

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

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The Journeys of Paul

(Continued)

By divine guidance Paul and his companions were led to the busy seaport of Troas, situated upon the extreme western coast. Thinking this to be the place assigned for their next work, they looked about to establish themselves for some months. But their plan was changed by Paul's night vision of the man from Macedonia and his plea for assistance. Ever obedient to inner plane instructions, Paul and his little company sailed from Troas on the following day, their destination being the Western World.

Acts 16:8-10

And they passing by Mysia, came down to Troas.

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and he prayed him, saying, Come over to Macedonia and help us.

And after he had seen the vision immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

The ability to receive direct spiritual instruction, and to "bring through" clearly the directions given by the great Ones who are ever seeking such channels, depends primarily upon an utter selflessness of motive and a mind unclouded by emotional excesses. Paul could maintain his mind unruffled and crystal clear, a perfect reflector of the light from spiritual realms.

From the landing port of Neapolis, the city of Philippi lay inland about twelve miles. This place afforded a fertile field for the disci-

ples of the new way. The population was composed of Romans, native Macedonians and Orientals. Philippi was a crossroads city, a meeting place for East and West.

It is significant that Paul's initial work in the Western World was with a group of women he met in their "place of prayer," a secluded nook on the river bank just outside the city. The leader of this group was Lydia, who afterward became one of his most active feminine disciples.

Acts 16:14, 15

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Throughout the New Testament the spiritual development of man and woman is traced side by side. The inner work of the Christian religion is the establishment of balance between the masculine and feminine principles in man. As this work progresses its reflection on the physical plane will manifest in a growing equality between men and women in the world of affairs.

With his entrance into Macedonia, Paul commenced a new and important cycle of his work. He now opened the door of Europe to the Christian religion.

"God hath called us." This knowledge

was all that was ever necessary to keep Paul on the move. "And I was never disobedient to the heavenly vision." In these two statements are to be found the two central ideals of Paul's life. No journey was ever too hazardous, no mountain path too difficult or too infested with bandits to deter him from going wherever he felt his work called him. Equally at home among enemies or friends, he ministered to both alike, thus making beautiful demonstration of the affirmation of a modern seer that "No man is your enemy, no man is your friend. All alike are your teachers."

Eagerly he returned to those cities wherein he had been beaten, stoned or imprisoned, counting his stripes and wounds as marks of honor won in the service of Christ Jesus. He was undaunted by obstacles, unafraid of persecution, and undeterred by the enmities of those who still clung to the rapidly disappearing faiths of the old Taurean Dispensation.

The dominant ideal of Paul was expressed in the phrase "to know only Christ and him crucified." This was used as a mantram of power by an occult Brotherhood of the thirteenth century. As a mantram, the words possess a spiritual potency far-reaching in its effect on every vehicle of the spirit, from its dense physical garment to its most tenuous and filmy robe of the highest spiritual essence. It is only true, however, if the disciple is earnestly and sincerely *living the life* which these words imply. They have no value as mere lip service.

It is well to note here that Lydia, Luke, Silas, Titus, and many others did not belong to the Jewish race although they were followers of the synagogue. It must be remembered that at this time the Taurean religion was decadent and its temple worship in a state of degeneration. The Semitic peoples, however, had come under the rulership of their race god Jehovah and the Arian religion. This was the most advanced teaching until Christ came. Therefore, pioneers among the Gentiles sought the light of the synagogue and received the name of "God-Fearers." It was the intense animosity of priests and conservative adherents of Tau-

rean and Arian temples, and their refusal to accept anything outside their established codes, which caused the bitter persecution of the Christ and of exponents of the new Piscean way.

History repeats itself today. The opposition is violent from conservatives in both religious and political fields as pioneers seek to teach and demonstrate truths belonging to the Aquarian Dispensation.

During the imprisonment of Paul and Silas in Philippi a severe earthquake occurred which gave rise to the beautiful incident of the conversion of the jailer and his entire household, and their gentle, tender ministry to their bruised and maltreated prisoners.

By the time Paul left Philippi the work had grown to such proportions and was of such importance that Luke remained to take charge of it. He stayed until the spring of 57, then rejoined Paul at the conclusion of the latter's third journey and accompanied him to Jerusalem, never to leave him again.

Paul's way now led to Thessalonica (the modern Salonika) which in Paul's day was Macedonia's foremost city. Its founder, Casander, had named the city for his wife, a sister of Alexander the Great. Paul's work here met with much success. His converts were largely among the God-Fearers, and both numerous and promising were the women among them.

Acts 17:1-12

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.