the West. If man owes much to CHRIST, woman owes still more. He has delivered her from the degradation of being man's slave and plaything and raised her to be his friend and his equal before Heaven; while, on the other hand, a new glory has been added to CHRIST's religion by the fineness and dignity with which it is invested when embodied in the female character.

These things were vividly illustrated in the earliest footsteps of Christianity on our continent. The first convert in Europe was a woman, at the first Christian service held on European soil the heart of Lydia being opened to receive the truth; and the change which passed upon her prefigured what woman in Europe was to become under the influence of Christianity. In the same town of Philippi there was seen, too, at the same time an equally representative image of the condition of woman in Europe before the Gospel reached it, in a poor girl, possessed of a spirit of divination and held in slavery by men who were making gain out of her misfortune, whom Paul restored to sanity. Her misery and degradation were a symbol of the disfiguration, as Lydia's sweet and benevolent Christian character was of the transfiguration of womanhood.

100. Liberality of the Churches - Another feature which prominently marked the Macedonian churches was a spirit of liberality. They insisted on supplying the bodily wants of the missionaries; and, even after Paul had left them, they sent gifts to meet his necessities in other towns. Long afterward, when he was a prisoner at Rome, they deputed Epaphroditus, one of their teachers, to carry thither similar gifts to him and to act as his attendant. Paul accepted the generosity of these loyal hearts, though in other places he would work his fingers to the bone and forego his natural rest rather than accept similar favors. Nor was their willingness to give due to superior wealth. On the contrary, they gave out of deep poverty. They were poor to begin with,

and they were made poorer by the persecutions which they had to endure. These were very severe after Paul left, and they lasted long. Of course they had broken first of all on Paul himself. Though he was so successful in Macedonia, he was swept out of every town at last like the offscourings of all things. It was generally by the Jews that this was brought about. They either fanaticized the mob against him, or accused him before the Roman authorities of introducing a new religion or disturbing the peace or proclaiming a king who would be a rival to Caesar. They would neither go into the kingdom of Heaven themselves nor suffer others to enter.

101. But GOD protected His servant. At Philippi He delivered him from prison by a physical miracle and by a miracle of grace still more marvelous wrought upon his cruel jailer; and in other towns He saved him by more natural means. In spite of bitter opposition, churches were founded in city after city, and from these the glad tidings sounded out over the whole province of Macedonia.

102. Achaia - When, leaving Macedonia, Paul proceeded south into Achaia, he entered the real Greece - the paradise of genius and renown. The memorials of the country's greatness rose around him on his journey. As he quitted Berea, he could see behind him the snowy peaks of Mount Olympus, where the deities of Greece had been supposed to dwell. Soon he was sailing past Thermopylae, where the immortal Three Hundred stood against the barbarian myriads; and, as his voyage neared its close, he saw before him the island of Salamis, where again the existence of Greece was saved from extinction by the valor of her sons.

103. Athens - His destination was Athens, the capital of the country. As he entered the city, he could not be insensible to the great memories which clung to its streets and monuments. Here the human mind had blazed forth with a splendor it has never exhibited elsewhere. In the golden age of its history Athens possessed more men of the very highest genius than have ever lived in any other city. To this day their names invest it with glory. Yet even in Paul's day the living Athens was a thing of the past. Four hundred years had elapsed since its golden age, and in the course of these centuries it had experienced a sad decline. Philosophy had degenerated into sophistry, art into dilettanteism, oratory into rhetoric, poetry into versemaking. It was a city living on its past. Yet it still had a great name and was full of culture and learning of a kind. It swarmed with so-called philosophers of different schools, and with teachers and professors of every variety of knowledge; and thousands of strangers of the wealthy class, collected from all parts of the world, lived there for study or the gratification of their intellectual tastes. It still represented to an intelligent visitor one of the great factors in the life of the world.

104. With the amazing versatility which enabled him to be all things to all men, Paul adapted himself to this population also. In the market-place, the lounge of the learned, he entered into conversation with students and philosophers, as Socrates had been wont to do on the same spot five centuries before. But he found even less appetite for the truth than the wisest of the Greeks had met with. Instead of the love of truth an insatiable intellectual curiosity possessed the inhabitants. This made them willing enough to tolerate the advances of anyone bringing before them a new doctrine; and, as long as Paul was merely developing the speculative part of his message, they listened to him with pleasure. Their interest seemed to deepen, and at last a multitude of them conveyed him to Mars' Hill, in the very center of the splendors of their city, and requested a full statement of his faith. He complied with their wishes and in the magnificent speech he there made them, gratified their peculiar tastes to the full, as in sentences of the noblest eloquence he unfolded the great truths of the unity of GOD and the unity of man, which

lie at the foundation of Christianity. But, when he advanced from these preliminaries to touch the consciences of his audience and address them about their own salvation, they departed in a body and left him talking.

105. He quitted Athens and never returned to it. Nowhere else had he so completely failed. He had been accustomed to endure the most violent persecution and to rally from it with a light heart. But there is something worse than persecution to a fiery faith like his, and he had to encounter it here: his message roused neither interest nor opposition. The Athenians never thought of persecuting him; they simply did not care what the babbler said; and this cold disdain cut him more deeply than the stones of the mob or the lictors' rods. Never perhaps was he so much depressed. When he left Athens, he moved on to Corinth, the other great city of Achaia; and he tells us himself that he arrived there in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

106. Corinth - There was in Corinth enough of the spirit of Athens to prevent these feelings from being easily assuaged. Corinth was to Athens very much what Glasgow is to Edinburgh. The one was the commercial, the other the intellectual capital of the country. Even the situations of the two places in Greece resembled in some respects those of these two cities in Scotland. But the Corinthians also were full of disputatious curiosity and intellectual hauteur. Paul dreaded the same kind of reception as he had met with in Athens. Could it be that these were people for whom the Gospel had no message? This was the staggering question which was making him tremble. There seemed to be nothing in them on which the Gospel could take hold: they appeared to feel no wants which it could satisfy.

107. There were other elements of discouragement in Corinth. It was the Paris of ancient times - a city rich and luxurious, wholly abandoned to sensuality. Vice displayed itself without shame in forms which struck deadly despair into Paul's pure Jewish mind. Could men be rescued from the grasp of such monstrous vices? Besides, the opposition of the Jews rose here to unusual virulence. He was compelled at length to depart from the synagogue altogether, and did so with expressions of strong feeling. Was the soldier of CHRIST going to be driven off the field and forced to confess that the Gospel was not suited for cultured Greece? It looked like it.

108. But the tide turned. At the critical moment Paul was visited with one of those visions which were wont to be vouchsafed to him at the most trying and decisive crises of his history. The Lord appeared to him in the night, saying, "**Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.**" The apostle took courage again, and the causes of discouragement began to clear away. The opposition of the Jews was broken, when they hurried him with mob violence before the Roman governor, Gallio, but were dismissed from the tribunal with ignominy and disdain. The very president of the synagogue became a Christian, and conversions multiplied among the native Corinthians. Paul enjoyed the solace of living under the roof of two leal-hearted friends of his own race and his own occupation, Aquila and Priscilla. He remained a year and a half in the city and founded one of the most interesting of his churches, thus planting the standard of the cross in Achaia also and proving that the Gospel was the power of GOD unto salvation even in the headquarters of the world's wisdom.

THE THIRD JOURNEY

109. It must have been a thrilling story Paul had to tell at Jerusalem and Antioch when he returned from his second journey; but he had no disposition to rest on his laurels, and it was not long before he set out on his third Journey.

110. In Asia - It might have been expected that, having in his second journey planted the Gospel in Greece, he would in his third have made Rome his principal aim. But, if the map be referred to, it will be observed that, in the midst, between the regions of Asia Minor which he evangelized during his first journey and the provinces of Greece in which he planted churches in his second journey, there was a hiatus - the populous province of Asia, in the west of Asia Minor. It was on this region that he descended in his third journey. Staying for no less than three years in Ephesus, its capital, he effectively filled up the gap and connected together the conquests of his former campaigns. This journey included, indeed, at its beginning, a visitation of all the churches formerly founded in Asia Minor and, at its close, a flying visit to the churches of Greece; but, true to his plan of dwelling only on what was new in each journey, the author of the Acts has supplied us only with the details relating to Ephesus.

111. Ephesus - This city was at that time the Liverpool of the Mediterranean. It possessed a splendid harbor, in which was concentrated the traffic of the sea which was then the highway of the nations; and, as Liverpool has behind her the great towns of Lancashire, so had Ephesus behind and around her such cities as those mentioned along with her in the epistles to the churches in the book of Revelation - Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. It was a city of vast wealth, and it was given over to every kind of pleasure, the fame of its theater and race-course being world-wide.

112. But Ephesus was still more famous as a sacred city. It was a seat of the worship of the goddess Diana, whose temple was one of the most celebrated shrines of the ancient world. This temple was enormously rich and harbored great numbers of priests. At certain seasons of the year it was a resort for flocks of pilgrims from the surrounding regions; and the inhabitants of the town flourished by ministering in various ways to this superstition. The goldsmiths drove a trade in little silver models of the image of the goddess which the temple contained and which was said to have fallen from Heaven. Copies of the mystic characters engraven on this ancient relic were sold as charms. The city swarmed with wizards, fortune-tellers, interpreters of dreams and other gentry of the like kind, who traded on the mariners, merchants and pilgrims who frequented the port.

113. Paul's work had therefore to assume the form of a polemic against superstition. He wrought such astonishing miracles in the name of JESUS that some of the Jewish palterers with the invisible world attempted to cast out devils by invoking the same name; but the attempt issued in their signal discomfiture. Other professors of magical arts were converted to the Christian faith and burnt their books. The vendors of superstitious objects saw their trade slipping through their fingers. To such an extent did this go at one of the festivals of the goddess that the silversmiths, whose traffic in little images had been specially smitten, organized a riot against Paul, which took place in the theater and was so successful that he was forced to quit the city.

114. But he did not go before Christianity was firmly established in Ephesus, and the beacon of the Gospel was twinkling brightly on the Asian coast, in response to that which was shining from the shores of Greece on the other side of the AEgean. We have a monument of his success in the churches lying all around Ephesus which John addressed a few years afterward in the

Apocalypse; for they were probably the indirect fruit of Paul's labors. But we have a far more astonishing monument of it in the Epistle to the Ephesians. This is perhaps the profoundest book in existence; yet its author evidently expected the Ephesians to understand it. If the orations of Demosthenes, with their closely packed arguments between the articulations of which even a knife cannot be thrust, be a monument of the intellectual greatness of the Greece which listened to them with pleasure; if the plays of Shakespeare, with their deep views of life and their obscure and complex language, be a testimony to the strength of mind of the Elizabethan Age, which could enjoy such solid fare in a place of entertainment; then the Epistle to the Ephesians, which sounds the lowest depths of Christian doctrine and scales the loftiest heights of Christian experience, is a testimony to the proficiency which Paul's converts had attained under his preaching in the capital of Asia.

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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