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**THE MISSIONARY METHODS OF PAUL AS DEMONSTRATED
IN THE BOOK OF ACTS**

**A Thesis presented to the
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity**

by

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THE MISSIONARY METHODS OF PAUL AS DEMONSTRATED IN
THE BOOK OF ACTS

INTRODUCTION

"It is certain that Paul remains the Gentile missionary. It was he who really established the duty and the right of Gentile missions; it was he who raised the movement out of its tentative beginnings into a mission that embraced all the world."* One is firmly convinced of the truth of this statement after a careful reading of the Book of Acts. Paul was indeed the missionary of the Gentiles, and we will do well if we study the methods which this great apostle used in fulfilling his task. Nor will it be out of place that we pause while considering the missionary methods of Paul to draw certain important lessons for the methods of the modern church's greatest business.

It is of course impossible in a brief survey of this nature to exhaust the vast amount of material that is to be found in this historical masterpiece of St. Luke. While it is not the purpose of Acts to tell us in so many words, "These are the methods which Paul used", yet the careful historian presents so much direct material and so many implications in regard to the missionary methods of Paul, that we shall attempt to present only what we consider the main points of the topic under consideration.

But in order to understand just why the Apostle Paul used the methods he used, we must sketch briefly the conditions in the world which Paul visited, and upon which he applied his methods. Before entering upon the discussion of the subject proper, we shall, therefore, present a few facts in regard to the conditions of the world at that time, which may have served as advantages or disadvantages of the Gentile missionary.

* Harnack: "The Mission and Expansion of Christianity", Vol. 1, p. 48.

The preparation of the world for the reception of the Gospel may be traced back to the eighth century before the Savior's birth, when the Jews were spread to different parts of the then-known world. The Assyrians in 722 B.C. carried over 25,000 Jews eastward. At the same time some of them were in Egypt,* and about a century and a half later, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, their numbers were vastly increased by those who took refuge along the Nile after the murder of Gedaliah. In this group we find the Prophet Jeremiah. "In 233 B.C. Antiochus the Great colonized the whole coast of Asia Minor with Jews from Babylon and Palestine."[†] About the middle of the century immediately before the birth of the Savior, Pompey took Jewish captives to the capital of the Roman Empire. For the festival of the Pentecost at Jerusalem believers were present from all parts of the world, of whom the large percentage were Jews.** "The geographer Strabo says the Jews 'had invaded every city, and it is not easy to find a place in the world which had not received that race and was not mastered by it.'[‡] According to Harnack there were about 700,000 Jews in Palestine at the time of the Apostle Paul, as compared with about 650,000 "at the present time--1920", and he reaches the conclusion that there was a "grand total of about four or four and a half million Jews" in the world at that time. And as Luke tells us, "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."^{††} So Paul was not going into a world that was completely ignorant of the Christian religion. This will be brought out more fully later in the discussion.

Another advantage to the Apostle Paul in his "world-wide mission" was the fact that the Greek language was spoken in all the places visited by Paul, a result of the conquest of Alexander the Great. Not only

* Hos. 2,6.

† Dallmann: "Paul", p. 59.

** Acts 2, 9-11.

‡ Dallman, op. cit., p. 60.

†† Acts 8,4.

could Paul speak and preach to the people in this tongue, but he also wrote his epistles in the language spoken all over the Roman empire at that time. It is true that other languages were spoken, but "Plutarch did not learn Latin, yet he had no trouble in Rome when conducting political business and delivering philosophic lectures.....Jerome says all the Orient spoke Greek."* The language question is the one which in modern heathen missions usually engages the attention of the missionary for several years, before he is able to do effective work.

The fact that the world was at that time under Roman control played no small part in the work of Paul. Not only could he appeal to the Roman governor for a just trial, which he had a right to demand as a full-fledged Roman citizen, but he also had the advantage of travel and commerce as it had been developed under Roman leadership. "The world-empire of Rome and the political unity which it secured for the nations bordering on the Mediterranean; the comparative unity secured by this world-state for the methods and conditions of outward existence, and also the comparative stability of social life"† no doubt made it easier for Paul to travel from one country to another, than it would have been, had each country been under a different rule. Another important help to the work was that "the entire Graeco-Roman world, with the exception of the nobility, was unpolitical, meaning that there were no barriers for a Jew or anyone else to speak",** or as we would say today, they had religious freedom and freedom of speech.

There was, however, also a great disadvantage connected with the condition of the Roman Empire at that time. The outward prosperity, the material wealth, and the social and apparently economic stability gave the people a feeling of self-satisfaction, so that they felt no need of salvation. They had no great troubles which drove them to their

* Dallmann, op. cit., p. 61.

† Harnack, op. cit., p. 20.

** Richter, "Die Briefe des Apostels Paulus als missionarische Sendschreiben." p. 60. (A free translation)

heavenly Father, but as is always the case, material prosperity caused — them to forget from where every good and perfect gift comes. They had much leisure time for loafing in the market-place and other public places, but worse than that, their idleness contributed to the corruptness of the morals. "Idleness is the devil's workshop", and the devil never loafs. Therefore, when Paul came to the larger cities, and presented his message of salvation, showing the need of salvation because of the depravity of the soul, they could complacently answer, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."^{*} Together with this leisure and prosperity came also a certain amount of learning, which, when turned in the wrong direction, could make men reject the simple message of salvation and with a haughty air say, "We will hear thee again on this matter."[†] The people of that day could not "stand prosperity", and therefore they were not especially anxious to hear the message that Paul was proclaiming.

On the other hand, there was a large number of thinking people, who took life seriously. They also saw the vanity and barrenness of idolatry, the bankruptcy of heathen philosophy, and the moral corruption that accompanied the ritualistic heathen religions. Their eyes were not closed to the evil results that followed from the teachings of religions whose gods practised immorality. They knew that the mythic theology of the poets was only a "tissue of frequently immoral fables painting the gods as the basest of men".[‡] But from all of this they could receive no rest for their weary souls. All the glitter and the glamour of the man-made religions simply failed to satisfy. They were groping for something different, something better. And here was the point of approach for the Apostle Paul to give them that for which they were longing. He had the

^{*} Acts 26,28.
[†] Acts 17,32.
[‡] Dallmann, op. cit., p. 63.

truth that causes the "soul to delight itself in fatness".* He came in the fulness of time. Summing it all up in the words of Dr. Dallmann, "The Christian religion was the world religion; Greek, the world language; Rome, the world empire. He was a Jewish Christian; he spoke the Greek language; he was a Roman citizen. He was God's chosen vessel to preach the world religion in the world language to the world empire."[†]

That, in brief, is the world into which Paul, the Tarsus-born Roman citizen, set out to proclaim the grace of God in Christ. Surely that was a great order! How did he go about fulfilling that task? That is the question which we wish to answer under the heading:

THE MISSIONARY METHODS OF PAUL AS DEMONSTRATED IN

THE BOOK OF ACTS

This topic will be discussed under a survey of the passages in the Book of Acts, showing the direct reference to methods where that is possible, and pointing out the implications where the methods are not directly stated. In connection with this we wish to make applications to our own missionary methods, which we feel should not only increase our zeal for missions, but should enable us to bring the Gospel in a more effective way to more souls. For this purpose the subject has been divided into two main chapters, which in turn have been subdivided into smaller chapters, as will be indicated. We will see what methods Paul used in:

- I. APPROACHING THE PEOPLE.
- II. ESTABLISHING THE CHURCHES.

PART ONE

APPROACHING THE PEOPLE

No doubt one of the greatest problems that faces the missionary, especially the young missionary, is how to approach the people to whom

* Is. 55,2.

[†] op. cit., p. 63.

he wishes to bring the Gospel. It is of supreme importance that the young missionary gain the confidence of those with whom he comes in contact, and therefore he will endeavor to do the right thing in the right way at the right time. Paul, whose phenomenal success cannot be denied, also realized the importance of approach, and it is well that we study the methods of approach which this model missionary employed.

CHAPTER I

METHODS DETERMINED BY HIS CONCEPTION OF HIS WORK

Paul's method of doing his work was determined, in large measure, by his conception of the work to be done. This was impressed upon him already at his conversion, as the Lord also told Ananias, "He is the chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."^{*} This was brought closer to him at the specific commission by the church at Antioch to go to the Gentiles. Up to that time he had been serving as a pastor among the Antiochians, but now he, together with Barnabas, is to set out on a "missionary enterprise"^{**} to bring the Gospel to the regions round about. Nor did Paul feel that his field of labor was to be limited to this small field adjacent to Antioch, so that he would bring the Gospel only to Seleucia, Cyprus, Paphos, Pamphylia, etc., but as his subsequent missionary journeys show, the world was his field, and he felt that this was all included in the commission which he had received of the Lord. Therefore "boldly he presses forward into hostile territory; every success of the never weary conqueror becomes an impulse to cast his net out farther still: Pisidia, Galatia, Asia Minor, Greece do not suffice for him; he must visit Rome itself, and even the world's metropolis is to be only a way station on his road to the farther west."^{***} Nor did Paul lose sight of this world-wide vision as

^{*} Acts 9,15.

^{**} Barnes Notes, sub. 13,2.

^{***}

Warnock, quoted by Lenski, "Paul", p. 70.

he advanced in years and as his labors became more strenuous. When at Ephesus on his third missionary journey, Paul called the elders together and told them how he had tried to fulfill the mission which was given to him, "so that I might finish my course with joy."^{*} And the last chapter of Acts tells us of Paul's experience at Rome, which was near the end of his life. Here the Jews refused to listen to him. Did Paul then lay down his armor and say, "I quit, I have done my duty"? No, he reminded the Jews that "the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles.", and then he continued "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."^{**} Since the apostle to the end of his life recognized and ever held before him this great mission, he shaped his methods accordingly, wasting no time as he went along, but crowding as much into that lifetime as was possible. What a lesson for us! How many ministers (every minister is a missionary) are as diligent in trying to pack into their lives absolutely as much activity for the kingdom of God as is possible? Too many are satisfied with preaching their required amount of sermons, and of making the "necessary" calls. They are too well satisfied in taking care of their little flock, and neglect to press forward as did the Apostle Paul. "When Christ told the disciples, "Go ye into all the world," he did not mean for the minister simply to write his sermons and then wait for the people to come listen to him, but He meant for them to go to the world. "The salesman knows that he must go out and see the people and bring in the business. Each missionary ought to know that he has been sent to do mission work; that he has been sent to look up the un-churched and, by means of the Gospel, try to bring them into the church."^{***}

Besides recognizing the enormity of the task assigned to him, Paul also felt a great responsibility to the Lord, who sent him out. No doubt

^{*} Acts 20,24.

^{**} Acts 28,28.31.

^{***} Fritz, "The Practical Missionary", p. 38.

his miraculous conversion, in which the Lord spoke to him directly and told him to go to Ananias and he would be told what he must do, led him to recognize this. Again, when Paul was commissioned by the congregation at Antioch, he knew that the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."* Knowing that it was God who sent him out to bring the message of salvation to a sinful world, Paul's methods were characterized by enthusiasm, zeal, and untiring devotion. Knowing that it was God who commissions his disciples, he submitted his entire life and work to God. This was not a blind submission, with the attitude that such was simply his fate, but it was a holy resignation to the guidance and direction of God, coupled with a faith that could say, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."** This submission to the will of the Holy Spirit also led Paul to a mission field which he had not planned to visit. "Paul and Silas are prevented from going to Asia and Bithynia, where they wanted to go, and by a special vision are led to Macedonia, where they had no intention of going at that time; but there is that woman Lydia with her associates who are ready to receive the Gospel and become the nucleus of a large church. Now, it is true, Paul was led there directly by the Holy Spirit."* "He had learned the lesson of submitting himself to the guidance of the Spirit, indeed all through the book of Acts we see how permeated were the early Christians with the promise of their Master that they should be led by His Spirit." This submission to the will of his Master does not imply that the apostle did no planning. We cannot state this better than it has been stated by Richter, a prominent leader of missions in Germany, whose statement is here freely translated:

"Paul had no definite program, so as to say, 'I will go to a certain place, will stay there so many days, will then go to another

* Acts 13,2.

** Acts 21,13.

* Hoyer, "The Missionary Forward Endeavor in the Light of the Book of Acts," p. 6.

‡ Howe, "Brief History of Missions," p. 20.

place and stay there, etc.' He commended himself wholly to the will of God, Acts 16,6ff. The only planned trip of Paul that we know is the one from Corinth to Jerusalem, then through Rome to Spain, but this trip he could not carry through, for he was cast into prison. And yet we cannot say that Paul had no plan in the establishment of the congregations, for when we look at the map and see how wisely the congregations are distributed over the country, then we can see that there was plenty of plan in his work.**

The same truth is expressed in the words of Harnack: "Paul felt that the Spirit of God drove him on, revealing his route and destination; but this did not supersede the exercise of deliberation and reflection in his own mind, and evidences of the latter may be found repeatedly throughout his travels.***"

As a result of this whole-hearted submission to God, Paul's labors are amply rewarded, not only by unparalleled success, but by the fact that whatever happened to him, he bore it with joy, even when things were going against him, humanly speaking. When we carry on our mission work, we should also remember that we are responsible and accountable to God, and then our attitude will not be one of a slavish submission to whatever befalls us, but we will take the hardships as they come. We are to use our common sense in planning our missions, of course, but that does not always mean that what seems to be the most unlikely field for work will be the most unfruitful. The Lord often blesses work where we least expect results, just as he blessed the work of Paul when he submitted to the Holy Ghost and went over to Macedonia.

In connection with the sense of responsibility which Paul had, we might also mention that he felt a responsibility over against the congregation at Antioch, from which he was commissioned to go on his first tour of evangelization. Although, in the words of Richter, "there was no special missionary society, which provided for the physical necessities of life and for the continuation of the work, although there was no committee to give instructions, although there were no institutions,

* Richter, "Die Briefe Pauli als Missionarische Sonderschreiben," p. 66.

** Harnack, op. cit., p. 370.

no parish houses, schools of different ranks, hospitals, etc."* yet Paul knew that he was sent by these Christians and that they expected him to do his work faithfully. Thus, on his return from his first trip, he was able to report that they had fulfilled their ministry.

Paul kept one aim steadily before him. That aim was to bring both Jew and Gentile to faith in Christ, the Savior. Paul testified to the Jews that Jesus had commanded him to be His witness "unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard,"** and still clearer to Agrippa, that Christ had sent him to the Gentiles "to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God."** That must be the aim of all missionary preaching. If there ever was a time when the so-called social Gospel could have been justified, it was at the time of Paul, yet he never lost sight of the one great purpose of spreading the Gospel, to tell men of their sin and their Savior. When he was before Felix, he did not speak to the magistrate of politics, or of social conditions, but "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come."** Prof. Theo. Hoyer ably describes the purpose of Paul in the words:

"We fail to find, in the first place, that Christian preachers are at all interested in this world or in the institutions of this world. Not in affairs of the State; and surely conditions in the government of Rome at that time, with Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero at the helm, were as bad as they could be. Yet not a word on cleaner politics, better laws, or more efficient enforcement of laws; instead, when he arrives in Rome and throughout his two-year stay in Rome, Paul preached the kingdom of God and taught those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, Acts 28,31.

Nor is it more moral improvement that they call for. Paul came to Corinth, probably the foremost city of luxury and lust at that time; even their religion was crass service of the flesh; they had a magnificent temple of Venus--with a thousand prostitutes. Nor was Paul ignorant of that; a year and a half he preached at Corinth; and in the first chapters of Romans he shows that the sins of the heathen were well known to him. Yet Paul does not hold forth on the evil reputation of the city, that the world over it was becoming customary

* Richter, "Evangelische Missionskunde", Band II, 1927, p. 18.

** Acts 22,15.

* Acts 23,18.

** Acts 24,25.

to say of young men who were leading a notoriously wild life, 'They are the Corinthians of the community,' he testifies to the Corinthians that Jesus was the Christ, Acts 16,5."

Realizing that social reform and moral uplift comes only as a result of the turning of the heart, the apostle was obedient to the heavenly vision and "showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."^{*} His one purpose was to kindle faith. That must be the one aim and goal of our missionary work. Whatever else we make, if we produce not believers, our work is a farce, a delusion. "Living faith in Christ's blood and righteousness, trust and confidence in Him as the Son of God and the Son of Man, slain for our sins and risen from the dead, complete reliance upon him for forgiveness, peace, help, and eternal life--this is what all preaching, and also all missionary preaching and teaching, must produce."^{*} The statement of a certain Congregational pastor that "the Church's one increasing purpose is the building of a better world, or, to use terms showing relationship, to weave a finer social fabric",^{*} is not in harmony with the one aim which Paul held before him as he set out on his program of evangelizing the world. Where the one purpose is to convert souls, all else will follow; where that purpose is lacking, the other will not follow, and nothing will make up for the lack but the preaching of repentance and faith.

Having this conception of his ambitious enterprise, Paul shaped his methods accordingly to carry it out.

CHAPTER II

PAUL USES THE ONLY CORRECT MEANS

When taking into consideration the tremendous task which Paul had of conquering the world for Christ, the question naturally arises, "What

^{*} Hoyer, op. cit., p. 8.

^{**} Lenski, "St. Paul", p. 75.

^{*} Quoted by Hoyer, op. cit., p. 7.

did he use for that purpose?" Did he capitalize on his brilliant genius? Did he show that he had a keen mind, was a sharp thinker, had a splendid education, and was a forceful speaker? Did he try to impress the philosophers of Athens? Did he cater to the great and mighty? One would think that Paul would have used all of these seeming advantages. It is true:

"Kings and generals need a vast equipment, necessitating a great outlay of money, when they go out against an enemy of their country to reconquer a land of which they have been robbed. When this King sends out His servants to reconquer for Him the lands which His enemy has stolen from Him, the hearts of mankind, He gives them just one weapon--His Word. Whether it be for attack or defense, sword and shield are the same; no matter who the people on whom they focus their attack, whether they are high society or the lowest scum or of any of the stages between, the Lord has instructed them to use only one thing, His Word, and that includes of course the visible Word, the Sacraments. His Word is the only means, but the all-sufficient means, for carrying on mission-work."^{**}

Paul and his helpers used the only correct means for accomplishing their purpose--the Gospel of the grace of God. "They preached the Word of God."^{**} That Paul had nothing else, needed nothing else, wanted nothing else, and knew nothing else than the Word to carry on his work, is shown through the entire second half of the Book of Acts. To pick out a few: Paul and Barnabas preached the Word in Perga,^{***} they preached the Gospel in Lystra and Derbe;[†] the Word of the Lord was published throughout all the region of Antioch;^{††} and in the last verse of the book we are told that Paul was in Rome for two years, "Preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding it."[‡] And that the Book of Acts in every instance shows that Paul used nothing but the Gospel, no matter where he preached, is not merely accident. That was Paul's intention, as he expresses in one of his letters: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."^{‡‡} Thus the greatest apostle of all times employed the only means which is the power of God unto salvation.

* Moyer, op. cit., p. 20.

** Acts 13,5.

*** Acts 14,25.

† Acts 14,7,21.

†† Acts 13,49.

‡ Acts 28,31

‡‡ 1 Cor. 2,2.

When Paul preached the Gospel, he preached the entire Gospel, and that, according to the division of our Lutheran theologians, consists of Law and Gospel. Paul reminded the elders at Ephesus: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God,"* and what he means when he says that he preached all the counsel of God is given in his words: "Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."^{**} At Antioch in Pisidia the apostle preached sin and grace, for he told the Jews: "Be it therefore known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Beware therefore lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish."[‡] Though it would have been much easier to talk in milder tones, or perhaps for the benefit of the Jews who rejected Christ as the Messiah to withhold some of the truth, the missionary preached "that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ."[§] The need of Christ's suffering, together with the blessed results of Christ's redemption, in other words, sin and grace, Law and Gospel, was the ever-recurring theme of the preaching of Paul.[¶]

And yet, while Paul did not shun to declare anything of the Gospel to his hearers, but taught everything, while he stresses salvation from different viewpoints before different audiences, and while the various events in connection with the life and death of Christ were announced, his emphasis was always on one point—he preached Christ crucified. —*

* Acts 20,27.

** Acts 20,21.

‡ Acts 13,38-41.

§ Acts 17,3.

¶ Adapted from Hoyer, op. cit., pp. 9, 17.

1 Mt
2 Cor 4:5

"It was Paul who first throw into such sharp relief the significance of Jesus Christ as a Redeemer, and made this the central point of Christian teaching. He led his hearers to admit 'we are sinners, one and all.' Then he led them to the cross of Christ, where he developed the conception of the cross as the power and the wisdom of God."* Paul stressed "that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead,"** in other words, he emphasized the vicarious atonement of Christ as the heart and center of all Christian truth. He knew that "the vicarious atonement of Christ for the sins of all the world was the central truth of the Gospel with which Christianity stands and falls. And that is why it makes no difference whether he speaks to the Jews or to the Greeks, whether he speaks to stern rulers or the women at the river, whether his hearer is a jailer about to commit suicide or a sorcerer trying to prevent another from hearing the truth, whether it is a learned audience of Greek philosophers or a band of terrified sailors about to suffer shipwreck, they all hear the same message--Christ and Him crucified. The reason for this is that Paul recognized the common need of man. He knew that every man, whether high or low, educated or ignorant, ruler or pauper, Jew or Gentile, is by nature a lost and condemned sinner. And he knew just as surely that the only method in which every individual sinner can be brought to faith is the simple story of the Cross of Christ. Thus "the name of Paul represents a testament and is a symbol: The real Gospel really for the real world--that is Paul the missionary."**

Since the Gospel is not the only means of grace, the question arises, "Did Paul use baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar?" In regard to baptism we have several instances where it is mentioned in connection with his ministry. Lydia and her whole household were baptized,** the family of the jailer was baptized,³ the sacrament was used at

* Harnack, op. cit., p. 382.

** Acts 17,3.

* Steck, "Paulus als Missionsprediger" in Missionsjahrbuch fuer 1930, p. 20.

** Acts 16,5.

& Acts 16,33.

Corinth,* and also at Ephesus.** From the Book of Acts itself it is impossible for us to say whether Paul did the actual baptizing himself, or whether his help rs did that part of the work. Some have taken Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 1,17: "Christ sent me, not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel" to mean that Paul did no baptizing, but only preached. It is more likely that Paul was merely stressing the fact that the preaching of the Word is the foundation of all Christian doctrine and practise, also of baptism. But it is sure that baptism was administered in connection with the work of Paul. This is also the view of Richter, when he says: "We know that Paul baptized, but we do not know whether indoctrination preceded baptism, nor do we know what mode of baptism he used. He did put much stress on baptism."[†]

There is some disagreement among commentators as to whether Paul instructed his converts before they were baptized. The Book of Acts does not state clearly whether they were really instructed, or whether it was only required that they confess Jesus as the Savior. It seems that in the case of the jailer and his family, a simple confession of faith is all that was asked. In regard to the Ephesian Christians, we are told that they had been baptized with the baptism of John, but that they did not know of the Holy Ghost. Just why they did not know of the Holy Ghost we cannot say definitely, but this much we do know--Paul instructed them on the doctrine of baptism and then they were really baptized. What the nature of this instruction was we do not know. Richter is of the opinion that we do not know whether indoctrination preceded baptism.^{††} R. Allen, in his book, "Missionary Methods, St. Paul's or Ours?" says, "St. Paul did not baptize uninstructed converts apart from a system of mutual responsibility which ensured their instruction."[‡]

We can be sure that at least the most necessary fundamentals were known

* Acts 18,8.

** Acts 19,5.

† Richter, "Die Briefe St. Pauli, etc." op. cit., p. 69.

†† Ibid., p. 69.

‡ Allen, "Missionary Methods, St. Paul's or Ours?" p. 6.

by the converts before they were baptized, but what the extent of their indoctrination was cannot be determined from the information given in the Book of Acts.

The Sacrament of the Altar is not mentioned in the story of St. Paul as recorded by Luke. Thus, taking the Book of Acts alone, we would be compelled to say that we do not know what Paul's attitude was toward Holy Communion. On the other hand, the very fact that it is not mentioned by the writer may be evidence that it was such a common practice, also with Paul, that it was not even necessary to mention it. This is also the conclusion of Richter, who states, "Although the Sacrament of the Altar is not mentioned in the Book of Acts, it is mentioned in the letters of Paul as a definite part of the regular service of the churches. The very fact that it is not mentioned in Acts shows that it was taken for granted that they celebrated Holy Communion."^{*} We know from the epistles that Paul stressed the importance of this sacrament, and that he insisted on its worthy reception, so it need not bother us that Luke does not mention it. We must remember that Luke presents Paul to us as a missionary, whose purpose it is to bring the Gospel of Christ to as many people as possible, and not as a pastor fulfilling a long pastorate at one certain place.

In speaking of the emphasis which Paul laid on the Word and its power, some who like to disparage the power of the Gospel mention that he had the help of miracles. It is true that Paul used miracles. The Lord "gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands,"^{**} in Iconium, but the people were divided, some believing, and some rejecting the truth. At Lystra occurred the healing of a cripple.^{**} At Philippi the spirit of divination was expelled.^{*} At Ephesus "God wrought special miracles by the hands of

^{*} Acts 14, 8. "Die Briefe, etc", p. 73.

^{**} Acts 14, 8-10.

^{*} Acts 16, 18.

Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."^{*} But the miracle that shed most light on the relation of the miracles to the Word is the one in which Paul struck Elymas, the sorcerer with blindness, for we are told that "the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."^{**} Here it is expressly stated that Sergius Paulus came to faith, not because of the miracle performed, but by the doctrine of the Lord. Paul himself did not trust the power of his miracles to convert people, but relied upon the power of the Gospel. In the healing of the lame man at Lystra we are told that the man had faith before he was healed. When the people then wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas because of the miracle, Paul refused to let them honor him, even rebuking them, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God."[†] We never hear of Paul referring to the miracles as the power which converts men, nor does he ever resort to them, except when it is necessary, which we will discuss in the next paragraph. Oepke is right when he states that the miracles did not precede the preaching of the apostle, but that they merely accompanied and followed it.[‡] This is true not only of time, but also of the importance of the supernatural deeds of Paul.

If the apostle used only the means of the Gospel to convert his hearers, what then was the purpose of the miracles, and what is their importance? This is ably shown in the following quotation from "Missionary Forward Endeavor in the Light of the Book of Acts" by Prof. Hoyer:

"It is the Lord who gives to the workers strength, courage, and boldness to go out against all odds and preach the Word. For that purpose He sent His apostles the Holy Ghost and thus endowed them with power from on high, Acts 1,8. And because the odds were so very great at that time, He endowed them with the special power of working miracles. These miracles were never an end in themselves, but a means |→

* Acts 19,11,12.

** Acts 13,12.

‡ Oepke, "Die Missionspredigt des Apostel Paulus" p. 19.

† Acts 14,15.

to an end, to draw attention to the preaching of the apostles and to stamp it as divine truth. In the power of the Spirit they went out and did far greater miracles, turning the world upside down with their preaching.....It is true, they had the power to perform miracles; they were needed then; Christianity was something new, something antagonistic to all that men wanted and desired, to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness; they needed this divine trademark on their teaching to establish it as truth. But even then miracles never stood in the foreground; they are mentioned only in passing; in fact, on the occasion of the first miracle, the healing of the lame man, Peter states clearly what the purpose of the miracles is, Acts 3,12; they are a means to the end that they might testify of Him who healed the lame man. The only means that the apostles know to carry out the work that Christ has given to them to do is the Gospel."²

Prof. Ramsey goes so far as to say that "the marvels recorded in Acts are not as a rule, said to have been efficacious in spreading the new religion."³ He adds that the importance of these events lies rather in their effect on the mind of the apostle themselves, who accepted them as an encouragement and a confirmation of their work. R. Allen devotes an entire chapter to the miracles, showing that they did not convert people, that "St. Paul did not use his powers of healing as an inducement to people to receive his teaching," but that they only aided in his preaching in the following manner (Will give only the outline):

1. His miracles attracted hearers. The wonderful cures attracted men to St. Paul. They came to see who it was that had done such a thing. So miracles prepared the way for preaching.
2. Miracles were universally accepted as proofs of the Divine approval of the message and work of him through whom they were wrought.
3. Miracles were a demonstration of the power of Jesus over pagan gods and demons. It is interesting to note that all of St. Paul's miracles, except the recovery of Eutychus, were wrought in pagan surroundings. They were wrought for the edification of Gentiles rather than of Jews or Christians.
4. Miracles were illustrations of the character of the new religion. They were sermons in act. They set forth in unmistakable terms two of its fundamental doctrines, the doctrine of charity and the doctrine of salvation, of release from bondage of sin and power of the devil.*

Thus, while the miracles were important, Paul did not rely on them for his work, but his teaching spread by convincing the minds of his hearers, as has been indicated in the case of Sergius Paulus. And since the performance of supernatural deeds was not to be the method in which to turn the

* Hoyer, op. cit., p. 6 & 24.

**"St. Paul, the Traveler and the Roman Citizen", p. 115.

† op. cit., p. 53ff.

hearts of men "the ability to work miracles was not a prerogative of Paul's own, to be exercised by him just as he pleased, but was held by him at the will of the Master himself, and used by him only on the impulse of the Holy Ghost, at such times and in such circumstances as divine wisdom determined to be appropriate."* From these arguments it is evident that the phenomenal success of Paul was not due to the miracles he performed.

Just as Paul used the only correct means for fulfilling his mission, so we in the twentieth century have only one means of converting men, and that is the Gospel. Men today are essentially the same as they were in the days of St. Paul. They are all lost and condemned sinners in the sight of God the Father, and are therefore in need of the Word. And when we preach the Word, especially when we are trying to build up what we sometimes call a "new mission field", we are not to drag in all sorts of "extras" to "help the Gospel." The Gospel is the power of God, even in its simplest form. No sensationalism, no novelty, and no fad can add to the power of the Gospel, but it can often detract and hinder the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore such things as the missionary donning a cowboy suit, as was recently done by the "Cowboy Evangelist" in Texas, and bringing in a Dizzy Dean, are entirely out of place. Nor is our preaching to be so involved and difficult that the people must marvel at our learning while their soul is starved, but we must preach the Gospel in its simplicity, stressing Christ and Him crucified. We are, of course, to preach the Gospel in its entirety, but whatever we preach, it must always center upon the meritorious work of Christ, for that and that alone will save men. And to save men is the only purpose of all mission work.

* Taylor, "Paul, the Missionary", p. 88.

CHAPTER III

PAUL WENT TO THE STRATEGIC CENTERS (

Paul had a large territory to evangelize, as has been pointed out before. It was therefore of great importance that he choose the places he wished to visit with the utmost of care. Throughout the Book of Acts one can notice how Paul chose strategic points at which to set up his evangelistic centers. He wanted to make the Gospel known to the greatest number in the shortest possible time. Therefore he went especially to the larger cities in Asia Minor and in Europe.

There are several reasons why Paul chose the places which are recorded in the Book of Acts. First of all, in such cities he could reach the largest number of people at one time. While Paul did not spurn the individual, he wanted to bring the masses under the sound of the Gospel. In addition to that, Paul chose centers from which the Church could branch out. He knew that his time was limited, and therefore he wanted the Church to spread out from strategic centers, so that Christianity would spread out as a network over the entire Roman Empire. And for that reason Paul did not try to visit as many towns in number as possible, but he visited the important places, where he could instruct the people sufficiently that they could bring the light of the Gospel to those round about them. A brief sketch of the important cities visited by Paul will bring this out more clearly.

The first important city in which Paul worked was Antioch in ^{Syria.} ~~Asia.~~ Antioch was chosen by Paul for several reasons. According to Acts 11,19, some of the Jews that were scattered went to Antioch, and there they preached the Word. That meant that Paul here had an opening in this chief city, not only among the Jews, but also among the Gentiles, for "some of them....spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.....and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord."* In addition to that

* Acts 11,20.21.

the city of Antioch was an important commercial center. "Situated on the river Orontes.....it was excellently placed for commercial communication between the East and the West....Here the merchants from the far East met their customers from the West, and exchanged commodities with each other. Such was its importance as a centre of influence, that, though in point of population in the Empire, it was frequently referred to as a second Rome."* But at the same time Antioch was notorious for the luxury and lasciviousness of its people, "outranking even Rome in the display of lascivious sensuality and debauchery, being, with the neighboring Daphne, perhaps the most fascinating moral quagmire in the world."^{**} But even in such cultured and morally corrupt places Paul knew that the Gospel could wrest human souls from the bonds of the devil, and into such places he went in order to build the Church. And what opportunities for spreading out from Antioch!

The other great city in Asia Minor visited by the missionary was Ephesus, a prominent seaport town. Here in Ephesus he again found some believers, Acts 18,19, and from here the church spread, "so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."^{*} Some commentators hold that it was from Ephesus that the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation were begun. Ephesus was both a wicked and a wealthy city. Located on the Aegean Sea, it was the doorway to Western Asia Minor, which naturally attracted many people to this prosperous town. But this wealthy city sang "Great is Diana of the Ephesians,"^{**} in whose worship "swarms of priestesses with the lead dances enticed men to the grossest and most degrading debauchery."[&] But again we must say that Paul chose this evil city for a special purpose, as Demetrius complained: "Ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus,

* Taylor, op. cit., p. 60,61.

** Theol. Quart., Vol. VII, p. 206.

† Acts 19,10.

& Ballmann, op. cit., p. 170.

but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people."^{*}

Taking into consideration the places in Europe which Paul visited, we note again how he planted his churches with a view to the future spread of the Church. When Paul went to Macedonia, he went to "the chief city of that part of Macedonia and a colony."^{**} "When he came to Europe he did not stop in Neapolis, the harbor town, nor did he go to the ancient city of Amphipolis; he went straight to Philippi. In Macedonia it was contested at that time that Philippi was the chief city; but to Paul it was, since it was a Roman colony; hence Paul evidently judged that Philippi was the city with a future, and his estimate proved correct; Philippi soon left its rival far behind."^{**} Allen stresses the argument that Paul went to Philippi, not because he wanted to go to any certain city, but because he knew he had a wide field to cover, and therefore looked upon his work there as working not in a city, but in a province, so that we would not say that Paul started in Philippi, but in Macedonia. That is probably going a little too far. Paul chose Philippi, and later Thessalonica, because they were both on the famous Egnatian highway, which made them outstanding cities, with great possibilities of future expansion.

Two other neighboring towns in Europe which Paul visited were Athens and Corinth. Athens was outstanding for its intellectual achievements. It was "the intellectual metropolis of the ancient world--the mother of arts and eloquence."^{***} Here is where the philosophers were wont to meet to discuss various religions, and especially "to hear some new thing."[&] But "in the most brilliant period of Athenian greatness, when art had reached its acme of noble simplicity, when poetry and oratory shed over

* Acts 19,25.

** Acts 18,12.

*** Dr. A. L. Graebner, Theol. Quart., Vol. VII, p. 214.

&& Taylor, op. cit., p. 234.

& Acts 18,24.

the public life a glowing atmosphere of grace and beauty, when intellect, unrivalled in force and subtlety, discussed questions which men are debating still, evils which are not so much as named among ourselves were sapping the very foundations of social order, and were made by men whose own personal purity is above suspicion the subject of jest and witticism."⁸ So true it is that the world by wisdom knows not God. Corinth, on the other hand, was a seaport town, a commercial center, also with much learning. It was the stepping stone from Europe to Asia, but here again we hear of the moral rottenness of this city, not from the Book of Acts, but from the letter which Paul later wrote to the Corinthians. Yet Paul visited these two centers of Greek civilization. Here were strategic points from which the Church could grow and spread out.

Rome was the city which Paul anxiously desired to visit. Coming from Macedonia and Achaia he wished to go to Jerusalem and then to Rome. Why? Not, as Allen says, to use the influence of his Roman citizenship, and possibly the help of the Roman government, to carry on his work, but in the continuance of his policy to go the chief centers, and to spread out his work from there. And what opportunities Rome offered just in that respect! Rome was the capital of the world at that time. All roads led to Rome. Paul felt sure that if he could plant the Gospel there, then it could spread rapidly from this influential city. Besides, there were devout Jews there, Jews who were mission-minded, of whom we have special mention of Aquila and Priscilla. Paul knew that he would be making no mistake by starting work there. But Paul did not go to Rome in the way in which he expected, but was taken there as a prisoner, though he did not let this keep him from preaching the Gospel.

The cities of today offer the same opportunities and the same problems which the cities of Paul's age had. And we must meet these problems

⁸ Taylor, op. cit., p. 236.

and responsibilities with the same zeal and fervor which the apostle showed. In our age the rural churches are being neglected more and more, and people are going to the cities. The rapid growth of our cities, and the movement of the people from the farm to the city present a challenge to our church today, which we must meet if we want to be true to our mission of evangelizing the world. This does not mean that we should neglect rural missions, but the emphasis must be on city missions, for there is where the vast majority of people are gathered, and we can approach the largest number of people at one time. This also affords better opportunities for expansion. This does not necessarily put the rural people at a great disadvantage, for with our modern roads and automobiles, they can easily attend church in the cities.

Paul did not hesitate to go to a large city because he knew that the wickedness of that city was too great. Had he been afraid of that, he probably never would have gotten started. Neither are we to shun the city for that reason, and possibly feel that it is useless to preach the Gospel there. It is true that vice and crime are more rampant in the larger cities. "In the city our national sins, such as money-madness, pleasure-madness, lust-madness, prostitution, the divorce evil, and political corruption, are developed to a high degree."² People in the city are also inclined to become indifferent in spiritual matters, but that is no reason why we should shun city missions. That is all the more reason why we should preach the Gospel there, if one wishes to argue in that manner. The fact is, all men are in the same condemnation, and the more of those men we can approach with the message of salvation, the better our methods are. But here too we should exercise our common sense. It would not be wise to go to any large city, but we must investigate and find out what the possibilities are. To fail to do so would be a waste of time and money: To do so will be blessed with fruits.

² Fritz, "The Practical Missionary", p. 15.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD OF APPROACHING THE JEWS

When Paul went to the various cities, he did not go there without any particular destination or purpose. He knew that it was necessary that the Word of God be spoken first to the Jews,* and for that reason he made it a point to get in touch with the Jews first. The logical place to preach to the Jews was the synagogue. We are told that on his first journey "they preached the word of God in the synagogue of the Jews,"** at Salamis, this was repeated at Antioch,† and this practice was continued at Iconium, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, and Ephesus. In fact, we are expressly told that this was the practise of Paul, namely, that he went to the Jews assembled in the synagogues, "as his manner was."‡ It was not mere accident that Paul got into the common meeting place of the worshipping Jews, but that was his deliberate purpose.

Why did Paul make his first approach in the cities to the Jews in the synagogues? The answer we find in the sermons of Paul, one of which was alluded to above. Paul knew that the Jews were the chosen people of God. The promises had been given first to the children of Israel. In addition to that, "with the Jews the hope of gaining some converts was slightly greater because there he had a point of contact: The Old Testament prophecies. And results proved that policy right; though the great majority of the Jews hardened their hearts against the Gospel and then became its bitterest enemies, yet a few were always won and formed a nucleus around whom a congregation could be gathered; and every missionary knows the great value of that."§ Another thing, Paul was sure of getting at least a hearing in the synagogue. It was the custom in the synagogue to permit any learned rabbi to speak, and Paul used those opportunities. It is really remarkable how often Paul tried to do this,

* Acts 13,46.

** Acts 13,5.

† Acts 13,14.

‡ Acts 17,2.

§ Hoyer, op. cit., p. 28.

in spite of the fact that he had been mistreated so often by the very Jews whom he approached in the synagogues. But if the Jews refused to hearken to his preaching, he left them and went to the Gentiles, for he considered himself a missionary, not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles, as will be taken up in the next chapter. Paul had no time to waste with stubborn Jews, so if his message fell on deaf ears, he moved onward. | R

The choice of the synagogues for the first approach was also made because of the influence which the synagogue and its members exerted on the world of that day. The Jews had become so well-known, or perhaps we should say "notorious", at Antioch, that they received the name Christian,* not as an honorary title which they bestowed upon themselves, but a name given to them by those outside of their own ranks because they had become so noticeable through the teachings and precepts of the synagogues. Paul, looking forward to evangelize the world, no doubt recognized the importance of getting the synagogues behind him. Harnack says of the importance of the synagogue:

"To nascent Christianity the synagogues in the Diaspora meant more than the fontes persecutionum of Tertullian's complaint; they also formed the most important presupposition for the rise and growth of Christian communities throughout the empire. The network of the synagogues furnished the Christian propaganda with centres and courses for its development, and in this way the mission of the new religion, which was undertaken in the name of the God of Abraham and Moses, found a sphere already prepared for itself."**

Lenski enlarges this same thought in the following manner:

"The increasing propaganda of the Jews had successfully paved the way for the Christian missionaries. We know of 150 Jewish congregations along the shores of the Mediterranean during the time of the Roman emperors (Deissmann); and their actual number must have been much greater. When Paul at first turned to these centers of Jewish religious life, he certainly did not intend thereby to make his work easy, but he did it because this method was bound to reach his goal in the quickest manner in entirely strange surroundings. Paul found and gathered together the people in whom he meant to kindle the fire, in order that they might carry it farther. How much more rapidly would the evangelization of the world proceed today, if we had a Christian diaspora, centers of Christian life in heathen lands. Alas, the "Christian" traders and

* Acts 11,26.

** Harnack, op. cit., p. 1.

others who go to those lands are almost always a hindrance, instead of a help, to the cause of missions."^{*}

The sad part of the story is that Paul did not succeed in getting the synagogues behind his cause whole-heartedly. Only a few believed and became ardent missionaries, while the others became violent opponents of the cause. The important thing is that the synagogues furnished Paul a starting-point for his mission work in these large cities.

An application of this method of Paul of going to a place where the people have some knowledge of Christianity is being carried out at the present time by our Synodical Conference. Our entrance into the African field, where these people have some knowledge of the truth is parallel to the apostle's approach to the Jews. Of course they do not have all the truth, but at least we have a point of contact, and this will open up a wide field for us. Another application of this we find in the early work of our fathers in this country, when they went to the places where "Deutsche" and "Lutheraner" could be found. That was not done in order to make the work easier, but that was following the principle of St. Paul. Fortunately our fathers enjoyed a better reception on the part of the people than Paul experienced among his brethren.

Although our fathers followed apostolic practise in the beginning, there is probably one phase in which they fell short. Some of them limited their work to the Germans and ex-Lutherans, a limit which St. Paul did not observe, as we shall see in the next chapter. The result was that our church came to be known as the "German Church," or as many in the South called it, "The Lutheran Church" (with the accent on the second syllable). The time has come when we must reach out farther than just to the "abgefallene Lutheraner". However, if we can find a nucleus of Christians in a place where we wish to start our mission, it is only common sense and good judgment that we first approach the believers and then spread out from there.

* Lenski, "St. Paul", p. 72.

CHAPTER V

PAUL'S APPROACH TO THE GENTILES

Since Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles also, and not only to the Jews, it naturally interests us to know what methods he used to approach the Gentiles. We have shown above, in the chapter on the means which Paul used to convert men, that Paul did not try to attract the attention of the Gentiles by means of miracles, or by any spectacular display, but that he approached them with the Word. How then did Paul bring the Word to the Gentiles?

Here again Paul followed somewhat the same order that he adopted in his work among the Jews. As we read through the Book of Acts we find that there are repeated references to the Jews and the Gentiles. And where are they to be found? At the synagogues. In the synagogues, so ^{Zahn} ~~Meister~~ tells us:

"They had not only Jews and proselytes in their audience, but many heathen became interested, were converted and adopted the religion and customs of the Jews. Many heathen were acquainted with the synagogues, and thus Paul had a good approach to the heathen. Paul knew that was where a conscientious heathen could be found. He could have used the streets for his preaching, as did the vendors, fortune-tellers, and philosophers, but he did not do this much, and when he did it, he did it only after considering the advisability of it. He seems to have preached out in the open in Lystra. In Athens he did not only use the synagogue every Sabbath, but he used the market-place daily."*

Paul did not limit his preaching to the Gentiles to the synagogues, but that is where he made his first approach. At Philippi he preached to the women at the river side. He disputed in the school of Tyrannus, but that was only after he was driven out of the synagogue. He no doubt approached many of the Gentiles personally as he came into contact with them in following his trade of making tents. In short, Paul approached the heathen in whatever way he could find, but since he had a world-wide mission and wanted to preach to as many as possible at one time, he made his first approach in the synagogues, where many of them were to be found, and where they were anxious to hear the Gospel.

* "Missionsmethoden im Zeitalter der Apostel", p. 31.

The Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews, were called by various names. The most common name was "proselyte". Other designations in the Book of Acts are "devout Greeks"; "ye that fear God,"** "Gentiles," etc. All of these can be combined under the term "proselytes," which is derived from the Greek "προσήλυτος." Thayer, in his definition of this word, divides the proselytes into two groups, and says:

"The Rabbins distinguish two classes of proselytes, namely, the proselytes of righteousness, who received circumcision and bound themselves to keep the whole Mosaic law and to comply with all the requirements of Judaism, and proselytes of the gate, who dwelt among the Jews, and although uncircumcised observed certain specified laws, especially the seven precepts of Noah (as the Rabbins called them), i.e., against the chief sins, idolatry, blasphemy against God, homicide, unchastity, theft or plundering, rebellion against rulers, and the use of "flesh with the blood thereof".*

The word *προσήλυτος* comes from *προσέρχομαι*, meaning "to come to" or "to come forward." According to this the term alone would simply mean one who comes to the Jewish religion or to the synagogue, not necessarily implying that all the requirements of Judaism had to be met. Barnes defines a proselyte as one "who is converted from one religion to another. The word does not mean here that he was a convert to Christianity--which was true--but that he had been converted at Antioch from paganism to the Jewish religion."** Sometimes an adjective is used in connection with the term, either *σεβόμενος* or *φοβούμενος*, both of them meaning the same thing, "to fear" or "to worship God." But that Paul did not consider the ceremonies of the Jews necessary for the proselytes for true worship can be seen from his stand at the conference in Jerusalem. What he was interested in was that they believed. Some of the believing Gentiles, of course, submitted to circumcision, but others did not. They had a special section in the synagogue where they could sit during services. It was these Gentiles that Paul approached first, partly because they came in large numbers to the synagogue eager to learn more, and

* Acts 17,4.

** Acts 13,16.

* "Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament", sub verb.

** sub Acts 6,5.

partly because these God-fearing Gentiles would be glad to lead him to others. Some of these Gentile converts later became some of the most faithful disciples.

In this connection we might add an interesting note by Prof. Hoyer:

"The first Christian in Europe was a woman, Lydia, c. 16,14. It is probable that a number of other women met with her in that house by the riverside where the Jews were wont to meet or in her own home; and so this little band of pious women was the beginning of the church in Philippi, the beginning of European Christendom. May we conclude from Acts 17,12* and other indications that even in those days women formed a larger contingent in the Church than the men? At any rate, they were active members and missionaries. Though they were told to keep silence in the congregation, they can nevertheless carry on very effective mission-work, and many a church begins with a little band of Christian women."**

In our church work today we can no more confine our work to the "apostate" Lutherans than Paul confined his work to the Jews. Formerly the German immigrants called for their pastor as soon as they had settled, but conditions now demand that we go out and work also among those who are not of German extraction. In many churches today we find that the recently gained converts are the most active, just as the Gentiles became some of the most enthusiastic workers for St. Paul. Those who have only recently been brought to the faith seem to appreciate their religion much more than those who "grew up in the church." Therefore we should urge also these people to help bring their former friends and associates to the faith and to the hope which they have just found. The Lutheran Hour of today has brought the true Gospel to many who are not connected with our church, and has lead them to be real seekers of the truth, just as the proselytes at the time of Paul. Many a young missionary can testify of the benefits derived from such work. It is now our duty to follow up the work of the Lutheran Hour and actually give to the people that for which they are looking. We must ever keep before us the fact that the world is our field, and must therefore grasp every opportunity to cover that field.

* Refers to "honorable women which were Greeks."

** op. cit., p. 18.

CHAPTER VI

PAUL USED TACT

One outstanding characteristic of Paul's methods, and one which is frequently overlooked or at least minimized, is his tact or diplomacy in dealing with those he met on his missionary journeys. To describe in detail the diplomacy of Paul as demonstrated by the Book of Acts would require a whole book itself, but just a few examples from several of his sermons will suffice to show what good judgment the missionary exercised in approaching his hearers.

"Tact" is defined by the Funk and Wagnalls College Standard Dictionary as "a quick or intuitive appreciation of what is fit, proper, or right; fine or ready mental discernment shown in saying or doing the proper thing, or especially in avoiding what would offend or disturb; skill or facility in dealing with men in emergencies." Another definition often given is "doing the right thing or saying the right thing at the right time in the right way." Every missionary is expected to be tactful, as the Savior Himself said: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."^{*} Allen argues that "the Christian missionary should strive to possess a sound knowledge of the religion of those to whom he speaks, and should approach them with sympathetic understanding of their intellectual position."^{**} Did Paul possess this ability? "Paul is 'the missionary' without equal because there was combined in him the wisdom of a serpent and the harmlessness of a dove."^{**} "We need do no more than examine the discourses of Paul himself to perceive how admirably he always spoke to the occasion, varying his method with the capacity and position of his audience."^{***} We shall therefore take just a few examples from Paul's discourses to point out the tact he employed in his work.

When Paul stood before the Jews in the synagogues, he did not burst

* Matt. 10, 16.

** Allen, op. cit., p. 93.

* Richter, "Missionsmethoden in Zeitalter der Apostel", p. 25.

** Taylor, op. cit. p. 115.

forth in violent denunciations of the manner in which the Jews had rejected their Savior. Such action would have closed the doors of approach to the Jews at once. On the contrary, he reasoned with them out of the Old Testament Scriptures, which was the proper thing to do, for they admitted the inspiration and authority of the books of Moses and the prophets. In order to convince any one in an argument, there must be a common starting point, and from that admitted basis or premise, the point at issue may be discussed. Thus Paul knew that the Jews would agree with him on the basis that the Old Testament Scriptures were the Word of God. And from this point, then, he showed that the prophets foretold the coming of Christ, and described the manner of His appearance and the purpose of His advent. The next step was that this Messiah, who was promised in the Scriptures accepted by the "men of Israel, children of the stock of Abraham" (note the tactfulness in these titles given to the Jews, Acts 13, 16. 28.), was the One who suffered and rose again. That of course was the very opposite opinion of the Jews, for they depicted the Messiah as a mighty conqueror. Many of the Jews did not accept this teaching, but the point here is that Paul used diplomacy in approaching this central Gospel truth in such a manner. Had Paul done it differently, he probably would never have gotten so far as to tell them that Christ was their Savior.

Another example of Paul's tact was shown in his circumcision of Timothyth. While Paul stressed that circumcision and observance of the old ordinances were not necessary for salvation, he did in this case circumcise Timothy for the sake of the Jews. "He took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters; for they knew all that his father was a Greek."^{*} This was no denial of the truth that circumcision was not required under the New Covenant. On the other hand, it is not wrong for the Jews to practise it for the sake of propriety, as long as they do not

* Acts 16, 3.

impose it on others. Thus Paul was not yielding any principle by this action, but he was tactfully removing the prejudices of the Jews against Timothy, and was thus skillfully opening for him a wider door of usefulness than he could otherwise have entered.

Paul's skill and technique, however, stands out even more prominently when we observe his tact in approaching the Gentiles. Here the outstanding example is Paul's sermon on Mars Hill in Athens. Luke tells us that the spirit of Paul was stirred when he saw how the city was wholly given to idolatry.* Paul certainly would have used poor judgment if he had at once proceeded to denounce this idolatry with ridicule or harsh criticism. He took his cue from the "altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."** Then he showed that this wonderful universe could not have been made by a god formed with hands and who dwells in a temple formed with hands. That was an appeal to the intelligence of these philosophers, and from here Paul led over to repentance, Acts 17,30, and then directly to the resurrection, v.31. To say that Paul here tried to convert philosophers with philosophy is absurd. This was just another evidence of the tact of the world's greatest missionary. That Paul's tact did not always win for him many converts is beside the point, but the fact that he was diplomatic cannot be denied. The same gift of adapting his presentation of the Gospel to the stand-point occupied by his hearers is shown in his sermon to the heathen at Lystra. He stood on the ground of what is commonly known as "natural religion", and from that reasoned up to "the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein."* Surely wisdom and prudence in this sermon cannot be denied.

The Jews did not only try to make it difficult for St. Paul to carry on his work, but they tried to lay upon the Gentiles the extra yoke of

* Acts 17,16.

** Acts 17,23.

* Acts 14,15.

the ceremonial law. The Jewish national pride rebelled against the claim that the heathen, too, should have a part in the hope of Israel. That of course, was embarrassing to the Gentiles, and a hindrance to the spread of the Gospel. That would naturally prejudice the Gentiles against the teachings of the Christian religion. Now notice the tact of St. Paul. After trying to convince the Jews of the fact that circumcision was not necessary, he suggests that they go to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders to settle the matter. The matter is presented in Jerusalem, and Paul brings back a letter which tells the Jews what they cannot demand of the Gentiles, and which tells the Gentiles from what they should abstain in order not to offend their Jewish brethren.* This saved a "split" in that congregation. It would be interesting to speculate as to just what would have happened to that congregation and to others where the same problem arose, if Paul had not used such diplomacy and good judgment in this matter.

It is of the utmost importance that the missionary of today exercise tact. By this is not meant a sort of "wishy-washy" flattery in order to get people to say "Yea and Amen" in tune to every slap on the back. But it means that the missionary should be tactful in approaching those to whom he brings the message of salvation. Here again many things could be mentioned in detail, but space does not permit. In general, the missionary should adapt his message to the knowledge and the needs of his hearers. That of course, will demand the deepest study of human nature, of general literature, and, above all, of the Word of God, but that in the end will by the blessing of the Holy Ghost be most successful in winning souls for Christ. Tact and diplomacy of course cannot convert men. It did not convert men for Paul. But the failure to use tact can and often does unnecessarily hinder the work of the Holy Spirit. Tact will remove many prejudices against the Gospel, and will open up new fields and new opportunities for the Gospel, just as it did for St. Paul.

* Acts 15,1-35.

CHAPTER VII

PAUL NOT A UNICIST

While Paul was tactful in all his dealing, he was not one who was willing to compromise on all matters. When it came to a question of doctrine, Paul absolutely insisted that the right doctrine be taught, and that no compromise could be made with false doctrine.

When Paul was in Paphos, he met a certain false prophet there, who wanted to hear the Word of God.* But here another false teacher stepped in, and with the deliberate purpose of "perverting the right ways of the Lord." How easy it would have been for Paul to take a sort of neutral stand, a middle way, so that it would be satisfactory to Sergius Paulus and to Elymas, the sorcerer! How much easier it would have been for Paul to say, "We will go together. We will take your followers, and I will gather some others, and have them all come together in a community service. Besides, that will help me, because I want to preach to as many as possible in my lifetime." But instead of that the apostle took a definite stand against this false teacher, and denounced him with the cutting remark, "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"** And that this was the right stand for Paul to take is seen from the fact that the Lord gave Paul the power to curse the sorcerer with blindness, and Sergius Paulus was brought to faith, "being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

While denouncing false teachers in no uncertain terms, Paul was not radical about it. While Paul did not adopt the Jesuitic principle of permitting the heathen to keep their idols just as long as they give them the right name, and while he didn't hesitate to show the folly of worshipping gods that are made with hands, he was not radical in his opposition to idolatry. Paul did not go around in Ephesus, destroying and

* Acts 13,7.

** Acts 13,10.

tearing down every image in his path. The town clerk of Ephesus told the mob that had been gathered by Demetrius, "Ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers or churches nor yet blasphemers of your goddesses." Paul fought false doctrine by teaching the true doctrine. But at the same time, he made the false teachers feel that there was no "common faith" between his teaching and theirs. They knew that Paul did not tolerate heresy, and that he would not join with them in their worship.

Another example of Paul's refusal to adopt unionistic principles is the incident of the expulsion of the spirit of divination of the damsel at Philippi. This damsel followed the apostle and cried, "These men are the servants of the most high God."^{*} That was the devil testifying for the servants of Christ as he had formerly done for Christ Himself. In doing this, of course, the devil had no purpose but to mislead people, by teaching falsehood under the guise of truth. An old commentator says, "When the devil cannot stop or defeat the kingdom of God, he tries to make common cause with it and so soil it with his filth." The devil was here tempting Paul to go together with his forces, thus combining the two groups of followers. That would have been easy for St. Paul, for this damsel was bringing in much gain for her masters. But the missionary was bold and uncompromising. He wanted no help from any other source but that which was in complete harmony with the spirit of God. Paul was no unionist, and his stand on unionism did not slow up his work, but rather proved to be a blessing to his work.^{**}

The influence of the Jewish synagogue has already been sketched. Had Paul been a unionist, he could have taken the attitude that there is "really no difference" in the teaching of the Jews and in the Gospel which he was proclaiming. That of course, would have meant that he could have larger audiences to begin with and could show immediate results.

^{*} Acts 16,17.

^{**} Adapted from Hoyer, op. cit., p. 30.

That policy too would have showed that there was a "common brotherhood of man", at least outwardly. Paul wanted unity, but not mere outward union. He insisted on purity of doctrine, and that is why he took the bold, uncompromising stand against the Judaistic teachers, not only at the council at Jerusalem, but wherever he came in contact with the teachers of work-righteousness. Work-righteousness is the natural religion of man, and Paul knew that all false teachers, all who depart from the clear teachings of Scripture, "sing the same song that man can and must do something for his own salvation." That is why he took such a firm stand on the true teachings of the Scripture.

In general it is not so hard to take a stand against the unionists of our day, especially if they are gross perverters of the truth. But when a missionary comes into a new field, certain temptations are placed before him. The ministerial alliance is usually ready to extend a helping hand, and asks the good brother to join their ranks. Nor is the alliance concerned about the doctrines that may be taught in their midst. Or there may be a number of prospects for membership in the church, who are still affiliated with the lodge. Here of course, the missionary dare not take a unionistic stand, although he must be very tactful. He must not become violent or abusive in taking his stand against the false teachers, but like Paul must fight the error with truth. Even the so-called help which unionistic practises offer must be shunned, for "the salvation of souls demands that we expose false doctrines and spoil the plans of those who corrupt souls; anything outside of that is worthless, and everything opposed to that is poison."* The result will be that the minister, who takes such a stand, will be respected for it, and his work will bear fruit, just as the work of Paul was not hindered by his opposition to unionistic practises.

* Hoyer, op. cit., p. 23.

CHAPTER VIII

PAUL'S MAINTENANCE

It may seem strange at first that Paul's way of maintaining himself should have anything to do with his missionary methods. But it is as it affects his approach to his hearers that his sustenance is important and must be treated in considering the methods of Paul. This fact is often overlooked, and the "finance" of St. Paul's journeys is usually treated as an interesting detail of ancient history, but not as though it had anything to do with his success as a preacher of the Gospel.

Paul himself does not regard the matter of his maintenance as a mere historical fact, but he shows its importance by his reminder to the elders at Ephesus: "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel."^{*} Here Paul stresses that it was not his purpose to make money out of the ministry, least of all to become rich. The apparel or robing here refers to the clothing worn by the wealthy. But more than casting aside all hopes of becoming wealthy off of his people, Paul did not even ask them to support him. "Ye ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me."^{**} Being a tentmaker by trade,[†] Paul supported himself and his companions by the work of his hands. This was not the custom of the heathen philosophers and soothsayers, for they collected money from those who heard them. Neither was that the system which the Jews had, for the law of the Old Testament provided for their priests. Paul wanted to avoid any appearance of money-making on his part. He knew that the people had been swindled so often that they would not be so easily persuaded to accept his teaching, if he went about in the same manner in which the false prophets did. He wanted to show his hearers that he wasn't begging anything of them, but that he was really bringing them something. He wished to place the true religion on a much higher plane than the worship of heathen deities.

^{*} Acts 20,33.

^{**} Acts 20,34.

[†] Acts 18,3.

While Paul did not ask aid of his hearers, he did accept their kindness and hospitality. He accepted the kind invitation of Lydia and her family to stay with them.* He was received into the home of Jason; even protected from the mob by him.** When he came to Corinth, he stayed in the home of Aquila and Priscilla, who had lately come from Rome. At all of these places he probably received his room and board, perhaps paying for his room and board in Corinth by working together with Aquila, who was also a tentmaker by trade. In this connection Dallmann adds an interesting note, when he says: "Paul made tents only to meet expenses. His real trade was the preaching of the Gospel."³ By this policy of not asking the churches to pay him for his work, Paul was not setting up a law that no missionaries or pastors should receive support, or that Christians should not contribute to the kingdom of God, for in his letters Paul emphasizes the duty of Christian giving. And much of this is contained in his admonition to the Ephesian elders, when he reminded them: "I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."⁴ But the point here is that Paul did not want to burden his disciples in the beginning with his maintenance, and did not want to hinder the spread of the Gospel by following a practise that had been abused by false teachers.

We can here learn several lessons from St. Paul. We note here that Paul was not in the ministry for money, and his people also knew that. In the same way, he who enters the ministry for money, is in the wrong position. "Self-seekers disgrace the holy office; clerical speculators disgrace it still more; bidders for "fat" calls and all who commercialize their office are an abomination to the Lord."⁵ If a man

* Acts 16,15.

** Acts 17,5ff.

³ Op. cit., p. 149.

⁴ Acts 20,35.

⁵ Lenski, Commentary on Acts, sub. 20,33.

is covetous of wealth while he is a shepherd of souls, he will become a hindrance to the spread of the Gospel, for his people will soon find out that he is earthly-minded and not heavenly-minded, and will not come to get the food for their souls which they desire.

When Paul wrought with his hands, he was not thereby setting up an example for all other missionaries to follow. His was a peculiar situation. From other passages in Scripture we know that they which labor in the Gospel should live of the Gospel. Under present conditions the missionary in a new field should be supported by the church at large, until the members of the new field have been instructed and have experienced the love of God, which will urge them to give to the Church. On the other hand, too many mission congregations take advantage of that favor. They feel that they will get "support" as long as they can get it, and as much as they can get. As soon as the congregation is established, they should contribute to the work of the kingdom at large, as will be pointed out in part two.

CHAPTER IX

PAUL NOT DEPENDENT ON EARTHLY HELP

It would be an interesting speculation as to what would have happened if Paul would have had the same idea of Church and State which Calvin had. On the contrary, Paul did not ask for and did not enlist the help of the government or any other earthly power, in spite of the fact that he was before rulers on several occasions.

Paul was brought before Gallio, the deputy of Achaia, and was accused of heresy. Gallio, however, sent the accusers away, telling them that such matters did not belong in his court. From this incident we can gather that if Paul had lived today, with the same chance to come into contact with the government, he would not have asked the government to pass Sunday legislation, anti-liquor laws, etc. "How it must disgust some modern preachers to read this story!" Gallio did his duty, which was all that Paul expected. But these modern preachers would say that Gallio did not do his duty, but that he should have decided in this matter, and should have supported the cause of the church. Gallio's decision here was right, when he said, "If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I bear with you; but if it be a question of words and names and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters."* Questions of religion do not belong in the government of the state. The state should not be concerned about religious matters, and should not even decide on them when such matters are brought to their courts. The church should be well satisfied that the government pays no heed at all to its affairs. It should not expect the state to further and favor the pure doctrine and to punish or prohibit false doctrine and worship. That is the church's business.

This we do expect of the government--that it protect the church and its members from injustice just as it does all other good citizens. Paul also appealed to the state for protection on the basis of his Roman

* Acts 18, 14.15.

citizenship. When Paul asked the question, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?", the centurion promptly tried to get out of the "mess" by turning Paul over to Claudius, for he knew that it was a capital crime to abuse to such a degree a man who had his Roman citizenship. When it was reported to Paul by his nephew that a conspiracy had been formed to kill Paul, he rightly used his privilege of appealing to his guards for protection. In the same way, "it is the government's duty to protect us in the exercise of our rights; and if we are hindered in these rights, we may demand such protection. Even then it is not always expedient to do so; sometimes it is better to suffer injustice than to take recourse to force, as the example of St. Paul also shows. But that we have the right to call for that protection is established. That, however, is the only case in which we make use of the government in affairs of the Church."

* Adapted from Hoyer, op. cit., p. 34-35.

PART TWO

ESTABLISHING THE CHURCHES

While Paul was essentially a travelling missionary more so than a pastor with a long pastorate, yet it cannot be said that he did not firmly establish the churches before he moved on in his journeys. It is true that the Book of Acts stresses the journeys more than his work of confirming the churches, yet there are a number of passages in Acts that give us definite information on Paul's method of establishing the churches.

CHAPTER I

THOROUGH INDOCTRINATION

Paul was a busy man. He wanted to push forward to bring as many people to the knowledge of the truth as possible. Yet he did not let this endeavor to convert as many people as possible crowd out another important part of all mission work, the indoctrination of those in the church. He recognized the necessity of planting churches, not merely of starting missions, and then confirming those churches, that they might not only be strong in their faith, but that they might teach others also. For that reason "Paul and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also."* At Corinth, the capital of vice and shame, Luke reminds us, "he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." Paul himself reminds the elders at Ephesus that he had taught them publicly and from house to house. And while he was there, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."** While at Corinth and Ephesus Paul instructed Aquila and Priscilla so well that they could later on instruct the eloquent Apollos. When Paul was at Rome, in the custody of the Roman government, he "dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and re-

* Acts 15,35.

** Acts 20,20.27.

ceived all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."* It is interesting to note also in these same passages something that has been discussed in foregoing chapters. The cities in which Paul remained the longest are those which are strategically located, from which the church could branch out. In addition Paul used the only correct means of indoctrinating his people: "Teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." This has been discussed fully under the division "Paul Used Only Correct Means." Then the fact that Luke mentions as something noble and praiseworthy the action of the Christians at Berea, who "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so,"** shows that the Apostle Paul endeavored to build up a church-membership well grounded in Scripture. He was not the modern type of revivalist preacher, who sways the audience either by eloquence or oratorical tricks, gets them to consent to what he says, possibly even succeeds in getting large numbers to confess Christ, whether they know what such confession means or not, and then forgets about their growth in spiritual things, but he wanted his converts to be able to give the reason for the hope that is in them. That Paul really taught his people, and taught them thoroughly is seen from "the fact that his letters take a good Scripture knowledge and fulness for granted."** Such teaching could, of course, not be completed in the short time which Paul allotted to the various places, but Paul had assistants to help him do this work. Paul's helpers will be discussed in a later chapter.

"We may note that after he had preached from city to city and many had received the Gospel, he did not leave them wholly to themselves, but he retraced his steps, re-visiting the scenes of his labor, 'confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith.'*** Paul did not consider his duty fulfilled when he had preached

* Acts 28,30,31.

** Acts 17,11.

* Richter, "Die Briefe St. Pauli als missionarische Sendschreiben," P. 69.

** Home, "A Brief History of Missions", p. 20.

to the people, but he recognized the necessity and benefits of follow-up work, and for that reason "Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do."* "And he went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches.**" Later we are told that "after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the churches."‡ Of these second visits Lenski says, "On this second visit he again confirmed the disciples. He viewed the progress that had been made, and his one aim was to make them as firm and solid as possible in the faith they had received. His second visit must have been even more delightful than his first. Let us note that no defection from the Gospel was evident to Paul on this second visit."‡‡ Taylor describes the purpose of this follow-up work in the following manner:

"The confirmation here spoken of was not a form at all, but rather the impartation of instruction by which the souls of the believers were strengthened. Truth is the proper nutriment of the soul, and intelligence gives stability to piety; therefore, that they might establish these young converts in the faith, Paul and Barnabas led them up from the simpler elements of the Gospel to its more important doctrines. This was a perfectly natural, and at the same time a pre-eminently wise proceeding on the part of the apostles. These disciples had just come out of heathenism. They had as yet only a slight acquaintance with the truths of the Gospel. They had not received, indeed there was not yet in existence, any written Gospel or epistle like those which now form the New Testament, by the study of which they might 'grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.'

They were, besides, surrounded by adversaries who could both sneer at and argue against their new belief, and therefore it was of the greatest importance that they should be able 'to give an answer to every man that asked them a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.' They wished to make them not only Christians, but also intelligent Christians; and we may be profitably instructed by their example. Our business with a soul is not ended when it is converted by God's grace. We have then to confirm it by teaching, and establish it by training. Now all this is to be secured, not by pompous ritualism in worship, or brief rose-water sermonettes in the pulpit, but by solid, substantial, and systematic instruction out of this Book. This is the second great aim of the Christian minister; and in the proportion in which it is neglected by those who occupy the pulpit, or slighted by those who occupy the pews, the life and strength will depart out of our churches."§

* Acts 15,36.

** Acts 15,41.

‡ Acts 18,23.

‡‡ Lenski, "Commentary on Acts", sub c. 18,23.

§ Taylor, op. cit., p. 134f.

From this practise of St. Paul of confirming the churches and their individual members by thorough indoctrination, it is evident that our Lutheran practise is not only correct, but that it is the method used by the greatest missionary that the world has ever known. People sometimes feel that our Lutheran method of instruction before reception into membership is a hindrance to our mission work, and that it causes people to hesitate to join the church. If this indoctrination is done in the wrong way, it can of course, keep people away, and perhaps even drive some away who are members, but if done correctly, it will not only confirm the members which we have, but will urge those members to do more for the building of the kingdom of Christ, and they themselves will be of great help to the missionary in bringing others to Christ.

Furthermore, following the example of the Christians at Berea, our Christian people should be led to search the Scriptures daily and diligently; first, of course, for their own edification, for the strengthening of their own faith, but also to test the preaching of their pastors whether what they teach is truth. "When they then find by their own searching that what they hear every Sunday is truth, that will build up a strong church, built not on human word, not on respect for a man, but on the rock of the divine Word, so that it will stand despite storm and ill weather."* While it is true that people should have the highest regard for their pastor, they should not simply accept his preaching as truth because he says so, but they should ascertain this by delving into the Scriptures themselves. Such Bible-reading Christians will then be able to give the reason why they accept the Lutheran teaching as the true one, and that reason can come from the only true source, the Bible. When such Christians approach others in the effort to induce them to come to church, they can give their reasons from the Bible, and not from other books, which, though good, are not recognized as the Bible is recognized.

* Hoyer, op. cit., p. 30.

CHAPTER II

METHOD OF PREACHING

Unfortunately, the Book of Acts does not give us much information on Paul's method of preaching, except that which has been mentioned in foregoing chapters. We do know that he accomplished wonderful results with his strict adherence to the Gospel of the grace of God, but whether Paul was an eloquent man or not, whether he had a powerful, resonant voice or not, whether he used gestures freely or not, whether he appealed more to the intellect than to the emotions--such questions we cannot answer definitely from the Book of Acts.

There are, however, several allusions to the preaching of Paul, from which we can draw certain conclusions. Paul was evidently a more forceful preacher than Barnabas, for we are told that at Lystra "they called Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker."^{*} He was evidently one who could present his subject-matter in a very interesting manner, for when he preached in the synagogue on the first Sabbath in Antioch, "the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath."^{**} "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God."^{***} For a stranger to come to a town and draw such a crowd in such a short time cannot mean anything else except that the message was so convincing and so powerful that people were eager to hear it. Paul must have been able to present his message in such a clear, logical, and forceful manner, that the truth of his message could not be denied, or even argued against with any degree of success, for shortly after his conversion he "increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ."^{***} The two references to Paul beckoning with his hand are probably not proofs that Paul used many gestures,

* Acts 14,12.

** Acts 13,42.

*** Acts 13,44.

*** Acts 9,22.

but merely that Paul raised his hand in a gesture to quiet the audience for their attention.

Referring to Paul's presentation of the Gospel, Taylor ably describes the success of Paul. He shows that Paul did not simply "rehash the same old truth," but that he presented the same glorious truth in varied and interesting ways. He says:

"I place in the fore-front his references to the character of his teachings. They are such as these: "I have gone among you preaching the kingdom of God;" "I have taught you publicly, testifying to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." And in speaking of the great design of his ministry, he sums it up as consisting in this: "To testify the Gospel of the grace of God." Thus he declared the good news of God's love as righteously shown to sinners through the Lord Jesus Christ; he proclaimed that men should change their minds toward God, and in order to move them to that, he set before them the evidence of God's love to them, in the gift of his Son for their salvation. In this way, by bringing them to faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, he led them also to repentance toward God, and when they thus returned to him he taught them that they entered into that kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. These were the truths, the preaching of which, being accompanied by the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, effected such results that sorcerers burnt their books of magic, and renounced their deeds of deceit; and gave such a blow to idolatry as filled Demetrius and his craftsmen with alarm. I do not mean to allege, indeed, that for three years his discourses were nothing but a continuous repetition of the fact that salvation comes to men through faith in Him who hath redeemed us with his precious blood, but rather that he sought always to unfold the principles which underlie the Cross of Christ, and to apply them to the circumstances of his hearers. He did not restrict himself to certain conventional forms of speech, or ring the changes on some recognized formulæ of doctrine; but whatever he touched, he touched with the Cross, and so connected it with Him who died thereon, as to bring his love as a constraining motive, either for its repudiation as dishonoring to him, or for its observance as tending to his glory. Thus the doctrinal and the practical were inseparably interblended; and the Christ whom he preached was the Life and the Light of men."

While this summary also takes into account the letters of Paul, it does not go beyond the impression gained from reading the sermons recorded in the Book of Acts.

When Paul came to a city, he did not set up new preaching places, as the modern revivalists are wont to do, but he used the regular synagogue method of preaching, unless he was forced to resort to other places

 * Taylor, op. cit., p. 326f.

by the stubbornness of the Jews. And in the synagogue, Paul used the usual synagogue method of preaching. Lenski describes the synagogue preaching in the following manner:

"Each synagogue had its managers, called 'elders,' or as here 'synagogue rulers,' with one man acting as chairman or head of the others. All the synagogue's affairs were in the hands of the rulers. Since pastors were unknown, the rulers managed the services, so that the lessons were read, the prayers and the responses were recited and necessary business attended to. Whenever possible, however, competent rabbis were asked to address the people. This was done by request or permission of the rulers. Men of the necessary schooling and ability were not numerous, and happened along as visitors only occasionally. When thus Paul, the famous pupil of Gamaliel from Jerusalem, and Barnabas, a Levite and resident of Jerusalem, appeared in Pisidian Antioch, the elders even sent the 'chazzan' or synagogue clerk to the rear where they were sitting and invited them to come forward and address a word to the people. This was in regular order, could not be had every Sabbath, and was appreciated the more on that account.

This occurred after the regular part of the service had been finished, the main feature of which Luke mentions, namely the reading of the Law (Thorah, Pentateuch) and of the Prophets (a term including the historical books from Joshua to Kings). The Pentateuch was divided into 54 lessons called parashas, 54 so as to suffice also for the Jewish leap year, the Prophets into 54 hapharas; one of which was read each Sabbath. These two lessons were in themselves a fair sized sermon."

When the visiting rabbi was called on to speak, it did not necessarily mean that he was to give an exposition on the lesson read for that day. He could take a portion of it if he wished, or even only one verse or word, and enlarge on that. The address would be quite informal, at least in most cases. It was this opportunity which the missionaries desired and used. "But the missionary never felt himself bound to the synagogue. In some cities he was cast out of the synagogues by the Jews, but this fact did not prevent him from preaching. He taught and preached in private homes, in schools, in temple courts, on the street, on ship-board, on river banks, on the highways, and whatsoever place the opportunity was afforded him."** In such places Paul adapted his method of preaching to the circumstances and to his hearers.

We can again learn a lesson from the apostle Paul. It often happens

* Lenski, "Commentary on Acts", sub. 13,15.

** Synodical Report, Oregon and Washington Dist., 1933, p. 18.

that when a young minister comes to an established congregation that he at once proceeds to "reform" the place. He tries to bring about a sudden change in the order of service, introduces new ideas at once, etc. This is not a good policy, nor was such a policy followed by Paul. He adapted himself to the conditions, and that is what we should do. If changes are necessary or desirable, we should go slow with them, and instruct the people first.

No doubt the feeling comes to many a pastor, especially to those who have been in the ministry for quite some time, that the good old Gospel truths are getting stale. It may be true that they are getting monotonous, but that is not the fault of the Gospel, but in the manner in which it is presented. Paul always preached essentially the same truth, but he varied his approach, his presentation, and his application in such a way that his preaching was lively and interesting. In the same way the modern pastor can by diligent study of the Bible and of the needs of the people make his sermons so interesting that the members and visitors will want to hear the pastor. "Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute mehr bei der Kirche behält denn die gute Predigt." The souls of men thirst for the living water of life, and the minister must give them to drink, and he must give them to drink in such a manner that it satisfies.

CHAPTER III

PAUL'S USE OF HELPERS

As the work of Paul increased and the duties became more numerous, he found it necessary to appoint helpers to help him carry out the work. This was not only due to the fact that Paul had to travel on to other places, but the individual congregations became so large, and the work in those congregations became so great that helpers were needed. Probably another reason why Paul chose helpers was to get the members of the churches, including the leaders in the churches, interested in the work themselves. If he had done all of the work himself, they would have gotten to the point where they would depend on him for everything. Paul knew that one of the quickest and surest ways to get people interested in the work of the church is to give them something to do.

While not all of the helpers which Paul used are listed in the Book of Acts, a large number of them together with their qualities and characteristics, are named. Probably the outstanding helper of Paul was Barnabas, "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."* He was a Cyprian, and was evidently considered a man of good judgment, capable, and trustworthy, otherwise the congregation at Jerusalem would not have entrusted him with visiting the church at Antioch. He accompanied Paul especially on his early journeys. Timothy, another assistant of Paul, was the son of a Jewess, which believed, but his father was a Greek.** He was a young man, "which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium,"*** and to have a good reputation from two cities like that meant something. No doubt Paul recognized the good qualities in the young man, and therefore used him very much, as a number of passages in Acts show. Luke, the writer of the Book of Acts and also of the third Gospel, accompanied Paul after Paul's call to Macedonia, and it is he who gives the interesting account of the work

* Acts 11, 24.

** Acts 16, 1.

*** Acts 16, 2.

of the apostle. Aquila and Priscilla were active laymen in the congregations of Paul. They had come from Rome, when Claudius expelled the Jews from that city, then helped Paul in Corinth and at Ephesus. Silas, Apollos, Erastus, Gaius, and Aristarchus were aides of Paul, of whom we are not told so much. Among the teachers and prophets at Antioch we find Simon, Lucius, and Manaen.* Then, not to be forgotten are the elders which Paul ordained in the various churches. There was a plurality of elders in every church, for "they ordained elders in every church," and Paul "sent for the elders of the church"† at Ephesus.

In regard to the duties of the various assistants, Zahn states:

"Paul and his helpers did not divide the work in any certain way, so that one should take one town and the other another town, nor did they divide them so that Peter or Barnabas would preach to the Jews and Paul to the heathen, but they went about their work in such a way, that, in the best sense of the term, each one went his own way, as long as he did not interfere with the field of the other person. Not an outer working together, but a consciousness of the unity of faith and the exercise of Christian love were to protect the oneness of the church and the forward movement of their missions."‡

Of these helpers of Paul, a large number is designated by the term "elders" which is a term denoting the office of a minister or pastor. That this is the meaning of the term is shown by the fact that Paul, in his instructions to the elders at Ephesus, told them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."†† These instructions include all the work of a Christian pastor. Taylor states that the term "presbyteros" really refers to the age or seniority of the person, while "episcopos" refers chiefly to the duties of overseer. However, one and the same office is denoted by the two words, elders and bishops.‡‡ In this same class we might also include Simon, Lucius, and

* Acts 13,1.

** Acts 20,17.

† "Missionsmethoden im Zeitalter der Apostel", p. 30f.

†† Acts 20,28f.

‡‡ op. cit., p. 140.

Manaen, although they were not overseers. "These men served the congregation in the regular manner. 'Prophets and teachers' thus go together; men who thoroughly understand the Word and at the same time are able to teach it to others."*

The duties of John Mark are outlined by Taylor as follows:

"The two friends took with them John, surnamed Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, and the author of the second Gospel. He is styled in the narrative "their minister"; but it is impossible to determine with precision the kind of service which he was expected to render them. Some suppose that he was simply a personal attendant, as Elisha was upon Elijah, or Gehazi upon Elisha. Others believe that he was an assistant in their public duties--such as preaching and the administration of baptism. To me it seems probable that, as he was, in some sort, the precursor of Timothy, the ministry of Mark was of a spiritual rather than a personal kind, and that he was useful in bringing people into contact with his companions; in supplementing their public instructions by private conversations; and in helping in the organizing of churches in the different places which were visited."**

From Paul's experience with Mark we learn that Paul insisted that his helpers be faithful. After the council at Jerusalem, Paul wanted to visit the brethren in every city where they had preached the Gospel. Barnabas wanted Mark to accompany them. But to this Paul would not consent. On a former occasion Mark had disappointed his expectations. He had put his hand to the plow and looked back; and therefore Paul would not trust him again. He did not forbid him to work, but he did not want him under his auspices. There was enough to contend with in the difficulties and dangers which were connected with a trip as they proposed, without burdening themselves with the care and worry of a timid and unreliable companion; for that reason Paul's decision was that Mark should be left behind. Nor did Paul yield in his insistence that his companions be faithful, for this incident caused the parting of the two close friends, Paul and Barnabas. Later, however, when Mark proved himself, Paul gladly received him into his company again. Paul put aside everything for Christ, and he expected his companions to do the same.

* Lenski, "Commentary on Acts", sub 10,1.

** op. cit., p. 77.

Timothy, as stated above, was well reported of among the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. His Paul desired to take with him. Timothy had been reared mostly by his mother and grandmother, as we learn from other sources outside of the Book of Acts. For that reason he had somewhat of a feminine delicacy. He lacked the stern and robust ruggedness of Saul of Tarsus. "His nature was emotional rather than intellectual; and, far from being at home in such exciting scenes as those in which Paul so conspicuously shone, he courted retirement, and sought to keep himself from the antagonism of others."^{*} But probably it was this very dissimilarity to himself that attracted Paul to him. Paul no doubt felt that Timothy would possess the very qualities in which he himself was defective. Paul used him in various capacities. He sent him with Erastus to Macedonia, while Paul tarried at Ephesus. Again, when Paul was at Athens, he anxiously awaited the arrival of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia. Evidently Timothy was a very valuable assistant to Paul. And that is why Paul was always so anxious to have Timothy with him.

An interesting note concerning Apollos and his instructors, Aquila and Priscilla is given us in Acts 18, 24ff. Apollos was a Jew, born in Alexandria, a city well-known for its learning in that age. We are told of him that he was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord." Seemingly there was here a man who had all of the qualifications that one could wish for, but there was one sad lack in this man, he knew only the baptism of John. Here is where two prominent laymen of St. Paul step to the front. After hearing him in the synagogue, and noticing that he was on the wrong track, they expounded him the way of God more perfectly. The layman corrects the pastor. What do we learn

^{*} Taylor, op. cit., p. 187.

from this story concerning Paul?⁷ First of all, we see that his helpers were well trained. Apollos was a well-trained speaker. But on the other hand, he had to be corrected by Aquila and Priscilla, which shows that even the laymen in Paul's congregation, at least the leaders among them, were well-versed in Scripture. And then, when Apollos was ready to go to Achaia, the brethren wrote ahead, urging the disciples in Achaia to receive Apollos, who when he went there, helped them much which had believed through grace.

Two other companions of Paul, not yet mentioned, and of whom we know very little, were Gaius and Aristarchus. We are told that they were travel-companions of Paul. That probably means that they went along with Paul wherever he went, and were not left at any place by themselves to carry on work as others were. It was their duty to take care of the physical needs of the trips of Paul, and more than likely to help in whatever capacity their service would be needed in the work of Paul.

In our modern churches congregational life has become very complicated in many cases. There are not only several sermons to preach weekly and a large number of pastoral calls to make, but there are many organizations that take up much of the pastor's time. Then many congregations expect their pastor to be everything from pastor to janitor. All the odd jobs are the work of the pastor, but his real work is mission-work, and anything that detracts from that work should not be done by the minister. He should do as Paul wisely did, turn such duties over to the laymen. Many a layman would be proud to be given some work to do. And many a pastor can testify to the fact that those laymen who are given something to do are the most interested in the work of the Church. A successful pastor in a western city, whose Walther League is one of the most active leagues in the state, once gave an address to a gathering of young people. His topic was: "Use me or lose me." There is much truth

in that brief statement. And when we use the help of assistants, we should insist that they be faithful, regardless of what capacity they are filling. Training the helpers, especially the Sunday School teachers, will not be without reward. Using such faithful, trained assistants, out of the ranks of the congregation, so that they feel a certain responsibility over against the congregation, will always bear fruit.

Making the application to foreign missions, we again learn a lesson from the apostle. He ordained elders and chose helpers from the ranks of the congregation. This made the members of the church feel a sense of responsibility over against these men, and avoided the feeling that some foreigner is trying to force something on the congregation. The same holds true of our foreign fields. We should train native men, men who understand their people and their customs, not only that they might open the door for greater opportunities for us, but also to urge the congregation to stand on its own feet. If a congregation has been absolutely dependent on the missionary for a number of years, then it will soon become "spoiled" and will be helpless if the missionary is forced to leave for some reason or other. We should train the converts, so that the work can be entrusted to them, if not entirely, then at least in part.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIAN LIFE AS A METHOD

In his sermon on the mount, Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."^{*} With these words Christ reminds us that also our Christian life, and not only our preaching, is a method of doing mission work. This truth was also recognized by Paul, who preached that there must be a pure Christian life, and who set a good example in this respect himself.

When Paul went about the various cities preaching the Gospel, he did not only desire that the people hear his message, but he wanted them to be persuaded and then to make a definite confession, either for or against Christ. The rejection of his message by the Jews in many cases and the acceptance of it in other instances are ample proof for the fact that Paul pressed for a decision either one way or the other. The result was that those who accepted Paul's message began to lead different lives, lives so different that they began to be noticed by others. That is why believers at Antioch were regarded as a peculiar people, who led peculiar lives, and for that reason they were given the name "Christian."^{**} At Philippi Paul preached that a Christian life must be observed, that a Christian must devote his entire life to the service of the King of kings. This was misunderstood by the masters of the maid who possessed the spirit of divination, and they interpreted it as teaching "customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans."[†] Notice here that the complaint is not so much to the truth which Paul taught, but to the customs, in other words, to the Christian life which the apostle urged and demanded. Again, in his defense before Agrippa, Paul himself stated that he "shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."^{††} Paul wanted his own people and others also to observe that the Christian religion demands a change of heart, and a change of life.

* Matt. 5,16.

† Acts 16,21.

** Acts 11,26.

†† Acts 26,20.

That he succeeded in convincing his hearers of the importance of the Christian life is plainly evident from the action of the Christians at Ephesus, those who had been former sorcerers. They brought their expensive books, treating of the curious arts, and burned all of them. Surely that was a noble deed, showing that these people were willing to show to others that they had given up their old sinful ways, and were now ready to walk in the ways of the Lord. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."^{*}

Besides preaching a Christian life, Paul also set the good example himself. Not only did he insist, "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem,"^{**} but standing on trial before the council in Jerusalem, he confidently asserted "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."[†] Paul took special care to live a good Christian life, as he told Felix, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."[‡] He even went so far as to assert that he had not offended against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against the emperor, Caesar, and then says that if anyone could prove that he was an offender and had committed anything worthy of death, he would refuse not to die.[§] These assertions were made on the witness stand before a mob, and had they been exaggerations, we can rest assured that they would have been pointed out and punished properly. Paul lived what he preached, and by that very living led others to take notice of the wonderful power which produced such effects, the Gospel. His followers, likewise, lived what they preached, and did mission work by that very fact.

There is no clear example of a case of Christian discipline by Paul in the Book of Acts. Peter had the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and in his letter to the Corinthians Paul mentions a case of Christian discipline. Taking Christian discipline in its widest sense, namely the sepa-

* Acts 19,20.

** Acts 18,21.

† Acts 23,1.

‡ Acts 24,16.

§ Acts 25,8.11.

ration of believers from unbelievers, we find numerous examples in the life of Paul, notable among them being the separation in Corinth, where Paul took the believers with him, announced clearly to the Jews that he was separating from them, and then went to the house of Justus to carry on his work with the believers. The case of Elymas the sorcerer, cannot be cited as an example of Christian discipline, for here he was not dealing with a believer, but with an unbeliever.

In our modern mission work we must not lose sight of the importance of the Christian life of the believers. By their daily existence, by their daily work, by their daily behavior, by their dealings with their fellowmen, by their example Christians can and should do effective and successful mission work. And even strict church discipline brings people into the Church. How often do we hear it said that church discipline, especially when it is carried to the bitter end of excommunication, harms the Church and keeps others out of the Church. But the very opposite is true. When members of a church are exposed as hypocrites, the world blames and condemns all of them; and if the church permits such people to remain members in good standing, it rightly becomes the object of ridicule and contempt. How many ministers have not heard that "hypocrite argument" when they made their mission calls! On the other hand, if the world sees that Christians and the Church are sincere and honest, and insist that all the members lead an honest Christian life, they will be attracted by such honesty. The present call from India and China, where the heathen see the results in the lives of the converts, shows that a sincere and pure Christian life does serve a missionary purpose. Would that more of our Christians, including also our pastors, would realize that!

CHAPTER V

INTEREST IN THE CHURCH AT LARGE

When Paul and Barnabas were sent out on their first missionary journey, they were not sent out by a large group of congregations, banded together to form a synod, as is the case today when men are commissioned to go to a new mission field, but they were sent by an individual congregation, the church at Antioch. Dr. A. L. Graebner says:

"Thus did God for all times establish a conspicuous example of His will and ordinance that the work of missions should be a work of the Church. And let it be noted that the sending of Paul and Barnabas was not committed to a sisterhood of churches or their representatives, not to a synod or council, but to a local congregation, the church that was at Antioch. As all the rights and duties of the Church rest with the local congregation, so does also the right and duty of Christian missions. When sister congregations, united in a synod, work together in missionary endeavors, it is not because they are members of the synod and must therefore consistently support the work of the synod, but because they are congregations, every one of which is charged to do what, for greater efficiency, they have agreed to perform together."^{*}

Dr. Dallman, in referring to this same incident, says, "The Church at Antioch thus has the proud distinction of being the first foreign missionary society, and the whole Church was the society."^{**} No doubt Paul and Barnabas recognized the importance of their commission from this congregation, and that is why they "sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."^{**} This was what we today would call "The Report to the Mission Board," or something similar. Paul was not doing this to boast of what he had done, for in this report he gave all glory to God. Paul was here speaking to a Christian congregation, and was arousing their interest in the work of the church at large, especially the missions.

Taylor ably points this out in the following description of that meeting:

* Theol. Quart., VII, p. 210.

** Dallman, "Paul", p. 58.

† Acts 14, 26f.

"We can be sure that every member would be in his place that day. With what intense attention would they follow Paul, as he told of confronting Elymas at Paphos, and of his preaching in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia! And how tearfully they would listen to his recital of his maltreatment by the men of Lystra; while, as the great success which had followed the labors of Barnabas and himself was set before them, they would break forth into one long, loud anthem of praise to Him who had given such testimony to the word of his grace, and had opened such 'a door of faith unto the Gentiles'. It was the birth-hour in them of a new joy. Now for the first time they became partakers of the gladness of those celestial ones, who rejoice over 'one sinner that repenteth'. Now they learned the meaning of the Savior's words: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'."^{*}

We can only imagine what interest this report of missions must have created among the members of the congregation at Antioch. The same could be said of the reports which Paul made to the churches of Phenice and Samaria,^{**} and to the mother church in Jerusalem.[†]

The apostle had another way of getting the local congregation interested in the work of the church at large, namely, the collection for the saints, as it is recorded in Acts 24,17. Paul refers to this collection as "alms to my nation, and offerings". "These were not ordinary alms, but gifts made by the churches to God for their needy brethren."^{††} There was a great dearth in Judea at that time, and the Jews were in need of help. Here was an opportunity for the Gentiles to show their appreciation for what the Jews had done for them, and they did not slight this opportunity.

"Paul collected money from the Gentile congregations for the poor Christians of Palestine, partly to show the appreciation of these people for the fact that the Jews had made it possible for them to hear the Gospel of Christ, and partly to show them that they were friendly toward the Jews, who had no doubt caused plenty of trouble when the Apostle Paul came to the Gentile cities to preach the Gospel. Another thing, many of the Jews mistrusted the work of Paul and this was a wise move to show that his work was not camouflage, but that it was really accomplishing results."[‡]

While all of this is true, it must also be added that the apostle was here teaching the saints to be always abounding in the work of the Lord. He looked not only to the individual congregations, but his interests and vision extended to the church at large.

* Taylor, op. cit., p. 144.

** Acts 15,3.

† Acts 15,4; 15,12; 21,19.

†† Lenski, sub Acts 24,17.

‡ Zahn, "Missionsmethoden im Zeitalter der Apostel", p. 44.

One other interesting feature that we note in this connection is that Paul did not only seek to arouse the interest of the older members of the congregations, but he at once enlisted the interest and the service of the converts for the work of the church at large. This is brought out by the fact that Paul had seven men, who went along with him to help with the collections for the saints at Jerusalem.* "These seven men who accompanied Paul were bearers of the great collection Paul had inaugurated in all his Gentile congregations during the two years preceding."** Thus Paul showed not only his own interest, but also engaged the help and interests of his converts in the work of the church.

In all our church work we must look beyond the needs and interests of our own congregation. We should, of course, take care of the local needs, but the Lord expects each congregation to do its share for the kingdom of God at large. While synods are not divinely instituted, yet they are organizations banded together for greater efficiency in the work which God has assigned to the local congregation, and for that reason it is important that the local church also contribute and otherwise show its interest in the larger organization of our church. While some give the excuse that they cannot even meet local expenses, it usually works out in this way, that those who do nothing for the church at large finally lose all interest in their local work, and those who do most for the church at large also best take care of their local needs. So it is not only a duty, but it is an actual advantage for a congregation to take interest in the work of the Kingdom at large.

* Acts 20,4.

** Lenski, sub Acts 20,4.

CHAPTER VI

CONCERN FOR HIS PEOPLE

While Paul was absolutely uncompromising in matters of false doctrine and did not mince words in denouncing false teachers, as the example of Elymas clearly shows, yet he is a model of tenderness and compassion. He is a pastor in the true sense of the word.

The outstanding example in Acts showing the concern of the apostle for the spiritual welfare of his people is the parting address from the elders at Ephesus. In this address, not only his faithfulness to duty stands out, but we cannot fail to notice his concern for the future of the souls of all his followers at Ephesus. This and more is ably brought out by Taylor, which I will quote here word for word, since I consider it the best section of Taylor's entire book. It follows:

"He served the Lord among the Ephesians 'with many tears'; and again, 'he ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears'. Dauntless here as he was when he needed to stand forth as the champion of the truth, his heart was yet full of compassion for the ignorant and them that were out of the way. But this tenderness was no mere sentiment, for it was the result of his faith; and having learned the value of his own soul, he was eager to keep others from that shipwreck from which there is no salvage. Thus his very love to men stimulated him to be faithful with them. Hear him again: 'I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you.' 'I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.' 'I ceased not to warn every one.'" To a superficial observer it might seem that fidelity and tenderness are incompatible with each other; but when we go deeper down we discover that in the noblest natures the one is the root out of which the other springs, and when the two exist together, the combination is as beautiful as it is effective. With most of us it is either all tenderness or all sternness; but when the most awful denunciations of sin come from one who is known to be gentle and affectionate in his character, there is a power in them which no trick of elocution can simulate; and when the kindest expressions come from one whose uncompromising principle will not let him sacrifice truth to amiability, there is a genuineness about them which lifts them as high above the conventionalities of politeness as heaven is high above the earth. But with these apparently opposite qualities there was combined in our apostle a deep humility; for he tells these elders that he 'served the Lord with all humility of mind'. He did not work for his own glory. He sought no honor or place or pre-ferment for himself. There was in his heart no jealousy of others; nor could any one charge him with seeking to depreciate any of his fellow-laborers, or grudging them the recognition that was their due. Of course the man who said to Titus, 'Let no man despise thee', would not allow others to trample upon himself. But he never set up the honor of men as an end in itself; and he was not always looking

after his dignity. He never cared to speak about himself save when his own vindication was essential for the defence of the truth; for that with him was uppermost, and everything was subordinated by him to his service of the Lord.

Again, we must not fail to note the industry of the apostle's Ephesian pastorate. He 'ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears'. He taught them not only publicly, but 'from house to house'. He studied the case of each individual, and went to each one with words in season. Without intermission and without reluctance he labored on for the space of three years, that he might keep himself pure from the blood of them all. Thus his love for souls was the mainspring of his assiduity, as it was also of his faithfulness; and as we read the record of this incessant toil, we are constrained to say how rarely we have seen on earth a ministry--I will not say equal to, but worthy to be put in comparison with this of Paul at Ephesus. 'Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears.' Well says the good Adolphe Monod, 'I read this verse again and again. I am never weary of recurring to it. In these tears of love I see the Christian to the very centre of his being; I perceive the apostle to the very end of his career. 'By the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one of you night and day with tears'. What a description! There is not a feature in it which does not tell. 'Three years', without losing even one of the days which he had spent at Ephesus from the beginning of his sojourn until the end--so much for the time! 'Night and day,' refreshed or fatigued, in safety or in peril, in season and out of season--so much for opportunities! 'I ceased not'; without relaxation or interruption--so much for perseverance! 'Every one', not only of the elders of the church at Ephesus, but of its members--so much for persons! 'With tears'--so much for charity!' 'As we linger thus over the touching details, may the Holy Spirit quicken us, and dispose us to the same unreserved consecration of our lives to the work of Christ!'"*

Surely Paul took heed unto the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer. With a pastor who was so concerned about and so interested in his people, we can well imagine how they must have rejoiced to hear him, or how they must have gone to him with their spiritual problems, not with fear and trembling, but in hope and confidence. What a filial relation there must have been between pastor and parishoner in that congregation!

Another important note of Luke in regard to the undivided concern which Paul had for his people is the incident in connection with his imprisonment at Philippi. If ever there was a man who would have had the right to be concerned about his own welfare, it was Paul in the jail at Philippi. But when he was permitted to leave the prison, he

* Taylor, op. cit., p. 228.

did not go to his friends to be pitied and consoled, but he comforted the brethren.* Forgetting all his own cares and worries Paul confirms and comforts those whose souls had been entrusted to him during his short stay there. Nor was this the only example of his comforting the disciples, for we read again and again that he consoled those whom he visited. And as a fitting climax, when the hour of departure came, then pastor and parishioners would get down on their knees and pray. What touching scenes! What love between shepherd and flock!

What a blessing it would be for our church if all pastors were as diligent as St. Paul was! It is not expected of them that they be as gifted as the great missionary was, but they should take their work just as seriously and perform it as conscientiously as he did. There is of course one great hindrance in many of our modern congregations, and that is that the congregations are too large. In many of our larger cities the congregations are so large that the pastor cannot be expected to shepherd the souls as he ought. Such pastors would do well to get helpers, as Paul did, in order that they could devote as much time to their flock as possible. And in dealing with his people, the pastor should gain the confidence of his people. This, of course, can be done only by consecrated devotion to the needs of the people, by fatherly admonition and comfort as they are needed. This will require much time and patience, and much house to house work. But a house-going pastor makes a church-going people. May God grant us the grace to follow in the foot-steps of him, who was not only the world's greatest missionary, but also the model pastor!

* Acts 16,40.

CONCLUSION

These, in brief, are the methods employed by the Apostle Paul in the fulfillment of the greatest missionary task ever undertaken by one man and actually completed. Having considered the methods used in this mammoth enterprise, the question naturally arises: "Were these methods successful?"

In answering this question we will not attempt to quote the number of converts Paul made, which would be impossible to do, nor will we try to estimate that innumerable throng of believers who could trace their opportunities for hearing the Gospel back to the accomplishments of the great Gentile missionary, but we will simply take a few statements from the Book of Acts, from which we have derived the information here presented in respect to his methods. First of all, we see that Paul did succeed in declaring all the counsel of God, including the nature of the one, living, personal, loving God; the facts of the life of Christ, the Son of God, the death, the resurrection, and their meaning; the folly of idolatry; the way of salvation; nearness of judgment; repentance and faith; and all are centered around the center of all doctrine, the cross of Christ. In regard to its effects on the hearers we have various reports. We hear, for example, that the Jews received not the Word of God and sought to kill Paul. We hear that they brought Paul to trial to condemn him, and even tried to kill him without trial. We hear that the multitudes were divided, and that part held with the Jews, and part held with the apostles. But the bright side of the story is that many believed, both of the Jews and of the Gentiles. It causes us to rejoice when we read that many of the Gentiles were glad and glorified the word of the Lord, laying aside all their former idolatrous beliefs and practises. It makes us exult to learn that the Word of the Lord was published throughout all the region, and that the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed. And God's promise for blessed results holds good to our day--if we would only do our part.

Thus we bring to a close this survey of the missionary methods of St. Paul as demonstrated in the Book of Acts. On the one hand it is with a note of sadness that we must break off, for the study of the methods of this master missionary is intensely interesting and well worth the study of every Christian pastor and of every one who wishes to become a messenger of the Lord. On the other hand we close with joy, for it is indeed comforting to know that a man, who is of like passions with us, can have such phenomenal success with the help of God, and it is of particular consolation to know that these things are written for our learning, that from a study of them we learn to fashion our own lives and our work accordingly, and may thus bring more blood-bought souls to the foot of the Cross. May we then learn this lesson and all that it implies, from Paul: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

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