

Acts

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Date: 05 June 1974

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- [0 : 00] May the Lord, by the Holy Spirit, make it our sacred pleasure to direct you to our lesson, the 14th chapter in the Acts of the Apostles, reading verse the 22nd.
- Chapter the 14th in the Acts and verse the 22nd.
- And a holy spiritual triad in the work to be accomplished by every God-ordained minister in the churches of Christ.
- And it is complete in itself. It is a complete spiritual entity.
- And we may well say that it is a summary of the long pastoral ministry that the flock here enjoyed.
- [2 : 35] Dear Mr. Dawson was instrumental in the three branches that are here declared.
- And I am disposed to say and declare this to the glory of God, that undoubtedly his works following him, this work is still being accomplished in your midst.
- We shall rather tend to tense the subject initially before concentrating on this sacred terminology given by St. Luke and the divine inspiration concerning the ministry of that great pastor, Paul the Apostle.
- Oh, what a father in God he was. He said himself, Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers.
- In Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel. What a glorious privilege for any man to be an instrument unto the begetting of children for Christ, his own chosen.
- [4 : 43] And I am going to say at once that these will be our crown of rejoicing within the veil when we reach the happy land.
- What a crown of rejoicing. The sweetness of this causes my spirit to almost leap within me.
- And immediately, therefore, let us name to you what is projected into the vision of Thy concerning this great man of God.
- This man who was used of God as the greatest theologian of the Christian church.
- You think in all his epistles and the prison epistles, how he enunciated all the holy doctrines of the church.
- [6 : 19] The devil was nonplussed as he always is. He thought to frustrate and incarcerate the apostle, and therefore inhibit the whole of his work.
- Instead of that, as he was incarcerated, so he writes. He writes a considerable portion of the canon of Scripture.
- So God wonderfully called him, divinely anointed him, and made him, and made him, as we have said, the greatest theologian of the Christian faith and church.
- Also, and I am afraid this is a term that is rather disliked by some, that it is a true term, he became a great missionary.

think of the mission field of St. Paul into Asia and Europe, and no doubt, through him, through those who were called under him, the gospel first came to the shores of Great Britain.

[8 : 13] God called him to this work. In fact, we have been following his missionary course, the first one in our lesson.

I understand, just an aside observation, I understand the perhaps suspicion that some may feel in their minds, possibly because there has been unreality with some who have the process to go forth into the world, but when you come to think of it, what a command Christ gave when he lifted up his holy hands at Bethany and blessed them.

What a command he gave when he declared as the man Christ Jesus, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations. nations. Not a few, not the western world, all nations.

This gospel is destined to spread to every land. Do you believe it?

[10 : 07] this evangel must reach every tribe, every tongue, every people, this message that Paul carried.

when you think, those of you who have read history to any depth of the completely pagan state of Britain in those early centuries, and the marvelous transformation of this island and its inhabitants by Christianity, I say this as an aside observation, but when you come to think of the blessings pendant upon the coming of Christianity to this country, the divine life, the holy light, the people led in that living way, that what

I was thinking of then, lesser things, but things that are important, Christianity gave us our first hospitals, our first schools, all the great London teaching hospitals were founded by Christianity, you think of the profound blessings that have accrued to every nation that has received by faith our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, every useful and invaluable institution stemmed from Christianity.

It is a wonderful consideration. And let us for a moment then ponder this.

[12 : 40] go ye therefore, that is, invested with divine authority and unction and power.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations. Christianity must touch every nation before the second advent.

I wonder whether we have failed. I wonder what is the measure of our failure to communicate, to tell out the wonders, what I have turned this evangel, that is, the message of the gospel, which covers the whole of the work and life of our blessed Savior.

go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded thee, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Amen. How beautiful. Now our apostle knew that. he could say, as he wrote, 1st Corinthians, I am what I am by the grace of God, and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, for I labored more abundantly than they are, yet not I, but the grace of God which is in there.

[14 : 58] And he did. And so here you see this broad stream of the gospel sweeping over Asia, coming towards Europe, and you see the gospel coming to these three cities, cities, in the land that we know now as Turkey, and for a while he labored in these three cities, within a radius of something like 40 to 50 miles, three places.

by divine appointment, if you will say to me, how did he know where to go, I can give you an answer in less than a minute, and it is this, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, his own words, Romans 8, that is how he knew, they are led by the Spirit of God, that is how he knew, as we were speaking at Cranbrook, Providence, quite near to this chapter, the Lord never failed him, he told him where to go, and what a word this is for ministers of the gospel, let me quote another scripture, a terminal scripture in

St. Mark that includes the first principle in our text, it is this, and listen carefully to it, and they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming his word with signs following, they went forth and preached the word everywhere, and if you say, what is this, how may this be defined everywhere, you already have the answer in the scripture quoted, for as many as are led by the

Spirit of God, that's the answer, it's the Spirit's work, it's not man's work, everywhere, where the Spirit of God leaves you, behold, I have set before thee an open door, no man can shut it, this is it, and the Lord does that, so, this is how the apostle, our apostle, I love to call him our apostle, because he is, he is my apostle, your apostle, now the next point that emerges in my mind is, and there's a key word in the first part of the chapter, where did he go, why did he go there, because he was led in the

Spirit, and for this while in these three, these three cities, or this region, you know you can more or less visualize it, I don't know distances very well here at Bethesden, but if you think of the radius of something like 40 miles and three places, fairly close together, and there he labored for a while, and when he came to Lystra there, he had mainly a Gentile congregation or audience, he did not go into the synagogue of the

[20 : 13] Jews, these were Gentiles, now, what I wanted to say next was this, there is a key word in the first verse of this chapter, you will say, how did he preach, or, you may frame the question another way, how did the Spirit of God work through him, in him and through him, for the Spirit of God has divers ways of working, sometimes there would be a miracle, sometimes it would be just the preaching of the gospel, various ways, but the key word word, as to how he preached, and how the Spirit of God worked in him and through him, is a very small word, but it is a word that sheds a wonderful light on the whole secret of his fruitful ministry, and the amazing fruitfulness of his apostleship, and that word is sow, s-o, and sow, stank, and that reveals the whole of the spiritual content of his ministry, now, if you want to know the meaning of that small word, sow, and sow, stank, see, the Spirit of God, and as he inspired

St. Luke to write this, he did not cause him to write and spake, but to define it, and sow, spake, but what is the answer, what is the meaning, sow, spake, every God-sent minister knows this secret, why was his, ministry, so efficacious, so fruitful, so successful, and why did it cause such an upheaval, and why were the powers of darkness so stirred by it, you know, there are two sides to a powerful ministry, that is the ministry of the Spirit,

I would rather speak of the ministry of the Spirit than name men, the ministry of the Spirit through men is a powerful ministry, now there are two sides, this is highly successful and owned and blessed of God for the conversion of sinners, the quickening of sinners, the regeneration of God's dead elect, the revelation of Christ, the feeding of their souls, and so on, there's another side to it, and that is it greatly stirs the powers of darkness, what minister of God has failed to prove it, you can rejoice in the Spirit's work, you can rejoice in blessings, and the

Lord blessing souls, but if the Lord does this, it will not be long before the devil roars, this greatly moves the powers of darkness, and this is something that some people do not appear to understand, how do you get on in your own soul, if you have a sweet blessing, don't you prove that before very long the adversary is very active to bruise and distress your mind, and you think of the temptations that God's dear servants have to go through, when the powers of darkness are stirred, if a sermon is of the Holy Ghost, no mistake, that sermon stirs the devil, as well as effecting blessing, and in fact, if the devil was not stirred, we should have to come to a conclusion that there was not much in it, because we should see the pattern of the word of

God, and here is the pattern of the word of God, God, and here will be well now, let me fulfill my pledge, what is the interpretation of so, and so spake, you have it in Corinthians, first Corinthians, and I want just to refer to it this afternoon, already I have named this in prayer, he says, and I brethren, chapter 2, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know, now this is the soul, this is how he preached, for I determined not to know anything among you save

[27 : 20] Jesus Christ and him crucified, now these are the two key verses, this is the interpretation of the soul, and so spake, thirst, and I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, and so spake, ah, what's the other facet, and my speech, and my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit, and of power, and so spake, this is it, there's no other preaching that is efficacious only, this.

God knows that although it is a lifelong process of discipline and pain to the flesh, flesh, it must be so, God knows how I covet these two facets in preaching the gospel, I would come in no other way, my friends, than this, and I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, that can never be attractive to the flesh, can it?

That must be a process of pain, because it means emptying, stripping, bringing low, buffeting, with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

Ah, then the filling, my speech, and my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom.

If he had yielded to the temptation, he could have used tremendous pairs of man's wisdom, for probably he had one of the greatest brains of any man that have ever lived, and with his enormous knowledge, but now he divested himself of this.

[30 : 20] My speech, and my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit, and of terror.

Now let me reiterate, the Lord knows how I covet those facets. words. What a solemn thing it would be if I came into Union Chapel pulpit this afternoon in any other way.

I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And that's true, that my speech and my preaching not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power.

And so spake. That's the secret. The whole secret. There's a great sweetness in this for me.

That was the secret of your pastor's ministry, who is in glory. He had many afflictions and many infirmities.

[31 : 50] The whole of the secret is in those two verses. And so spake. really, before I pass, I want just to put it to you, really, this is a summary, very considerably, a summary of the whole Christian life and experience.

The Lord bringing down, emptying, killing, stripping, so that you're in that very place.

I was with you in weakness, fear, and much strength. And some of you may be ready to say, very soberly, yes, that describes my life.

That is how I am. But then, it is purposeful. the Lord empties, so that he should fill you with the spirit.

He strips you to clothe you, he kills you to make you alive, he wounds you to heal you, he makes you sore to bind you up.

[33 : 21] I remember when I was in St. Mary's Hospital of Eastbourne some years ago, for a very, very painful operation, I said to my surgeon when he came round one day, I said, you know, your work and mine are similar.

And he said, well, spell it out. I said, that's simple. I said, you wounded me, you sorely wounded me to heal me.

And I said, that's just what the ministry does by the spirit. It wounds sinners in order to heal them. He said, I see, and you'll prove it, and you do prove it, don't you?

You see, if you're going to know this other side, the demonstration of the spirit and power and the blessing, you must first of all have the preparatory work.

And it's not easy for a proud mortal, as we are. We are proud mortals, proud and independent.

[34 : 49] A dear minister of God who is now in glory, an eminent minister with us. I remember him saying to me once, only a few years before he passed, entered his rest, he said, I have two inveterate evils, pride and independence.

So you see, we don't like, do we, coming into this, I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

of course it would be a sad affair if it stopped there, wouldn't it? But the purpose of God is to use those that he has anointed and so does this demonstration of the spirit and of power.

you take for a moment, I feel that I must say this to you, take for a moment Christ.

Now, you know when you think of Christ that the right esteem for Christ is that he should be very, very precious, more precious than all things beside, to really feel it, you know that, well, what is the preparation for it?

[36 : 31] It is to be a poor, wretched, needy sinner. It is to know more and more of your sinfulness.

I don't mean now by breaking out into ways of sin, I mean by the spirit convincing you. It's to be a poor, guilty, sinful wretch.

Broken hearted is sin. And then is he precious? but if you go along and your heart is hard, you can talk about Christ, but you don't feel his precious grace, not in the way that you wish to.

sin, and so you see how much this must be multiplied in the ministry. Weakness, fear, much trembling, demonstration of the spirit, power, and so state, the secret.

That's the nucleus. wonderful, isn't it? So state. And I think of this great man, as God made him, I think too of that amazing word that we have concerning him, that is measurably obscured.

[38 : 20] In this way, that when he had been taken up into paradise, and then came back, there was a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to battle him.

Have you got it? And he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him.

Lord, I don't want there, so I want a different way of living. In fact, I quite believe, according to the whole tenor of that paragraph, that he quite concluded that the Lord would respond to his entreatment and remove it.

But he didn't. Not then, at any rate. he answered him.

He said, look, my grace is sufficient for this. You may have been saying, I don't know how I can go on, Lord.

[39 : 31] How can I go on? it's so hard to go on nightly. My grace is sufficient for this.

For my strength is made perfect, complete, in weakness. weakness. And he was kept weak in himself.

There's no other way, is there? You imagine any man who was buoyant in himself as a man, and went with all the natural fleshly confidence in the world, into the pulpit, whatever would you get.

The people of God would soon be able to give an answer. And this is just the sign of the Lord's people.

He brings us lower and lower and lower, sanctified, it. You fall into his arms.

[40 : 55] Christ is all and in all. He is very precious. And so stified. This is how he preached.

Now, there is another scripture that presents itself to my mind, and that is, I may take up the divine perfection of faithfulness.

When the Lord spake to Ananias in the city that we are very familiar with now, Damascus, Ananias, could hardly credit that he was being sent to this man, the one that he knew to be, the arch persecutor.

But the Lord, the Lord had a dialogue with Ananias. They taught together, they communed together, the Lord and Ananias, and he said, he said to him, he said, go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me.

Before I continue that quotation, poor soul, do you hope you're a chosen vessel unto him? Chosen.

[42 : 44] You think of it, chosen vessel before you were born, chosen to be born again, to have your heart filled with the Spirit, to have Christ in you, the hope of glory, to know him, to be united to him, to have your sins forgiven, to be used by him, and then to go where he is.

Chosen vessel, happy soul, a chosen vessel. Isaacme unto me, So he said to him in this dialogue, 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 great things he must suffer for my sake and so and really this is a very sweet portion when you come to think of it deeply and so

Ananias must have felt a real love to him he did and the Lord said he is a chosen vessel unto me he felt a real love to him and yet he had been such a cruel person and so when he went in he said to him brother soul brother you see what grace does my thing brother soul the Lord even Jesus Jesus the name you hated hated first while the followers of whom you sought to exterminate to destroy this sect the Lord even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way in the way as thou camest as thou camest hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost did the Lord accomplish in this chapter in our text was accomplished how faithful our God is think of it think of it

I believe that this afternoon we may think like this it's a wonderful thought for a servant of God an anointed man there are those who are praising God in eternal glory for their salvation who were blessed and fed through us and who heard that sweet name through us I'm speaking of those now sent of God into the ministry what an honor think of it they're praising him and you declared that name to them on this earth and that gospel flowed through your heart and lips into their soul and that unction flowed from heaven through you into their souls and now they're there amen and and after settles and saying whoa who's that's so the let's you and that too