

May 7

Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel. 1 Corinthians 9:16

WE should be prompt to tell others the best tidings we have; sympathy with the groaning creation in the various trials of life

R5968 "What a zeal the Apostle had! Harken to his words, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16)... He felt that he could not be satisfied except when doing all in his power to make known to all who have the "hearing ear" the Message of God's grace centered in Christ Jesus."

PROPER MANNER OF PRESENTING THE TRUTH

R5698 *"The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." 2 Tim. 2:24, 25...*

Our text is applicable to any servant of God, any member of the Church of Christ, whether he holds office among the brethren or not. It is an injunction which applies to all of the Church. Every spirit-begotten child of God is to teach according to his opportunity and ability, under the limitations of sex, etc., given in the Scriptures. "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isaiah 61:1.) These words of the Prophet apply to every member of The Christ, Head and Body...

The Lord's followers are to be gentle to all men... They are not to be strife-breeders, not always getting into a wrangle, but long-suffering, considerate of the opinions and preferences of others. There may be times when a Christian is put into a position where he will be forced to defend himself; but it is one thing to defend one's self in a reasonable way, and quite another to be strifeful and aggressive...

In the presentation of the Message to others patience is necessary. Be willing to go over the point again and again, having sympathy with those you are instructing, remembering how difficult you found it...

Whether presenting the Truth publicly or in private, never assume an air of superiority, never manifest haughtiness. Never allow yourself to become so irritated as to say, "I know more about this in five minutes than you do in a year"; nor even imply this thought in the expression of your face, or in tone or manner. You see, you can express yourself in these four different ways... Any one of the four would be sufficient to place a barrier between yourself and those whom you were endeavoring to interest. You are to be meek, lowly of heart, humble.

If some one presents to you an argument or a Scripture that he thinks contradicts your position, say to him, "Well, brother, let us see whether that is in harmony with the teachings of the Bible. We must accept as Truth only that which will harmonize all the statements of the Word of God. Let us prove the matter." Have a meek, teachable manner, one which shows that you are willing to learn from another if he can teach you something from the sure Word of the Lord. Thus your opponent will

should lead us to point to the Lord's promises respecting the coming Kingdom and the blessings that should then be to all the families of the earth. Whoever does not thus proclaim daily, on every suitable opportunity, gives evidence either of lack of

be more willing to hear what you have to say, if he is disposed to be at all reasonable."

PROPER COURSE OF A TEACHER

R2800 "COMMUNING WITH THE LORD. *Lu 24:13-35... "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way!"...*

We here see the proper course of the teacher illustrated by the great Teacher himself. As he went to the Scriptures and brought forth from them evidences of divine foreknowledge and prediction respecting the things that were transpiring before their eyes, so we, if we attempt to teach others, should not be content with offering our views, our opinions, our conjectures, but should search the Scriptures and be able, from that source to give to every man a reason for the hopes that are within us--that his hopes, as well as ours, may be built up, not upon the theories of men, but upon the inspired teachings of God's Word."

NOT OPINION OR CONJECTURE, BUT GOD'S WORD

(1Pe 4:11 KJV) "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified..."

R2802 "We claim no infallibility for our presentations, nor do we simply offer our opinions and conjectures, after the manner of the scribes and Pharisees; but rather after the manner of the great Teacher, we seek to present to the minds of those interested the teachings of Moses and the prophets, and to voice the testimony of Jesus and the apostles, and to show the harmony of the Scriptures."

(1Pet 3:15 KJV) "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear ["reverence" Rotherham]"

CR437 "As we begin to realize the greatness of our God and the grandeur of the message we have to give out, we feel our own insufficiency. And then we hear the Lord's Word saying: Be ye holy that bear the vessels of the Lord's house and that bear about this message of the Lord to others. Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. The truth was intended for this particular purpose..."

We need the guidance and power and the Lord's spirit to give us wisdom and direction. And if we realize that we are not sufficient for these things it will bring us near to the Lord, and it will make us more earnest in ascertaining the mind of the Lord, and study the Word of the Lord... As you become fortified in the knowledge of God's plan, and become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might...

It is recorded by the Apostles themselves that they were ignorant and unlearned

knowledge or of faith in the revelation, or of selfishness, which the Lord cannot approve, and which, if persisted in, will ultimately debar him from a share in the Kingdom. *Z.'03-174 R3205:1*

men. What a wonderful admission, what evidence that those men were simply trying to tell God's message, that they were not trying to puff themselves up or to speak for themselves. They were merely speaking as the Lord's mouthpieces."

R2002 "Reverence is defined as a feeling of profound respect, often mingled with awe and affection; a feeling of worshipful regard when directed to the divine or sacred: also conduct inspired by, or conformed to, such feeling... This is the only proper attitude of the creature toward the Creator, the Author of our being, and the Creator, Preserver and Lord of the whole universe..."

It is not our part to change one iota of the ordinances of God... Nor to render null and void the authority of his precepts and instructions in order to please the worldly-minded. The law and the testimonies of God must be received into good and honest hearts without regard to human philosophies and idle speculations. The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and blessed is the man that trusteth in him, and to whom a "Thus saith the Lord" is the end of all controversy on every subject."

R3329 "DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS." *"Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."*--Col. 3:17.

Whether he realizes it or not, each one who professes to be a Christian speaks and acts *in the name of the Lord Jesus*. The thought of our text therefore must be that we should endeavor to keep this fact continually before our minds, to the intent that our actions and words may properly represent our Lord and honor the name which he has permitted us to bear."

R2952 "Stephen's faith and power and opportunities for service came to him along the same lines as faith and power have come to the Lord's people since--whole-hearted devotion to the Lord, to his people and to his truth."

HELPFUL WITNESS SUBJECTS --MILK, NOT MEAT--

(1 Cor 3:2 KJV) "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."

R5688 "Beginners who have not long known Christ, who are new in respect to the truths of God's Plan, are not to be choked with strong meat. These may be fed upon the simpler truths, which they can assimilate. They need "the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby." Some of the Lord's people, who have been longer in the way, in talking with the newly consecrated unwisely begin to tell them the truths regarding immortality, trinity, etc., before they are able to digest them. These are giving strong meat to babes, and are liable to drive them away from the table of the Lord"

R3674 "Let us more and more seek to exer-

cise heavenly wisdom in all our affairs, that we may accomplish as much good as possible and choke and stumble none.... Many of the Lord's people need to learn this lesson of secretiveness--not to tell everything that they know...

Our Lord used this very method of not telling all that he knew to those who were not ready for the information. He said on one occasion to his disciples, "I have many things to tell you but ye cannot bear them now." (John 16:12)... Strong meat for men and milk for babes is the thought."

FURTHER REFS. DIRECTLY ON OUR MANNA TEXT

R5893 "PREACHING THE GOSPEL A NECESSITY "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel."--1 Corinthians 9:16...

We understand the Apostle to mean here: "I should be very unhappy if I could not preach the Gospel; it would be a cause of great distress to me. In view of my former course of persecution, and the Lord's great mercy to me, it would mean a loss of His favor and blessing should I refrain from proclaiming His Message." The context seems to bear out this thought. So it should be a great distress to those to whom the Lord has granted the illumination of His Truth, if the opportunity of preaching this glorious Gospel were taken from them...

There are some who have the thought that there is no way to preach except by a public discourse from the platform. But this seems not to be the Bible thought of preaching. Jesus talked to the people by the sea-side, and along the way; sometimes He sat upon the edge of the well and preached the Message of salvation; He preached to His disciples up in the mountain; sometimes He journeyed with them and talked. And so with us. Whatever way or time we may have for preaching the Good Tidings we should use.

The word Gospel means glad tidings, good news. We are to tell the "good tidings of great joy." This may be done in the daily walk of our life, as we meet the butcher, the baker and the grocery man, or our neighbors and friends. It may be done by literature sent through the mails, or by handing out a tract, a book, or by preaching from the platform."

CR297 "Can you imagine a better opportunity for serving God and spreading the Truth? I cannot. *It seems to me very clear that this is the grandest privilege that could be offered to anyone....*

Then, the question comes up, is there any opportunity?... The Lord says, here is a chance for service, there is something to do. Then that is the time which tests whether you really meant it or not. But, of course, the Lord knew the heart in advance, but He is leaving this to you and me to prove our profession. If we accept that opportunity, then our actions speak louder than words. On the other hand, our actions would be asking, Lord, I misstated myself. I was not very anxious, but was merely talking a little. See to it, my dear brethren, God is not mocked, he who is professing to serve God and finds an opportunity and does it not, shows that he is not in the right attitude of heart. You and I have an opportunity and He lets us make some opportunities also, so St. Paul found his opportunity, and said, "Woe

is me if I preach not the Gospel of Christ." Did he mean that he would go to eternal torment if he did not preach the Gospel?... No, he meant, O, I could not be happy in anything on earth, I would have fire in my bones. It is the greatest privilege I have in the world to tell the goodness of God, the redemptive work of Jesus, and what the terms and conditions are of joint-heirship in the Kingdom. To be a servant of God, it will be woe to me indeed if I could not preach this glorious message. Now that is just what the Lord wants; he is testing just that class who would rather talk of the Gospel of Christ than eat a good dinner. If you had to take your choice, you would rather miss your dinner. That is what the Apostle meant that we should be instant "in season and out of season," whether in or out of season for ourselves, if it is convenient so far as the other party is concerned. If he is willing to hear, let everything go by the board that you may have the great privilege of telling him... Our zeal is being tested, our love is being tested and the degree of our earnestness is being tested."

SHOULD WE EVER STOP WHILE ON THIS SIDE OF THE VEIL?

R5602 "We are well aware that some of our dear readers have the thought that the Gentile Times having closed, the Gospel Message was closed. Some of these brethren feel that it is useless to continue the Message. We cannot sympathize with their reasoning. The Divine command was that they should preach the Word, not until the close of Gentile Times, but until the Church would be completed."

(Isa 62:6-7) "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence. {7} And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

A342 "The troubles of this "Day of Jehovah" will give opportunity for preaching the good tidings of coming good, such as is seldom afforded, and blessed are they who will follow the footsteps of the Master, and be the good Samaritans binding up the wounds and pouring in the oil and wine of comfort and cheer. The assurance given such is that their labor is not in vain; for when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Isa. 26:9"

R5917 "We who know that the King of Glory and His blessed Kingdom are the only remedy for the wrongs and woes of man should be pointing the groaning creation to this Kingdom, rather than to the poultices of their own contriving which can do no real good. Tell them the meaning of present world-wide conditions, and how, beyond the troubles now overspreading the world, will come the glorious Times of Restitution foretold by all the holy Prophets since the world began."

B142 "The Church is thus enabled to point out to the world the cause of the trouble, to announce the presence of the new Ruler, to declare the policy, plan and object of the new dispensation, and to instruct the world as to the wisest course to pursue in view of these

things. And though men will not give heed to the instruction until the lesson of submission has been forced upon them by the trouble, it will greatly aid them then in learning the lesson. It is to this mission of the "feet," or last members of the Church, who will declare upon the mountains (kingdoms) the *reign of Christ begun*, that 'Isaiah 52:7' refers."

"WOE IS UNTO ME IF I PREACH NOT THE GOSPEL"

(Rom 10:10 KJV) "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

R3071 "Confession of the truth is necessary to a full appreciation of it... Confession is necessary to the expanding, enlarging and completing of faith in the heart..."

Many are weak, puny, sickly, in their spiritual health, because of their failure to follow the Lord's direction -- to declare courageously--and as wisely and lovingly as possible--what great things the Lord hath done for our souls."

R5720 ""He that watereth shall himself also be watered." As we proclaim the Truth from an honest, earnest, loving heart we shall become more and more filled with it ourselves. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth and it tendeth to poverty"--to leanness of soul..."

Whoever appreciates these things of God and then speaks forth in love and sincerity will receive a blessing in his own heart and mind, and the Truth will become clearer and sweeter. In helping others he will be helping himself. Thus the various features of the Plan of God become more firmly engraved upon his mind."

R5440 "HIS LOVING-KINDNESS, O HOW GREAT!" "*Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee.*"--Psalm 63:3...

David declared that life without God's loving-kindness would be worth nothing to him; he would not appreciate his life if cut off from the favor of the Lord...

We, above all other people in the world's history, have the loving-kindness of God manifested toward us. We have His exceeding great and precious promises. We are the recipients of His special love. And the more we appreciate this love and these glorious promises and the bountiful provisions of His grace, the more our hearts respond in gratitude, the more His loving-kindness becomes a reality to us, and the more are we ready to lay down our lives in His service..."

"I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY!"

We who have come to realize our Father's unspeakable favor to us as better than this present life with all it could have to give, we who have joyfully laid upon His altar every earthly good thing, every hope and ambition, every power of our being, rejoice to tell the Good Tidings of Salvation to others. We rejoice to sound forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. The Message is too good to keep! If we could not proclaim it, it would be as a burning fire shut up in our bones; so we *must* tell it. And we are willing that the telling of it shall cost us trouble, cost us money, cost us the mis-

understanding and persecution of former friends, and possibly the breaking of home ties."

R5476 "The preaching of the Gospel brings opposition. If our Lord had gone about casting out demons, healing the sick, etc., and had not told anything about the Divine Plan, He would probably have been looked upon as a fine character--as a man going about doing good. But because He preached differently from the Scribes and Pharisees, and His preaching of the Truth infringed upon the teachings of those about Him, it roused their ire.

So it is today. All the persecution comes about from the making known of the Truth. In no time that we know has this not been true. In the Dark Ages and throughout the Gospel Age, the preaching of the Truth has brought upon those telling the Good Tidings persecutions from those whose minds have been benighted by the Prince of Darkness. In proportion as we open our lips and tell of the Gospel of the Lord, we are opposed by Satan and those who are blinded by him.

R2952 "The Editor would like, for himself and...for all the brethren who speak at all, publicly or privately, in the name of Jesus,

that Stephen's beaming face might be impressed upon our memories. If it is, and if every time we stand forth before men publicly or privately, as the representatives of our Lord, we could so realize his blessing and our privilege as his servants, that it would fill our hearts, and beam forth from our faces, in gladness, in thankfulness, for the privilege of serving, then indeed we would have the highest degree of blessing to ourselves, and doubtless also would bring the largest degree of blessing to all those whose hearts would be prepared for the truth, and also for those not yet ready for it, but...in preparation for it, as was Saul of Tarsus. "

R3204 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)
"GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY"

--ACTS 27:33-44.--JUNE 7.--

"Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses."--Psa. 107:6.

NOT long after Paul's discourse before Festus and Agrippa, opportunity offered for sending him a prisoner to Rome, in accordance with his own appeal. He was not sent alone, but in company with other prisoners and under a strong guard. The journey from Caesarea to Rome was by water on merchant vessels, and was probably in the fall of the year, when the storms on the Mediterranean are frequently very severe, sometimes lasting for several days, as in the case mentioned in this lesson. The storm lasted for fourteen days, and was evidently unusually severe. The dangerous season for navigation was reckoned from September 14 to November 14, at which time all navigation in the open sea was suspended for the winter. It is presumed that this storm occurred about September 25.

Doubtless, were we able to look at affairs from God's standpoint, as we will be able to view them by and by, we should see more reason than we now are able to discern why the Apostle's journey to Rome should have been attended with such trying experiences, mental and physical, as were incidental to the shipwreck, wintering on the island of Malta, etc. Possibly the Apostle's faith was being tried; possibly it was being rooted and grounded by these experiences. The Lord had distinctly informed him in a vision that he should go to Rome as his ambassador. He was now on the way, and on several occasions matters looked serious; it seemed as though he would never see the capital of the world; never have the privilege of presenting the truth to the brethren residing there, to whom he had already sent the Epistle to the Romans; never have the opportunity of laboring in their midst, as he had hoped and promised to do.

When in port at Crete a conference was held respecting the wisdom of wintering there or of going on, and the Apostle gave his opinion that it would be unsafe to go on. This may have been the result of some inspiration, but quite possibly was merely the result of his own judgment of the weather, etc. He had already had large experience in seeing disasters, as we are informed in one of his epistles written previous to this time: "Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep." (2 Cor. 11:25.) Besides, his trade as a sail-maker would naturally bring him in contact with sailors, and interest him in all matters pertaining to the craft. Those in command, however, decided to proceed on the journey, and encountered the disastrous storm of our lesson. During those fourteen days the Apostle had abundant opportunity to fear and doubt and question the Lord's providences, and apparently it was not until the night of the thirteenth day of the storm that the Lord sent an angel to the Apostle, with the consoling message that he should not fear--"Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." (Vs. 24.) We may safely assume that the Apostle, during these testing days, remained heartily loyal in faith toward God, and that this message at the close was in the nature of an encouragement and an expression of approval.

We may draw a good lesson from this incident, not only in respect to our own affairs in life,--that the Lord may lead in mysterious ways regarding our temporal matters and our service for him and his cause;--but we may additionally apply the lesson in a general way to all spiritual testings and trials. The Lord gives us, for instance, assurances of his love and care, and of the ultimate outcome of the narrow way to all who faithfully follow in the steps of Jesus; but meantime he may permit trials and difficulties of various kinds to come as storms upon us, threatening our very destruction, threatening the overwhelming of our spiritual life, darkening the sky of our hopes with the thunderclouds of our enemies' threats and Satan's

roarings. Our duty is to let the eye of faith be undimmed by these various terrible conditions,--to let our hearts be firmly fixed upon him who has promised, and who is able also to perform. Thus,

^{1}"When the storms of life are raging,
Tempests wild on sea and land,
I will seek a place of refuge
In the shadow of God's hand.
"Enemies may strive to injure,
Satan all his arts employ;
God will turn what seems to harm me
Into everlasting joy."

The expression, "God hath given thee all them that sail with thee," is very meaningful. It reminds us of Abraham's prayer for Sodom--peradventure there were even five righteous persons, God agreed to save the city. There is no suggestion in these words of the "fatherhood of God, and brotherhood of men," as that false teaching is now advocated by many who have a noble impulse. The thought, on the contrary, is that there was only one man on that ship who was in personal relationship to God. The others, whatever their natural traits of character, had never come into personal relationship with the Father. Another thought from the words is that the divine care going with the saints may prove a great blessing to their companions, even though, as in this case, they be worldly and unregenerate. This thought is particularly applicable in the earthly families of God's people. The believing consecrated father or mother is the direct subject of divine care; for of the angels it is written, "They are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation," and, in ministering to these, very frequently (indeed, we may suppose generally) those of their families who have not come into full relationship with the Lord are to some extent included under the protecting care. Elsewhere the Apostle points out that in some respects the believing wife has a blessed influence over her husband; or the believing husband a favorable influence over the wife in regard to the children, else the children would be accounted unholy. (1 Cor. 7:14.) This is another illustration of the same general lesson that divine care, though specially for the saints, includes all of their interests of every kind. This does not necessarily imply earthly prosperity, wealth, preservation from accident, shipwreck, etc., as in Paul's case, and yet it does always mean, in some sense and in some degree, an advantage. Let us take from this thought all the comfort we can. All things shall work together for good to the Lord's saints, and those who are nearest and dearest to them will surely be participants to some extent in their interest and in the divine care.

Promptly after receiving the assurances of the safety of all on board, the Apostle made the matter known to the ship's company, and manifested his own faith in the message by cheerfulness and breaking of his fast, and advising all the others to do likewise. His spirit was contagious; they were all cheered, and doubtless they were all impressed not only by the fact to which the Apostle called their attention--namely, that this disaster had come upon them by their failing to follow his advice--but also by the evidence of God's special favor toward him in connection with the knowledge of their ultimate rescue. So it should be with us: whatever we know that is good or comforting or refreshing to ourselves, we should dispense to

{1} Hymn 328

others. Had the Apostle kept this good news to himself, it would have implied one of two things; either that he did not have faith in its fulfilment, or that he was selfish; but having the Lord's spirit of generosity, as well as large trust in the Lord, he did not hesitate to make known the coming deliverance; and he glorified God in that he did not claim to have this knowledge of himself, but credited it to a revelation. Evidently the prisoner had produced a deep impression upon many of the soldiers and sailors. Who can say that at some future time the Apostle's brave and noble conduct may not have influenced some of his two hundred and seventy-six companions--possibly eventually drawing some of them to the Lord? So it should be with each of us; ⁽²⁾we should be prompt to tell to others the best tidings we have; sympathy with the groaning creation in the various trials of life should lead us to point to the Lord's promises respecting the coming Kingdom and the blessings that should then be to all the families of the earth. Whoever does not thus proclaim daily, on every suitable opportunity, gives evidence either of lack of knowledge or of faith in the revelation or of selfishness, which the Lord can not approve, and which, persisted in, will ultimately debar him from a share in the Kingdom.

Another thought properly connected with this lesson is the absence of any suggestion of a revival service being held on board the boat. Neither Paul nor Luke nor Aristarchus are reported to have made the slightest effort, except as their lives were living epistles. It is barely possible that religious services may not have been permitted on the vessel; but, anyway, we know from the Apostle's general course of conduct, that he did his fishing for men amongst rather different classes. As we understand the matter, the seamen of that day were of a coarse and ignorant class. We cannot doubt that the Apostle would have been glad indeed to have served any of his companions had he found in them the hearing ear--according to the Master's words, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." That the sailors were not in a condition to receive or appreciate the gospel is evident from the lesson; because they were selfishly intent upon using the only small boat available for their escape, and premeditated leaving the soldiers and the prisoners on the vessel. We mark the spirit of selfishness as totally unbecoming in anyone begotten of the spirit of God, and contrast it with the spirit of the Apostle, as generous, loving, considerate of others. A similar test shows us that the soldiers in general were not of a class likely to have a hearing ear, because, when perceiving that the vessel would go to pieces, and that thus some prisoners might escape, they counselled their destruction. "The liberal heart deviseth liberal things," and all of the Lord's consecrated people should not only have the noble impulses coming to them because they are the Lord's and because they have tasted of his grace, and been made partakers of his spirit, but, additionally, they should see to it that this spirit prevails in them; that it is manifest in all the affairs of life. They should see to it that they do not crush out the noble impulses which would properly come to them; that, on the contrary, they foster them and encourage them and develop them more and more. Thus we grow in grace as we grow in knowledge, by obedience to the things which we learn.

The centurion alone seems to have profited by the experiences. He alone seems to have read the Apostle's living epistle to any advantage, and upon him it did make an impression, for while he would not have objected so much to the killing of the other prison-

ers, who probably were seditious characters and worthy of death, he saw no way to make an exception of Paul, and for Paul's sake, therefore, all the prisoners' lives were spared.

Notwithstanding the Apostle's assurance of the Lord that the lives of the entire ship's company were given him, that all would be saved, he realized the propriety of using all proper diligence in co-operation with the promise. Hence, when he discerned the evident intention of the sailors to escape in the small boat, leaving the passengers, unable to guide the vessel, at the mercy of the sea, he communicated the facts to the centurion, pointing out the necessity of compliance with reasonable precautions to insure the fulfilment of the divine promise. So ⁽³⁾we all should understand that we have something to do in realizing the gracious promises of God to us. In connection with the affairs of this present life he has promised that our bread and water shall be sure, but this does not imply that we shall neglect reasonable opportunities for securing these. He has promised us also a share in the Kingdom by and by; but it is for us to make our calling and our election sure. God is thoroughly capable and thoroughly willing to perform all of his part in connection with every matter, but it is to our advantage that he calls upon us to show our faith by our works--by our cooperation with him in all reasonable ways. He does not expect us to perform miracles; but he does expect us to do what we are able to do both in respect to present things and eternal matters. By and by the Apostle's predictions were fulfilled, and the entire ship's company, some by swimming and others by floating on wreckage, reached the land. We notice again that the Apostle did not propose, on reaching land, to have a general revival service; he was not bent on exciting men's minds, but was practicing the same gospel methods which the Master taught him; viz., "Let us reason together"--sit down first and count the cost of discipleship, and, if willing to pay the price, "Come, take up thy cross, and follow me." If this, the Lord's method for gathering his people from the world, were still pursued, there would be many fewer nominal Christians; but we believe there would be no smaller number of the genuine ones. The time for bringing in the world is not yet; hence the Master's words in prayer, "I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, that they all may be one... that [ultimately, 'in due time'] the world may believe." The gathering of the elect class for the Kingdom is under disadvantageous conditions which will thoroughly test them, and make their way so narrow that few will find it, and still fewer make progress in it. When God's time for dealing with the world shall have come, the powers of heaven and of earth will cooperate with the glorified Church in making the gospel so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

So far as the record shows, the Apostle and his companions did no mission work amongst the barbarians of the island on which they were wrecked, nor amongst the soldiers and sailors, their companions during that winter. They left no Church there;--we may safely presume that they found no hearing ears. The lesson to us from this should be that we are not to expect the conversion of the world nor anything akin to it. We are to expect that the Lord will find with the truth a sufficient number to complete the elect Church, and then, with the power and the authority of the Kingdom, establish righteousness and cause the knowledge of himself to fill the earth and bless the whole world through the Church.--Gal. 3:29.

⁽²⁾ May 7 Manna, 1 Cor. 9:16

⁽³⁾ May 8 Manna, 1Jn 2:25

WHETHER WITNESSING OR AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE COME TO THE TRUTH

(1Co 4:1-2 KJV) "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. (2) Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

Songs in the Night - June 19

Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day. Ephesians 6:13

NO MAN ever puts on armor unless he expects to fight. If he is a soldier of the cross, the "sword of the Spirit" is the great weapon with which he will prove his loyalty and strength. The brethren should build each other up in the most holy faith, fighting the

good fight, and showing their loyalty to the Lord and to the truth. (Jude 20; 1Timothy 6:12) Those who succumb to the influences of darkness show themselves unworthy of the new order of things, and they may not expect to be sharers with Christ in his kingdom, but to be among those rejected of the Lord as unworthy. Z'12-288 R5098:2

R3199 "There is among Christians today a great lack of established faith on any point of doctrine. They say, "I think," "I hope," or "Perhaps it may be so, but this is only my opinion, and it may be right or it may be wrong. I have charity, however, for your opposing opinion, and for every man's opinion; for who knows which is right?..."

All this passes among Christians generally for large-hearted benevolence and personal humility, while in fact it is an ig-

noble, compromising spirit that is unwilling to forego the friendship of those who oppose the Lord by opposing the truth; and which would rather see the truth suffer, and those weak in the faith stumbled, than that they should bear the reproach of Christ."

(1Th 2:4 KJV) "We were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."

R5720 "The Truth is always to be spoken humbly, but fearlessly.... Speaking of the Truth is absolutely essential to the life of the Christian. The Truth of God's Word is to be enshrined above all else in the heart of the child of God, and he should esteem it a blessed privilege to speak it."