

## March 24

*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Hebrews 13:5*

WHY, then, should we fear what man may do unto us, or be distressed in regard to the Lord's work, as though Satan or any other evil power could prevail against it?

### R5184 "THE LESSON OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S WISDOM AND LOVE"

The Adversary's method of attack is well illustrated in the fall of our first parents. Mother Eve should have resisted the suggestion which came to her through the serpent--that God had forbidden that which was for their highest interest in life. She should have said, "I will not entertain such a thought; for to do so would be disloyal to my Creator." When the suggestion to eat came to Father Adam, apparently the thought came also, "You may as well join with her in the partaking of the food. It will be better to die together, for there will be no pleasure in life without her." Adam stopped to reason on the matter, but he did not have a sufficiency of knowledge to permit him to do so successfully. He should have said, "God knows; He arranged it. What He has said is enough for me. I will be true to Him, and trust the results to His Wisdom and Love."

*Obedience* is the lesson for us to learn from the experience of Adam and Eve. We have not a sufficiency of knowledge with which to reason on some subjects... The Father seeketh such to worship Him as will do so in spirit and in truth, and who have perfect confidence in Him as the One who is all-wise and all-loving to direct and guide their affairs. Those who do not learn this lesson of trust, will not be fit for the responsibilities to be put upon the glorified Church. Let us learn this lesson and be very positive in our endeavors to be in harmony with God.

*Faithfulness in trial* will develop the overcomers. The Lord does not wish to have in the Little Flock any who are disloyal in any sense of the word. They may be weak in many of the essentials of character, but they are all *loyal to God*. The Lord is seeking those who will *remain loyal* under trials and difficulties, and thus develop characters pleasing to Him. These are not alarmed at Satan's onslaughts, which are seen to be an occasion for an increase of faith; for greater is He that is on our part than are all that are against us!

In *Pilgrim's Progress* this inability of the Wicked One to touch the faithful people of God is very beautifully pictured. While walking in the narrow way, Christian beheld two lions; and for a moment he was terror-stricken. Christian studied the situation and decided to go forward. When he came near the lions, he found that *they were chained*. So it is with our adversaries. They can do no *harm* to the children of God. Although they may roar, yet they cannot injure the *New Creature*.

The New Creature may develop even when the outer man is perishing. Satan succeeded in having the chief priests and Pharisees cause the death of our Lord; but this was the very means by which He entered into glory. In His dealings with our Lord the Father has given us an illustration of His dealings with us. So we may know that even if Satan should appear to get the victory

Nevertheless, it is for us to show our devotion, not only by our zeal, but also by our prudence, ...therefore we are to proceed in the Lord's work as though the entire responsibility rested upon us, but in our hearts are to recognize that the entire weight and responsibility rest with the Lord.

over us, these "light afflictions" will, as we are told, "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." --2Cor. 4:17.

We know that we have no power with which to oppose Satan. None is sufficient for these things except the Lord. But He is greater than are Satan and all his angels. We are looking forward with the eye of faith to the things that are unseen. So it behooves us to be steadfast, immovable, full of faith, and therefore able to meet whatever the Father permits to come upon us."

R5539 "THE CHRISTIAN'S TOWER OF STRENGTH" *"The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."*--Hebrews 13:6...

No power in the Universe is able to cope with our God; and He has declared that He is the Support and Shield of His children. He is the Strong Tower of those who put their trust in Him.

If we abide in Christ and His Word abides in us, He will be our Deliverer in six troubles, and in the seventh He will not forsake us--because we have been called of God, because we have responded to that call, because we are seeking to glorify Him in our bodies. Hence we need not fear what any man can do unto us. The Apostle Paul, who exhorts us to courage and confident trust in God, was a noble example of courageous faith...

#### TRUE FAITH NOT PRESUMPTION

We should not say, The Lord is my Helper, and therefore He will not suffer my house to burn, nor burglars to break in and steal my belongings. I will not lock my doors at night; for the Lord is watching over me and mine. This would not be the spirit of a sound mind. It would not be true faith, but presumption. We should take all reasonable precautions to prevent losses of such kinds. The Lord expects us to do all in our power for our own protection, and not expect Him to work unnecessary miracles to protect us from our own carelessness and inefficiency. Under such circumstances He might allow us to become involved in difficulty and loss, and thus to learn a needed lesson. We are stewards of whatever the Lord has entrusted to us, and He expects us to exercise care in regard to whatever is properly under our care but belonging to Him. We should have buckets and water at hand so as to be ready in case of fire. We should have proper fastenings upon our doors and our windows. When our own duty is done, we are to leave ourselves fully in the Lord's hands, knowing that all will be well with us.

If the Lord permits seeming calamity to come, we may rest assured that it will work out our good, if we are properly exercised by the experience. After having done our part, we should trust all consequences to Him, not doubting that He will care for us in His own best way. The Lord will give us whatever help along temporal lines He sees is for the highest interests of the New Creature, if we do not remove ourselves from

Long ago some one said, "I am immortal until my work is finished;" and we may rely upon it that this is practically true of all engaged in the Lord's service -- that "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Z. '03-41

His keeping and seek to manage our own interests. Even in the event of such a mistake, if we come to see where we have been wilful and have leaned to our own understanding and renew full allegiance to the Lord, the difficulties in which we have become involved may prove to be a real blessing in opening our eyes to our wrong course, in showing us our own insufficiency to guide ourselves, and in bringing us wholly back to God.

#### "THAT WICKED ONE TOUCHETH HIM NOT"

Our highest interests, our real interests, are matters of our Father's constant care. If we keep very near to the Lord, we are protected from the power of the fallen angels, who would, if permitted, bring about our ensnarement and overthrow. They cannot really harm us if we are watching and keeping our garments white. Only a lack of faithfulness would subject us to their power to any extent so far as our New Creature interests are concerned. They can neither harm our bodies in any way nor cause any violence to us, unless the Lord permits it for our highest good--perhaps for our deliverance and exaltation, as in the case of our Master.

Let us, then, keep ourselves, that "that Wicked One touch us not." We are subject to various attacks by the deluded servants of the powers of darkness. There may be attacks upon our good name, our reputation, our bodies, or what not, with more or less legality. We are to a considerable extent subject to man, through "the powers that be." Yet our bitterest enemies are powerless to touch us, unless permitted by the Lord. And we cannot be touched by the great Adversary, if we remain true to our Covenant--true to the Vows we have taken to the Lord. The Adversary can never touch our real selves as New Creatures save by our own unfaithfulness.

#### WE WILL WORSHIP OUR GOD ALONE

It may be the will of God to permit us to suffer, just as He permitted John the Baptist to be imprisoned and finally beheaded, just as He permitted Jesus to be arrested and crucified, and He has permitted many of His saints in the past to be maltreated or killed. But we need not fear what men may do unto us, knowing that our God, whose we are and whom we serve, will be with us constantly, and will cause all things to work out His own glorious purposes *for us and in us*.

We would, of course, be glad to please men, if this were possible. But wherever it is a question of pleasing *God* or pleasing *man*, we will say, as did the three young Hebrews to the king of Babylon: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us....But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." We will not do anything contrary to the Divine will, to the command of Jehovah. We will worship our God alone!

When the Jewish Council (Acts 4:13-20) commanded the Apostles Peter and John

to speak no more in the name of Jesus, their reply was: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." When Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, said to our Lord on the night of His arrest and trial, "Knowest Thou that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?" Jesus answered: "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above." So it is with all the footstep followers of the Master. God's grace will be sufficient. Man is powerless to harm a hair of our heads, unless it is permitted of our Father in Heaven for His glory and our own highest welfare.

#### COURAGE BORN OF FAITH

The world has often wondered at the calmness of the Lord's humble little ones under circumstances which would cause the stoutest heart to quail. But to follow the course in life which will glorify our God and magnify His grace, to be able to meet wisely and courageously the trials and difficulties as they come to us as Christians, representatives of the King of Heaven, and to meet them in the spirit of rejoicing, counting our tribulations all joy, it is necessary that our hearts be in attune with the Lord, that we have no will but His, and that the fear of man, which bringeth a snare, shall be overcome. We cannot accomplish this in our own strength, but in the strength of God alone. We are instructed to fear Jehovah, and not to fear a weak mortal. The righteous are as bold as a lion, as gentle as a dove, as meek as a lamb. This peculiar combination of boldness, gentleness and meekness should characterize every Christian."

(Heb 13:5-6 KJV) *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. [6] So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."*

R4876 on Heb 13:5 "The Authorized Version of the Bible uses the word conversation in the broad sense of conduct, including, not only the words, but the looks and the acts of life. The force of the text, therefore, is, Let your conduct be without covetousness..."

The principle of covetousness is a principle of *selfish desire*. It may manifest itself in two ways: First, when it extends to another man's goods; and, second, when it pertains to things already in our possession. This is specially true of Christians, who have given themselves and all they have to the Lord. From the moment of such consecration all the powers possessed or to be possessed belong to the Lord; and to seek to use these for one's self and to refuse to use them in the service of the Lord would be holding back what belongs to the Lord... Some of the Lord's dear children fail to realize their privileges of (1) sacrifice, and (2) the cultivation of the spirit of contentment and generosity...

Spiritual Israel should use wisely such things as are within their reach, accepting all as God's gifts with thanksgiving. Their petitions should be for spiritual gifts, including *patient endurance* and *heart contentment*, accompanied with heartfelt thanks for blessings already received."

R2352 Highlights "BE CONTENT WITH SUCH THINGS AS YE HAVE...Heb. 13:5,6... If the forgiveness of his sins and reconciliation to the Lord, through the blood of the cross, the Christian's first experience in grace, was a great blessing that could scarcely be comprehended or measured, still more is this second blessing a cause for fullness of joy, in that it has brought to us begetting of the holy spirit, whereby we know that we are the sons of God, "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ..."

We, by the grace of God, have found the pearl of great price, and are not only content with the terms upon which it is offered to us, but most gladly, willingly, joyfully, we count all else but loss and dross...

All who have intelligently taken the position of followers of Christ, knew from their start in the narrow way to expect trials and difficulties and adversities, and have said to the Master:

"Not for ease or worldly pleasure,  
Nor for fame my prayer shall be;

Gladly will I toil and suffer,

Only let me walk with thee, close to thee."

We should view every affair and incident of this present life that is not painful as a cause for thankfulness to the Lord; because it is that much less than our covenant might legitimately require; for our Master distinctly informed us that the way was rugged, saying, "Whosoever will live godly in this present time shall suffer persecution." And furthermore, our Lord's own example of suffering and enduring patiently the mockings, slanders, evil speaking, and general contradiction of sinners against himself, and the examples of the Apostles, who followed closely in his footsteps in the same path, all indicate that, all things considered, we of the present time who "have not yet resisted unto blood [death], striving against sin" and the machinations of sinners and the wiles of the Adversary, have much to be thankful for, that our lines have fallen unto us in comparatively pleasant places. We have every reason for thankfulness, no reason for murmuring.

And not only are we to be appreciative of the smooth places along the "narrow way," in which the Lord gives rest to our weary feet, but we are to be thankful also for all the trials and tribulations... Viewed from the proper standpoint, all the trials and difficulties which come to us will be seen to be mercies and blessings, designed to shape us in conformity with the lines of character manifested in our Lord... To shrink back from and to avoid the trials and difficulties and persecutions incident to faithfulness to the Lord and to his service, would be, in a measure at least, to draw back from our consecration, which is to suffer with him, that we may also reign with him -- to be dead with him, that we may also live with him.

#### FEW ARE APPRECIATIVE— FEW VALUE THE THINGS THAT THEY HAVE

But evidently only the smaller number of those who have named the name of Christ, and who have made consecration of life and time and influence and all things to him, have ever appreciated these matters in their true light; and hence, not only are the so-called Christian nations the most discontented peoples of the world, but professed Christians are often among the most discon-

tented and unhappy of individuals. Nay more, even some of those who have made the full consecration to the Lord, and some who have come to a considerable knowledge of present truth...many of these also, we fear, are among the discontented of the world, -- unhappy, restless, not enjoying the *rest* which God provides for his people...

Brethren, these things ought not so to be. See to it that they do not so continue. Remember that according to our covenant we sacrificed all of our earthly interests and rights, that we might become sharers with our Master in the divine nature and all the heavenly promises. Remember that the only things of an earthly kind promised us by the Lord are that we shall have the things *needful*...

With these things rightly viewed, where is the occasion or the desire to murmur or complain about such things as we have? Where would be the desire to wish for, hope for, or ask for more than the Lord has promised to give us, and more than his unerring wisdom has seen would be best for us? If these lessons from the Lord's Word are received into the good soil of honest hearts, they will speedily bring forth, under the sunshine of the divine favor and the droppings of divine grace, a hundredfold more of joy and peace and trust and contentment and happiness and love, in the lives of all who put them into exercise; and the influence upon our families, neighbors and associates will be a good influence, for their happiness as well as our own.

Instead of complaining about the weather...let us be content with such weather as we have. We did not make it and we cannot change it...

If your health is not the best, do not go mourning and complaining all your days; be thankful -- thankful that it is not worse, remembering that as a member of the fallen race the full penalty of sin against you is pain and suffering unto death. Whatever therefore you have, that is moderate or endurable or in some measure enjoyable, be very thankful, very grateful, and make the most of it...

If your position in life is a lowly one, and requires continual labor to secure the things needful, do not complain, but, on the contrary, render thanks--thanks for the health and strength to perform the needed labor; thanks for the realization that the present brief life is only the schooling time, and that the lessons of the present, rightly learned, will bring riches of grace and glory which the world could neither give nor take away... Realizing that riches of faith, riches of trust, riches of contentment, and riches of godliness, with the fruits of the spirit which accompany these constitute the true riches, give thanks to the Lord that in his wisdom and grace he has so favorably situated you...

#### "WHAT IS FAITH'S FOUNDATION STRONG?"

In our text, after the Apostle has urged us to be "content with such things as ye have," he adds the reason or ground upon which this advice is given, saying, "For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Yes; this is the true ground of contentment, the realization of the Lord's care, and that the Lord's wisdom and grace are being exercised towards us,--and that such things as he grants are the things which are best for us, and which we would choose for

ourselves, if we had sufficient wisdom and insight into all the circumstances of the case...

We are of the opinion that the testings which the Lord designs for his people are *not merely doctrinal tests*, and consequently we expect, more and more, that the harvest siftings and separations amongst those who come to a knowledge of the truth, will be considerably along the lines of character, and of the fruits of the spirit... It is of paramount importance that we, as soldiers of the cross, put on not only the intellectual covering, the helmet of salvation, but also the heart covering, love of righteousness and

truth and goodness and purity, with the shield of faith...

The time is short; and those of the Lord's people who do not soon start to cultivate a spirit of contentment and thankfulness will not only not be fit for the Kingdom, but will as sharers of the world's spirit of discontent be in sore distress with the world very shortly, in the great time of trouble... Contentment and the faith which it implies, are necessary to godliness... Meekness, patience, gentleness, longsuffering, brotherly-kindness, love, will not grow in the garden of the soul, where the weeds of discontent are permitted to sap the strength

and vitiate the air with their noxious presence and influence...

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your *faith*," because faith lies at the foundation of all loyalty to God and his cause. Faith in the divine supervision of all our affairs not only gives peace and content, but it saps the root of all selfish ambitions and vain gloryings and boastings... Faith in the Lord's supervision *prefers* the Lord's arrangement to any other as respects the sufferings of this present time and the glory that is to follow..."

R3143 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

## PAUL AT CORINTH

--ACTS 18:1-11--FEBRUARY 8.--

*"Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ."--1 Cor. 3:11.*

ATHENS did not prove to be a very successful field for the Apostle Paul's labors. He quickly perceived that, although its citizens were chiefly engaged in hearing new things and in philosophizing on every subject, including religion, nevertheless, the tendency of science and philosophy, falsely so-called, so occupied their attention and so satisfied their minds that they were not as ready for the truth as some others less highly educated and less philosophical. The Apostle's experience in this respect coincides with that of all who, in sincerity, preach the gospel of Christ stripped of all human invention and philosophy. His experience illustrates his declaration that God does not choose many great or wise or learned, according to the course or standard of this world, but chiefly the poor of this world, socially, philosophically and financially, to be heirs of the Kingdom; because this class is more inclined to receive the faith and to become rich therein.

Leaving Athens, the Apostle journeyed about forty miles to Corinth, a prominent city of Greece, though very different from Athens. It was a commercial city, noted for its manufactures, architecture, paintings, Corinthian brass, or bronze, etc. It was much less moral than Athens, much less refined, much less given to the study of religious themes, but, nevertheless, a better field for the gospel. Where religious forms and ceremonies become popular they are apt to have correspondingly the less weight and force. Where sin, immorality and irreligion are popular, those minds which have a religious trend are apt to be freer, more open for the truth, because unsatisfied by formalism, and because they more keenly recognize righteousness by its sharp contrast with the sin abounding. Similarly today, the truth is likely to receive a cooler reception amongst those whose religious sensibilities are to some extent satisfied by forms and ceremonies: truth usually makes better progress today in places where to some extent irreligion seems to have the upper hand (as in Corinth), and where, therefore, virtue is at a higher premium. The heart most ready for the truth is the one which is not satiated and stupefied with religious formalism; but which realizes to some extent the exceeding sinfulness of sin and longs for the righteousness which is of God. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness is induced by such conditions. Like the Apostle, we are to discern the most fruitful fields, and spend our energies upon them, leaving the other fields for a more convenient season, whether it shall come during the present age or during the Millennium. The Apostle apparently stayed but a few days at Athens, but abode a year and a half at Corinth -- the irreligious city, where he found many honest-hearted people, to whom the Lord directed the gospel through him.

The Emperor Claudius Caesar was reigning at this time, and the historian says that he "drove the Jews from Rome, because they were incessantly raising tumults at the instigation of a certain Chrestus." This was about the year A.D. 52, about twenty years after Pentecost, and it is surmised by some that the historian wrote Chrestus instead of Christus, a less common name, and that his reference was to dissensions among the Jews respecting the principles of Christianity, which by this time had doubtless reached Rome. That Christianity was already established in Rome before Paul's going there seems to be implied by his expression, "I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are at Rome also." (Rom. 1:8-15.) The supposition is that Aquila, a Jew, with his wife, Priscilla, a Gentile, who were amongst those driven from Rome, had received the message of the gospel, and that the Apostle going to Corinth found Aquila

readily by reason of their being of the same craft or trade -- tent-makers.

It was customary at that time that the sons of all the upper class of people should learn a trade, however well educated otherwise. St. Paul's trade as a tent-maker stood him now in good place, enabling him to provide for his necessities, while preaching the gospel of Christ. From his own explanation of the matter we learn that even after a considerable number of believers had been gathered at Corinth as a Church, the Apostle maintained himself by his trade -- not because it would have been a sin for him to have received money and support from the believers there, but because he hoped that the gospel would commend itself more to many if its chief expounder were seen to be laboring not for the meat that perisheth, nor for wealth, but preaching the gospel without charge -- laying down his life for the brethren. There is a lesson in this for all of the Lord's people who have talent as ministers of the Word. Our object, like that of the Apostle, should be seen to be that "we seek not *yours*, but *you*." -- 2 Cor. 12:14.

The Apostle evidently lost no time in showing his colors -- engaging with as much wisdom as possible in the preaching of the gospel to the Jews and Jewish proselytes from amongst the Greeks in their synagogue. He was not in this an intruder, for such was the custom of the synagogue; -- that any person of ability had the privilege of giving an exposition of the teachings of the Law and the Prophets. The Apostle was a man of some ability, and apparently in every city he at first was welcomed; the subsequent hatred of himself and his theme being the logical result of the wrong condition of heart on the part of those who heard -- their unwillingness to receive the truth in the love of it -- their preference for the traditions of the elders, with their more or less error, rejecting the light of the truth as it came to them. We find similar conditions today in Christendom, and are following the Scriptural precedent when we approach as closely as we can to the synagogues of our time, and as nearly as possible do as the Apostle did, -- reasoning with and persuading the attendants at divine worship. Under the usages of our time it would be improper for us now to attempt such a discussion or reasoning inside church buildings. The nearest approach we have is through the printed page, on the pavement, near the churches, -- but far enough away to avoid reasonable prejudice and opposition. Let it be noticed also that the proper method of presenting the truth today, as in the Apostle's time, is not by haranguing, but by reasonable presentation -- appealing to the testimony of the Word of God in a logical and a reasonable manner. Let us rejoice that we find ourselves in such good accord with apostolic methods, and resolve that we will refrain from any other methods, however popular they may be with those who follow not with us.

How long the Apostle continued in this way is not distinctly declared, but in his first letter to that church, written some time after, he remarks, "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling; and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the spirit, and with power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." The word "weakness" in this text may be properly understood to imply that the Apostle was physically weak, possibly for a time ailing to such an extent as to be unable to work at his trade, because, referring again to the matter (2 Cor. 11:9) he intimates that for a time he was in want. This noble soldier of the cross was evi-

dently permitted of the Lord to have a little season of measurable discouragement, when the sunshine of divine favor was to some extent clouded by temporal difficulties: probably his physical weakness to some extent produced melancholy -- "trembling with fear." He had no thought of abandoning the warfare in which he had enlisted himself even unto death, but apparently his recent experiences at Thessalonica, at Berea and at Athens, were causing him to wonder whether or not he was too aggressive in the presentation of the gospel -- whether or not he was inclined needlessly to bring upon himself persecution, and was thus perhaps interfering with the Lord's work, rather than helping it forward, as he desired. Now he was, for the time, at least, disposed to be extremely careful how he presented the message, -- how that, as our Golden Text expresses it, there is no salvation, no harmony with God, no eternal life by the law, nor by any other means than through the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was about this time that the Lord comforted and encouraged the Apostle by the arrival of Silas and Timothy, whom he had left in Berea. They brought with them not only the comfort and encouragement of a good report of the work behind them, the fruitage of his labors, but additionally brought presents from the brethren, which supplied his necessities, and caused his heart to rejoice because of the evidence of their brotherly love, and that the gospel had reached their hearts and even down into their pocket-books. The presence of these two fellow-helpers, in whom he had so much confidence, was a refreshment of spirit to the Apostle. Their coming not only brought physical strength, but an energy of spirit -- an increased earnestness and force to his preaching: he no longer felt so timid, trembling, fearful. This is still true amongst the Lord's people -- <sup>(1)</sup>the strongest of the brethren need the help, the encouragement, the assistance of others. The Lord has so arranged it that we may not feel ourselves entirely self-sufficient, and that even our proper leaning upon the Lord shall seem to require also the co-operation, encouragement, sympathy and love of the fellow-laborers in the vineyard.

Who that has borne any measure of labor and heat of the day in the gospel service cannot sympathize with this thought? Here, then, is a way in which many of the Lord's dear people who have not themselves the largest amount of talent or opportunity for service may be co-laborers and assistants in the gospel work. The Apostle mentions these helpers in the same breath with the more able servants of the truth, saying, "Ye endured a great fight of afflictions, partly whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly whilst ye became the companions of them that were so used." -- Heb. 10:32,33.

Encouraged, revived in spirit, the Apostle was bolder now to tell the Jews and Greek proselytes plainly that there is no salvation except through Christ. The effect of this plain declaration was that he was no longer made welcome in the synagogue, and the opposition becoming violent, he shook his raiment, as an indication that he had nothing further to present, and would discontinue the discussion, declaring that their responsibility rested with themselves; that he had done all in his power to preach the good tidings to them first, as was proper; but that now henceforth, according to the scriptural declaration, the message should be proclaimed outside the synagogue, to any who had ears to hear it and hearts to receive it. The new meeting was started close to the synagogue, to the intent that the message he had already delivered might be impressed more and more upon those who had heard it -- that they should not forget his declaration that the promise made to the fathers was in process of fulfilment in Christ, and those who accept him.

One of the chief men of the synagogue, and various of the people at Corinth were favorably impressed by the gospel message, and the Church of Corinth thus took its start in the house of Justus. The believers testified their acceptance by baptism -- the true baptism of consecration, we may be sure, first, but also the outward symbolic water baptism, which would be a testimony to others and which is referred to in this lesson.

The Apostle, still meditating the propriety of greater moderation in preaching Jesus and the resurrection, was by this time, perhaps, feeling fearful of further difficulties with the Jews, and the trouble they could stir up with the authorities. Doubtless he had in mind previous experiences, and was debating mentally whether or not he should leave before the persecution set in, -- whether or not it was the Lord's will that he should be so courageous in the presentations of the truth as to awaken further hostilities against himself and

all the brethren. The Lord came to the assistance of his faithful servant, and instructed him in a dream that he should neither leave nor hold his peace -- that there were many people there of right condition of heart to receive the truth.

It is an encouragement to us to note this, another evidence that the Lord himself has supervision of his own work, and guides those who are truly his servants, -- who seek not their own will nor their own honor, but to glorify him in their bodies and spirits which are his. The necessity for such admonishing by dreams is less today than in the Apostle's day, because the Word of the Lord is now complete, and in the hands of his people in convenient form, that they can, through the experience and instruction of the apostles, know what to expect and how to do; -- whereas the Apostle was treading a new path and needed to be guided therein. We of today may know assuredly that it is the Lord's will that we should exercise wisdom in the presentation of his Word, and that grace should be poured upon our lips, that they may minister blessing to the hearers; but that we shall not hold our peace nor flee to another city until persecution has come to such a pitch as to almost necessitate removal.

We should not dare to say that the Lord might not use a dream today to instruct and guide his people, as he did the Apostle, but we do say that there is less necessity for such special direction, since the general directions of his Word are now explicit and amplified. We do suggest, however, that as the Apostle says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits," so we may well say to ourselves, Believe not every dream, but test the dream -- whether it be of God or not. A dream must never lead us in opposition to the written Word of God, but if it can be understood in harmony with the Word and its reasonable interpretation, we should rejoice in it and be thereby encouraged to follow the Word. If the dream agree not with this Word it is because there is no light in it. (Isa. 8:20.) We are confident that many dreams are not of God, the majority probably being of indigestion, and some quite probably of the evil one. Hence, we have the more need of care that we follow not a dream, because it is a dream, but at very most permit it to direct us to the plain instruction of the Lord's Word.

The Lord's promise that no man should set on the Apostle to hurt was fulfilled; for, although a disturbance was created and he was taken before the magistracy, no violence was done him, and the case was dismissed by the Roman governor. As with the Apostle, so with us; in the Lord's wisdom varying experiences may be to our advantage. Sometimes it may be advantageous to us and the cause that we should seem to be defeated and forced to flight. We may rely, however, that the Lord understands the situation fully, and will not permit his work to be disconcerted and interrupted to its real disadvantage. <sup>(2)</sup>Long ago some one said, "I am immortal until my work is finished;" and we may rely upon it that this is practically true of all engaged in the Lord's service -- that "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." He will use and protect and guide them in their affairs, in ways that will be to his pleasuring, and eventually to their highest welfare, -- to the intent that all of his good purposes shall be accomplished.

<sup>(3)</sup>Why, then, should we fear what man may do unto us, or be distressed in regard to the Lord's work, as though Satan or any other evil power could prevail against it? Nevertheless, it is for us to show our devotion, not only by our zeal, but also by our prudence. While God knows what will prosper, he declares of us, "Thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that" -- <sup>(4)</sup>therefore, we are to proceed in the Lord's work as though the entire responsibility rested upon us, but in our hearts are to recognize that the entire weight and responsibility rests with the Lord.

Our Golden Text gives us the central theme of the Apostle's preaching on every occasion. It would be a poor text for Higher Critics, for Evolutionists, for Theosophists, for Christian Scientists, and for most other of the new gospels so numerous in our day. Let us hold fast to the same message which the Apostle preached, which recognizes no other foundation than Christ, and no other Church and no other salvation than that built upon that foundation. Other structures, built upon other foundations, are anti-Christian, however smooth their philosophy, however arrayed in a garment of light to deceive, if possible, the very elect.

<sup>(2)</sup> 1/3 Mar. 24 Manna

<sup>(3)</sup> 1/3 Mar. 24 Manna, Heb. 13:5

<sup>(4)</sup> 1/3 Mar. 24 Manna

<sup>(1)</sup> Mar. 23 Manna, Heb. 10:32-33