

October 28, 1928

Acts 20:28-38

28. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.

29. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock;

30. And from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

31. Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears.

32. 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.

33. I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35. In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all.

37. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him,

38. Sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

What particular point did Paul emphasize?

In this lesson Paul emphasized his unselfishness, "I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." He wanted the disciples to understand that his preaching was not for any material gain, but only that they should understand Truth.

Is it wise to warn people of impending danger without telling them how to avoid the calamity?

One should never put fear into the mind of another, or mention impending danger, without also emphasizing the saving power of God.

Did Paul cover this point in the lesson for today?

Yes. After telling his followers that grievous wolves would enter the flock and that even among themselves men would arise, speaking perverse things, he said, "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."

In verse 35 of this lesson Paul quotes Jesus as saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Where else in the Bible is this statement which is attributed by Paul to Jesus?

This quotation which Paul attributes to Jesus is nowhere else recorded in the Scriptures. Concerning it a footnote in Ferrar Fenton's translation says: "This quotation . . . proves that St. Paul had been personally acquainted with Him [Jesus], and I might add references to other parts of this apostle's writings to confirm the fact, as well as to passages in the Gospels."

Which among the admonitions of Jesus most closely approaches the statement, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"?

In the Gospel according to Luke is found the following parallel to the quotation by Paul, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom."

October 20, 1929

Acts 20:33-35

33. I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35. In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Do we emulate and indorse the position of Paul, as given in verse 34. "Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me"?

No; we do not approve Paul's actions entirely. Paul was a tentmaker and labored at his trade to support himself and companions, while he preached the Gospel to the people. We think that Paul should have taught Truth and looked to God for his supply and support without laboring with his hands.

How can those who become weary with their work make it light and easy?

Burdensome work may be lightened by one's understanding and realizing that God through Christ will take away the burden of work. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1935

Acts 20:33-35
33. I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35. In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Why does the metaphysician combine will and understanding in his study?

Because in order to succeed in his efforts man must express both faculties. Neither alone is sufficient to the perfect expression of man's higher and better self.

What does Paul symbolize in today's lesson?

Paul is a symbol of the will acting in conjunction with the word, which in turn reveals illumined understanding.

What is the first step in the transformation of the will?

The overcoming of covetousness comes first, because covetousness is the most self-centered form of personality, and man must give up personality in order to manifest the divine will.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1923.

36. And when he had thus spoken, he
kneeled down and prayed with them all.
37. And they all wept sore, and fell
on Paul's neck and kissed him,
38. Sorrowing most of all for the word
which he had spoken, that they should be-
hold his face no more. And they brought
him on his way into the ship.

*What should we be thankful for,
above all else?*

Above all else we should be thank-
ful that we understand Truth as
taught and demonstrated by Jesus
Christ.

April 5, 1903
Acts 20:28-30

(See October 28, 1928 for scripture)

INTERPRETATION

We do not, in the beginning abide in the consciousness of the Truth perpetually. It seems to leave us at times. Yet we know that God is omnipresent: then why this seeming departure of His Spirit at certain periods of our experience? The answer is that we have a work to do for ourselves. The Spirit of Truth plants the seed and works with us for the space of three years, which is the fulfillment of action in mind, idea, and expression, the Divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Church at Ephesus is made up of all our thoughts about substance. Manifest substance is the outgrowth of an idea in the one Spirit-mind. The body is Substance formed out of Substance manifest. Expressed Substance is the universal ether of Science, the akasa of esoteric Buddhism. It is invisible to the eye of sense, but may be felt in nerve energy. It penetrates matter and is not subject to gravity or any of the limitations of the molecule. In the brain we may call it thought-stuff, in the body it is vital energy.

This inner substance is moved and formed by ideas. When centered in the man consciousness, these make ecclesia, or church, which really means an organized body of thoughts. This is our "flock" which we are to oversee and feed with Spiritual ideas.

The "grievous wolves," which we are warned against, are the hungry thoughts of the world at large. These are undisciplined, though at the foundation they are hunting the good. When they find entry among our orderly thoughts they produce inharmony. We should always make our minds positive when in close association with those who think and talk error. If we do not do this, their error thoughts will enter into some of these subconscious centres, and cause us trouble.

"Also of your own selves shall men arise."

Not even all of our own ideas are converted to the Truth, but some of them rise up and pervert the doctrine. This tendency of one's own thoughts to combat the Truth and attempt to win to the error the right thoughts is one of the most exasperating conditions we have to meet. Sometimes it is like two or more people talking in ^{our} own thoughts, and the arguments on the mortal side are so convincing that we are led by them.

The only sure guide out of this medley of thoughts that rise up within us is, commit yourself to God and "the Word of His grace." That "Word of grace" realized in the mind by all who earnestly ask for Divine guidance.

When we realize how unselfishly the Spirit of Truth has labored with us to lift us into higher conditions we should be moved to help others. The greatest blessings come to us from doing good where we expect no reward. It is said that the faces of those people who do good in secret fairly shine, because of the inward joy of the Spirit. Small satisfaction comes from good works done with ostentation. The philanthropist who loves to see his name blazoned in public gets but a transitory satisfaction. It is blessed to give in the right spirit--even more blessed to give than it is to receive.

(UNITY magazine)

January 3, 1914

Acts 20:17-35

17. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church.
18. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time.
19. Serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews;
20. How I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house.
21. Testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.
22. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:
23. Save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.
24. But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.
25. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more.
26. Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.
27. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God.
28. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.
29. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock;
30. And from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.
31. Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears.
32. 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.
33. I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.
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SILENT PRAYER: *I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.*

A study of the life of Paul reveals a type of mind which we classify in this day as the spiritually illuminated. He was more than a psychic, he had spiritual understanding.

One may be opened to see thought-forms, and apparently know a great deal more about the occult than the ordinary individual, yet at the same time lack spiritual understanding. The difference between a commercial clairvoyant and a Spiritual Seer is found in the *understanding* quality of the mind. One sees thought-images but does not know their real significance, while the other not only sees but knows as well. To be a psychic and not have real spiritual

understanding is dangerous. Those who do not have psychic vision give deference to those who do, and take for granted that they are possessed of superior knowledge, when in fact they may be very ignorant. This assumption of wisdom leads to a certain mortal egotism on the part of the psychic and the study of real Truth is neglected. There is no profit in visions and dreams unless the understanding is also there as the interpreter. In Egypt the baker, the butler and the king dreamed dreams but it took a Joseph to interpret them.

Paul had open vision after his conversion on the way to Damascus. On that occasion his inner sight and hearing were quickened, but his spiritual understanding was not opened until after three years' study in Arabia. He is silent about that experience, but had he written of it he would doubtless have told of meditations and illuminations similar to those which all people have who get into the higher realms of mind.

Students of Truth find that meekness is very necessary in order to open the mentality to the realm of pure ideas. Paul developed this humility, and it was a remarkable achievement for one who formerly had such large self-sufficiency.

Because Paul was a very great apostle, and wise in spiritual things far beyond us in many ways, it does not follow that he was perfect, or that we should accept as gospel truth all that he wrote. He had his weak spots. In this lesson he proclaims that he is going to Jerusalem "bound in the spirit." This is not a wise affirmation for one who is preaching freedom from bonds; neither is the one that he is going to Jerusalem, in spite of the warnings of the Holy Ghost that "bonds and afflictions" await him there. It seems that he was told by the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem, but his obstinacy and persistence, which he had so long held in abeyance, broke forth on this occasion and he is just going to have his own way in spite of divine warnings.

So we find in our spiritual ongoing that old states of mind which we thought were wholly overcome, crop out again and have to be demonstrated over. Spiritual obedience will save us from hard experiences. Had Paul been obedient he would have avoided the years of imprisonment in Jerusalem and Rome. The Lord does not put trials upon us nor are we bound in doing his work. "Where Christ is there is liberty."

UNITY magazine

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1925.

Acts 20:25-38.

25. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more.

26. Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

27. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God.

28. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.

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38. Sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

What great idea is Paul trying to impress upon his followers in the lesson for today?

In this lesson Paul is endeavoring to impress upon his followers the idea that they to whom he has taught the living Gospel should beware of teachers who would attempt to promulgate perverse doctrines and to draw the disciples away from the Truth.

What particular point did Paul emphasize?

In this lesson Paul emphasized his unselfishness: "I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." He wanted the disciples to understand that his preaching

was not for any material gain, but only that they should understand Truth.

Is it wise to warn people of impending danger without telling them how to escape the calamity?

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Which among the admonitions of Jesus most closely approaches this statement: "It is more blessed to give than to receive"?

In the Gospel by Luke is found the following parallel to the quotation by Paul: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom."

Is the giving referred to by Paul and Jesus restricted to material things?

The giving of material things unaccompanied by a helpful thought or word is futile. We should always accompany our gifts with some substantial thought or word. To give to charity with the idea that it is charity and that the one receiving the gift is in great need, increases the lack and sows broadcast the need of a larger charity. Giving without wisdom is hazardous.

March 12, 1950
Acts 20:28

28. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO "FEED THE CHURCH OF THE LORD"?

The church represents an aggregation of spiritual thoughts in consciousness. We must nourish and sustain the spiritual side of our nature if we are to stand fast in the Truth.

March 12, 1950
Acts 20:17, 18

17. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church.

18. And when they were come to him, he said unto them,

Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time.

INTERPRETATION

WHAT DO THE ELDERS SIGNIFY?

They signify the intelligent, directive powers of the spiritual self. Paul's calling the elders together represents a drawing together in conscious unity of the spiritual powers, to the end that peace and harmony may be established in the life.

PAUL REMINDED THE ELDERS OF THE CONSISTENCY OF HIS LIFE AMONG THEM. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STATEMENT?

Paul represents the creative word of Truth, which is always present when the directive powers are assembled.

October 28, 1928
Acts 20:17-21

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18. And when they were come to him, he said unto them,

Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time.

19. Serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews;

20. How I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house,

21. Testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

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May 14, 1939

Acts 20:17-21

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20. How I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house,

21. Testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why is Paul represented as sending to Ephesus from Miletus, calling to him the elders of the church?

Miletus (scarlet; purest wool) refers to the seemingly material life in the organism. The transformed desire of the individual is called into the seemingly material life, where it may hear and be quickened by the word of Truth.

What distinguishes the word of Truth from man's ordinary words?

The spirit of humility (all lowliness of mind), genuine feeling (tears), the power to endure tests of faith (trials by the plots of the Jews), courage (declaring anything that was profitable), inculcating a change of mind towards God and faith towards Jesus Christ.

Of what are Jews and Gentiles symbols in this lesson?

Of the formless and the formed aspects of mind, respectively.