

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

“ . . . thou hast left thy first love.”

These notes are published on the eve of Bro. Ron Abel's visit to Australia and will be the basis of a series of talks that he is to deliver, God Willing, throughout various ecclesias of this country and in New Zealand.

It is not the first time they have been produced. Originally they were used at a Toronto Study Day in February of this year. On that occasion almost every member of the Shelburne Ecclesia participated in varied ways in the presentation of the material. The result was a most uplifting day of spiritual edification for many lovers of the Truth in the Southern Ontario region.

The real thrust of these notes is to alert Christadelphians against complacency in our preaching and ecclesial life. Ephesus, after a wonderful beginning and even a perpetuated soundness in doctrine, was found wanting of its 'first love' (Rev. 2:4). The fire of the meeting was gone! The burning zeal reflected in self-sacrificing and defacing labour and care was only a shadow of its former warmth.

All will appreciate the relevance of this consideration to the Brotherhood of the 1980s. With Christ at the door it is high time indeed that "we awoke out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11).

These notes provide a scriptural analysis of the history of the ecclesia at Ephesus and so contain detailed verse-by-verse comments on sections of Acts 18-20, Ephesians 6 and Revelation 2. At various points the commentary is expanded to develop the powerful lessons which Ephesus hands down to our community. We suggest that a first reading of the notes cover just the following sections which deal with these main lessons:

Foreword — page 3,

Ephesus: The Pride of Asia — page 7,

What can be Learned From the Spiritual Warrior? — pages 61-66,

Leave it up to the Organization? — pages 79-80,

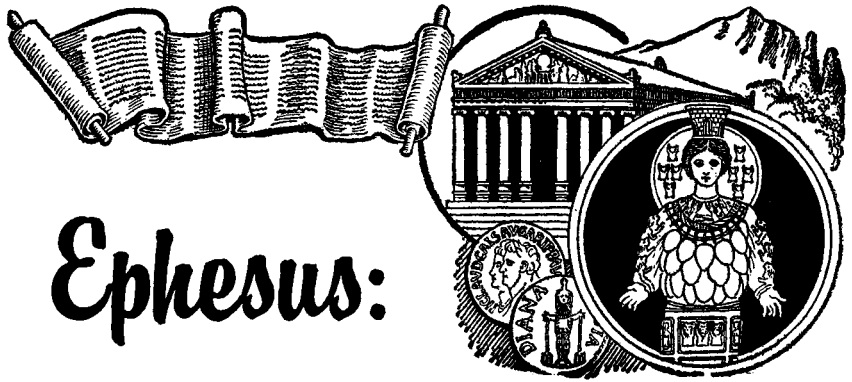
Epilogue — pages 81-82.

Having appreciated the force in the lessons from Ephesus, particularly as they relate to our preaching activities, the reader then can return to Chapter 1 with a zeal to follow carefully through the detailed exposition.

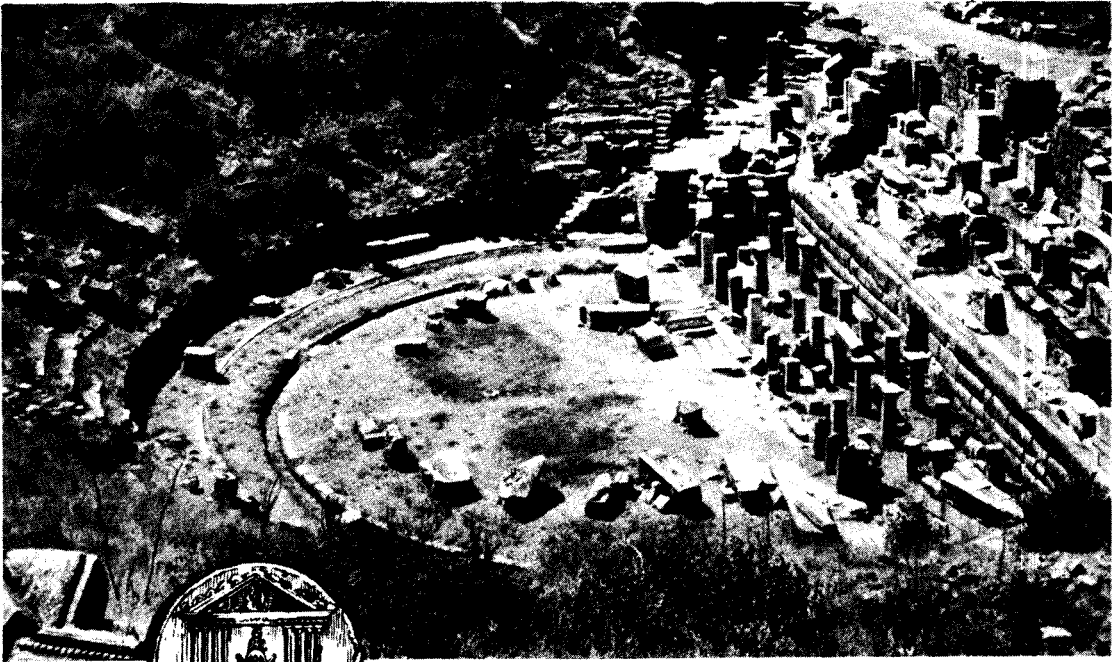
May these pages, together with our brother's presence in Australia and New Zealand be of measurable value in preparing a people for the Lord, to the glory of His Father's Name.

Christadelphian Scripture Study Service
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The Committee
August, 1981



Ephesus:



“And it came to pass. . . that Paul. . . came to Ephesus” (Acts 19:1)

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia on the west coast of Asia Minor. Shown above are the ruins of the theatre, where games were held in honour of the Roman emperor.

FOREWORD

It is not often that an ecclesial history is studied. There have been many notes produced on “Ephesians”¹ and it is not the intention of these notes to add to the list. However, valuable lessons can be learned from a “longitudinal study” —so to speak — seeing an ecclesia from its inception to its demise; considering the circumstances of its founding; reading the exhortation addressed to the ecclesia as recorded in Acts, the Epistles and the Revelation.

“Quenching the fiery darts” is an expression which had primary reference to the nature of the opposition to the preaching of the gospel at Ephesus, but it is full of meaning and relevance for today. The spiritual soldier must be equipped with “all the armour of God” and be prepared for close-in fighting with the “machaira” — the short sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

When the “Christadelphian” magazine acquired its present name, Bro. Robert Roberts wrote in the “Ambassador”:

“The Christadelphians represent a more definite movement than has ever existed before in the modern history of the truth. They stand upon a clearly-defined basis, with distinct objects before them, and with a machinery in their hands which is daily increasing in power, to accomplish these objects. Their devotion to the achievement of them is also on the increase. They are a people given to the study of the Word, aiming at conformity to its teachings in all things, and fired with a zeal to advance the glorious principles by which they have been constituted a people in the earth. They have become aggressive upon outer darkness, and throughout the kingdom are becoming more and more active and successful in the work of enlightening the good and honest-hearted people, who are groping in the dark and perplexing labyrinths of orthodox theology. This is the people whom this magazine represents, and whose exertions it strives to abet by every effectual means that comes within reach, and to whose development, encouragement, purification, and preparation, we desire to give ourselves unreservedly, during the further period of conflict that may await us in the future.”²

Could our community today be similarly described?

The ecclesia at Ephesus was commended by Jesus for its labour (unto weariness) and its patient endurance, yet these were not enough! It had lost its “first love”. What is meant by this expression? Are we in danger of losing our “first love”?

There can be no question that as a community we are better educated than our Ephesian brethren, in general, would have been. It remains a challenge to our generation to see if the Scripture addressed to the Ephesian Ecclesia can be understood better and applied more faithfully. It is the purpose of these notes to provide a help along the way.

RON ABEL

Shelburne, Ontario
February, 1981

¹John Carter, Birmingham C.M.P.A. 1956; Don Styles, 1964; John Allfree, 1973; John Knowles.

²Robert Roberts, “The Ambassador”, No. 61, Vol. VI, July 1869, p.185.

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Ephesus: Putting it all together —



“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”

CHAPTER 1

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

EPHESUS: THE PRIDE OF ASIA.

Ephesus, at the time of the Apostle Paul was a flourishing city of Asia Minor. It was an important port of call for ships and had a fine harbour. In addition, it provided an important port for the inland routes from Antioch and Phrygia.

It was only a matter of time, however, until Ephesus was surpassed in importance by other cities. The Cayster River flowed steeply down from the mountainous interior and deposited large quantities of silt in the harbour. Year after year, the process continued until ships were unable to call at Ephesus.

The geography of Ephesus mirrored the spirituality of the ecclesia. A large flourishing ecclesia was located there from which “all Asia” heard the gospel. However, a stern warning was sent to the ecclesia by Jesus: “Unless you repent and do the first works, I will remove your lampstand.”

By the 4th century the ecclesial light at Ephesus had been extinguished. The Apostasy convened a council from which Mariolatry (the worship of Mary as the ‘Mother of God’) was officially proclaimed as a doctrine, and which was enthusiastically supported by the “Bishop” of Ephesus. The pagan worship of Diana (Artemis) had been supplanted by Mariolatry.

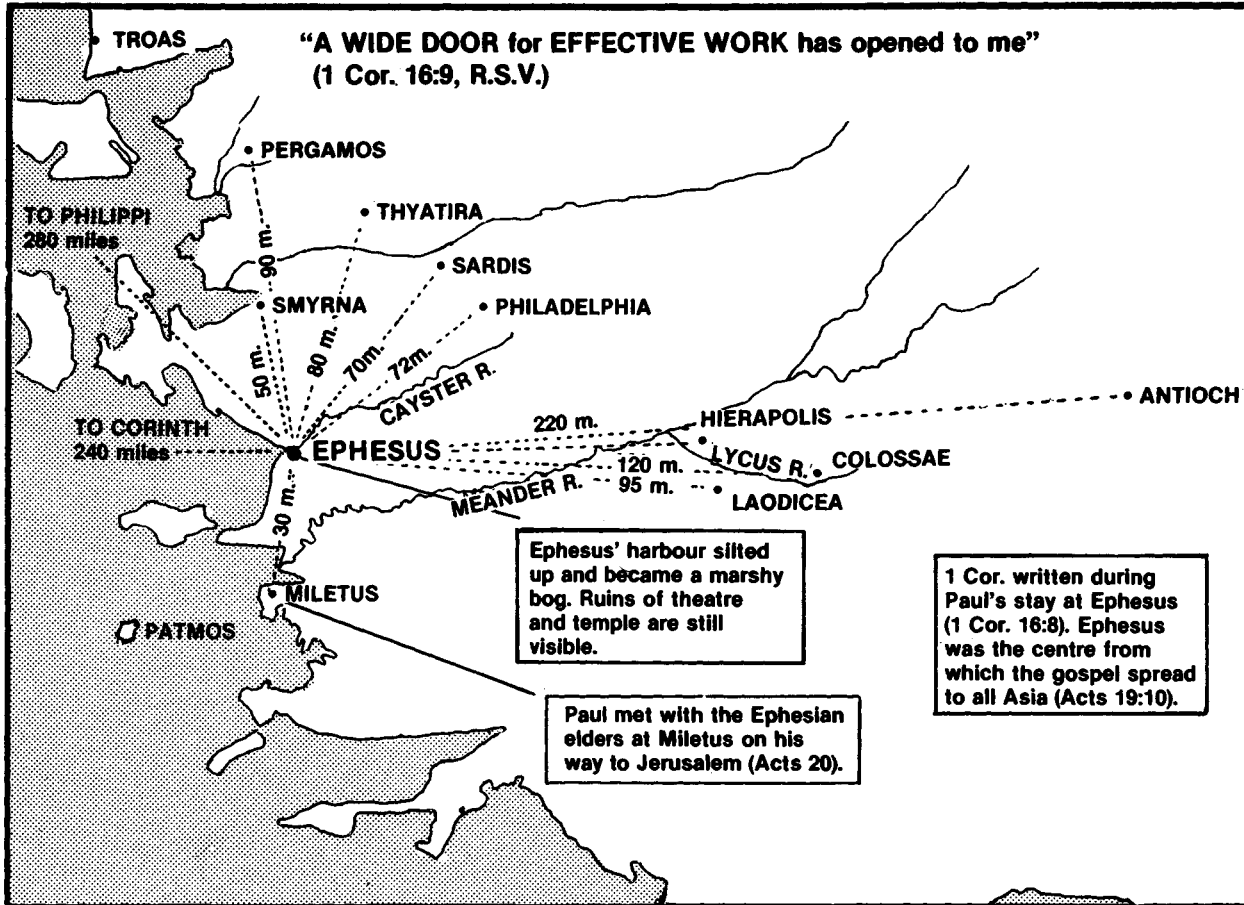
As the silt continued to clog the harbour, the city of Ephesus sank into a marshy bog — reflecting the apostate doctrines of her inhabitants. Today, Islam is the predominate religion in Ephesus reflecting the Turkish rule. A few “shrines” remain. These are regarded as such by the Catholic Church and are reminiscent of the silversmiths who benefited from the worship of Artemis.

A colossal temple, regarded as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world housed Artemis (Diana). The original temple was destroyed by fire about the time that Alexander the Great was born. The rebuilding effort took 200 years and taxed all of Asia. The huge 60 foot columns (120 of them!) were donated by kings of Ionia. The result was the pride of Asia, and the site of numerous pilgrimages.

When the Apostle Paul reasoned that “they be no gods which are made with hands” he was undermining not only pagan belief, but the lucrative business of silversmiths and others whose livelihood depended upon the continuation of pagan temple worship.

Amidst pagan magic workers, Jewish exorcists, Grecian intellectualism and stern Judaism, the truth of the gospel not only took root in Ephesus, but spread from there to the ecclesias of Asia Minor — the subject of the last revelation of Jesus himself through his servant John, exiled on the isle of Patmos, close to Ephesus.

It is a most fascinating study to piece together the events of Acts with the epistles of Paul and the Revelation to learn of the ecclesial history of Ephesus.



Ephesus' harbour silted up and became a marshy bog. Ruins of theatre and temple are still visible.

Paul met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus on his way to Jerusalem (Acts 20).

1 Cor. written during Paul's stay at Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8). Ephesus was the centre from which the gospel spread to all Asia (Acts 19:10).

EVENTS IN THE ECCLESIAL LIFE OF EPHEBUS

1. The gospel goes to Asia on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:9).
2. Stephen debates with Jews from Asia (Acts 6:9).
3. Paul, Priscilla and Aquila leave Corinth for Ephesus, A.D. 53 (Acts 18:18, 19).
4. Apollos arrives at Ephesus, instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, then goes to Corinth (Acts 18:24-27).
5. Paul preaches in synagogue—favourable response (Acts 18:20).
6. Paul leaves Priscilla and Aquila and goes to Jerusalem (Acts 18:21).
7. Paul arrives back at Ephesus (Acts 19:1).
8. Re-baptism of 12 disciples of John (Acts 19:1-7).
9. Paul witnesses in the synagogue for 3 months (Acts 19:8-9).
10. Paul lectures in Hall of Tyrannus for 2 years (Acts 19:9, 10).
11. All Asia hears the gospel (Acts 19:10).
12. Special miracles wrought (Acts 19:12).
13. Encounter with exorcist Sceva (Acts 19:13).
14. Burning of books of magic (Acts 19:19).
15. Paul makes a short visit to Corinth.
16. Visitors from Corinth arrive—meet Paul at Ephesus (1 Cor. 1:11; 16:17).
17. Paul writes an “Earlier Letter” to Corinthians (1 Cor. 5).
18. Corinthians send Paul a letter with questions (1 Cor. 7:1).
19. Paul writes 1 Corinthians from Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8).
20. Paul intends to go to Macedonia and Corinth (1 Cor. 16:5), so Timothy and Erastus are sent ahead (Acts 19:22, cf. 1 Cor. 16:10).
21. Demetrius and silversmith riot (Acts 19:23-41).
22. After a 3-year stay Paul leaves for Macedonia, A.D. 56 (Acts 20:1).
23. Paul meets the Ephesian elders at Miletus (Acts 20:17) —gives a farewell exhortation.
24. Timothy remains at Ephesus to establish sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3).
25. 1 Timothy written to Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3).
26. Ephesians is written, about A.D. 61 (see Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20).
27. Tychicus is sent to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12).
28. 2 Timothy written to Timothy at Ephesus — Paul wrote from a prison in Rome (cf. 2 Tim. 4:19; 1:15-18).
29. The Revelation written—sent by John on the Isle of Patmos to Ephesus and other ecclesias, approx. A.D. 96 (Rev. 2:1-7).
30. Mariolatry proclaimed at Ephesus, A.D. 431.

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE EPHESIAN ECCLESIA

throughout its Scriptural history

1. **DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST** were there. It is not known whether they travelled to Ephesus before the Feast of Pentecost of Acts 2. These were rebaptised into Christ upon Paul's instruction (Acts 19:1-6).
2. **JEWS OF THE DIASPORA**—those living outside Jerusalem who travelled to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost and were converted by Peter and the other apostles (Acts 2:9—those from Asia). See also Peter's epistle "to the strangers scattered throughout . . . Asia" (1 Pet. 1:1). These probably formed the early members of the ecclesia.
3. **PRISCILLA AND AQUILA** travelled to Ephesus accompanied by the Apostle Paul. An ecclesia was established in their home (1 Cor. 16:19; cf. Acts 18:19). Paul continued to witness in the synagogue.
4. **THE APOSTLE PAUL** preached in Ephesus on two occasions —once for a three-year stay (Acts 18:19, 19:1).
5. **JEWS AND PROSELYTES**—A favourable response was received from preaching in the synagogue—"they desired him to tarry longer time with them" (Acts 18:20) but Paul determined to leave them, indicating the importance he placed on his trip to Jerusalem to keep a Jewish Feast (a detail we learn from 1 Cor. 16:7, 8). No doubt Jewish and possibly proselyte converts resulted from this witness.
6. **GENTILES**—from the lecture hall of Tyrannus, the gospel travelled to "all Asia" in a three-year period. No doubt many Gentile converts were made.
7. **GAIUS AND ARISTARCHUS**—"men of Macedonia" who travelled with Paul (Acts 19:29). They were caught in the riot at Ephesus but were later released and accompanied Paul when he left Ephesus (Acts 20:4).
8. **APOLLOS** spoke boldly in the synagogue although incomplete in his knowledge (Acts 18:24-28). Little is known of his relationship to the Ephesian ecclesia since he left Ephesus for Achaia—Corinth.
9. **ALEXANDER**—a Jew. He was set forth as the spokesman during the riot at Ephesus (Acts 19:33). He must have become a convert who later defected. Of him, Paul wrote: "whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they [Hymenaeus and Alexander] may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:20). "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works. Of whom be thou [Timothy] ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words" (2 Tim. 4:14, 15).
10. **HYMENAËUS**—a convert delivered unto Satan by Paul so that (along with Alexander) he might learn not to blaspheme (1 Tim. 1:20).
11. **TIMOTHY**—Paul's "dearly beloved son"—"I have no one like him" (Phil. 2:20, R.S.V.). He was sent to Ephesus when Paul went to Macedonia. Timothy was given specific "charges" (e.g. 1 Tim. 1:3) to ensure sound growth of the believers to become a "pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15, R.S.V.). It is not known how long Timothy stayed at Ephesus, but 1 Timothy indicates that he was sent there with apostolic authority to act in Paul's place.
12. **TYCHICUS**—a travelling companion of Paul's (from Asia), sent to Ephesus

while Paul was in Rome on trial for his life (2 Tim. 4:12) Tychicus was with Paul and knew his precarious position. Paul wrote affectionately of him:

“But that ye also may know my affairs, [and] how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs and [that] he might comfort your hearts” (Ephesians 6:21-22).

He may have carried the Ephesian epistle to Ephesus as he did the Colossian epistle to Colossae.

13. **TROPHIMUS**—an Ephesian who accompanied Paul from Ephesus (after the visit to Macedonia) on his way to Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost. He was probably the ecclesial delegate who took the Ephesian contribution to the Jerusalem Poor Fund (Acts 20:4). He was later left sick at Miletum when Paul journeyed to Rome (2 Tim. 4:20).
- 14 & 15. **PHYGELLUS and HERMOGENES** who both “turned away” from the Apostle Paul (2 Tim. 1:15).
16. **ONESIPHORUS**—He ministered to Paul’s needs while at Ephesus and eagerly sought out the Apostle at Rome when to do so involved personal risk (2 Tim. 1:16-18).
- 17.& 18. Possibly **HYMENAEUS and PHILETUS**— errorists who taught “that the resurrection is past already” (2 Tim. 2:18).
19. **EPAENETUS**—the firstfruits or first convert in Asia for Christ (Rom. 16:5—note A.V. is in error in giving “Achaia” for the firstfruits in Achaia was Stephanas—1 Cor. 16:15).
20. Probably **SOSTHENES** who sends his greetings with Paul (1 Cor. 1:1) to the Corinthians, so presumably he was with Paul at Ephesus when he wrote 1 Corinthians. Sosthenes was a Corinthian—the ruler of the synagogue who was beaten before the tribunal (Acts 18:17).
21. **THE CORINTHIAN DELEGATION**—**Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus**, esteemed representatives of the Corinthian Ecclesia who visited Paul and “refreshed his spirit” (1 Cor. 16:17-18).
22. Possibly **CHLOE’S HOUSEHOLD**—who brought the Apostle Paul reports of the ecclesial situation at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:11).
23. **ERASTUS** was sent to Macedonia with Timothy (Acts 19:22). He was a Corinthian—the city treasurer (Rom. 16:23).

CHAPTER 2

THE BATTLE FOR THE MIND

THE FOUNDING OF THE EPHESIAN ECCLESIA: THE RECORD OF ACTS

Luke records in Acts of the Apostles the interesting account of the establishment of the ecclesia at Ephesus.

18:18 *“And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow”*

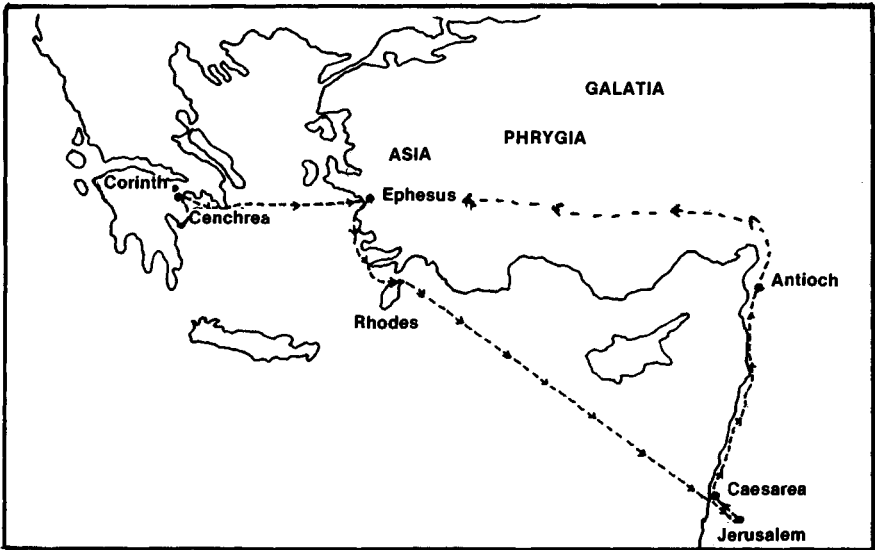
“into Syria”—Paul went to Syria because of the Antioch ecclesia located there (verse 22).

“having shorn his head”—There is some doubt as to whether this refers to Paul or Aquila. Grammatically, the closest antecedent is Aquila, but the primary subject of the verse is Paul. Assuming that Paul is the one who had the vow, it could not have been the Nazarite vow of Num. 6:11-21:

—the Nazarite shaved his head **after** the days of separation (Num. 6:5, 9, 18); yet

—the vow was still operative—**“He had a vow”** not **“he had had a vow”**.

It was a custom among the Jews to shave their head when delivered from a great danger. This was a public acknowledgement that God’s mercy had been shown in their deliverance.¹ This action would show that Paul’s deliverance from his enemies at Corinth was not due to Gallio’s intervention (18:12-17), but God’s providential care (cf. 18:9, 10 — ‘Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision. Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city’).



¹See Ian Leask, “Acts of the Apostles”, Durban North, South Africa, 1969, p.394.

18:19 *“And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews”*

“Ephesus”—This was an indirect port of call on the way to Caesarea in Syria: the more direct route would be to travel to Rhodes or Crete. This route implies the importance of Ephesus.

“he left them there”—Priscilla and Aquila, it seems, engaged in the pastoral work of ecclesial care while Paul was freed for the demanding work of argumentation with the Jews in the synagogue. An ecclesia was established in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (1 Cor. 16:19).

“entered into the synagogue”—This was Paul’s usual practice. He laboured tirelessly to identify Jesus with the Messianic Scriptures (cf. ‘And Paul went in, as was his custom, and for three weeks he argued with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead’, Acts 17:2-3, R.S.V.).

Stephen had earlier engaged Jews from Asia who disputed with him, but “were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake” (Acts 6:9, 10).

18:20 *“When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not”*

The Jewish response to Paul’s synagogue witnessing is unique. This is the only reference to a generally positive reaction.

18:21 *“But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus”*

“But bade them farewell”—“taking leave”, Con. Ver.

“this feast which cometh in Jerusalem”—It is uncertain as to whether this is the feast of Pentecost or Passover. Although feasts were kept throughout Judea, great importance was attached to Jerusalem because of the Temple.

18:22 *“And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the ecclesia he went down to Antioch”*

Nothing is said of the sea journey, nor is there any indication of what Paul did at Jerusalem. This is especially significant since Paul left opportunities to preach to the Jews in order to come to Jerusalem.

18:23 *“And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples”*

Galatia and Phrygia were the interior provinces of Asia Minor. The journey would have encompassed about 1,500 miles in travel.

18:24 *“And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus”*

“Alexandria”—a leading city of learning and philosophy. The Alexandrian schools specialised in teaching the application of allegory and type to the “sacred books” so as to elucidate their Messianic content. They also exhibited the connection between Hebrew thought and Alexandrian philosophy.

“eloquent”—Gk: “logios”, “full of words” (Yg); “scholarly”, Con. Ver.

“mighty in the scriptures”—Gk: “dunatos”, “able, powerful” (Yg); “well versed in the scriptures”, R.S.V. These would be the Old Testament scriptures. His knowledge, however, was incomplete as the next verses show.

18:25 “*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, knowing only the baptism of John*”.

“instructed”—Gk: “katéchéo”, “to sound throughout, instruct” (Yg); “orally instructed”, Nestle.

“fervent in spirit”—“Fervent”, Gk: “zeó”, “to boil, be hot, fervid” (Yg); “burning”, Nestle.

“taught diligently”—“Diligently”, Gk: “akribós”, “accurately, exactly” (Yg); “accurately”, Nestle; R.S.V.; Con. Ver.

“knowing only the baptism of John”—It is not revealed how Apollos acquired his accurate, though incomplete knowledge about John’s baptism. Until Christ died, believers could not be baptised into the Name. This was done after Pentecost (Acts 2:38).

18:26 “*And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly*”

“speak boldly—Gk: “parrhésziazomai”, “to use free utterance” (Yg).

“expounded—Gk: “ektithémi”, “to put forth” (Yg); “more accurately explained”, Nestle. The explanation would show the Messiahship of Jesus and the significance of baptism into his name.

18:27 “*And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace*”

Two ecclesias were located in Achaia—Corinth and Cenchrea. **Why** “he was disposed to go” is not stated. The fact that **he** wanted to go, and that the ecclesia sent an accompanying letter, indicates that “freelance” work was part of the early ecclesial development as well as the formal directives given by the Holy Spirit to apostles and prophets.

“helped them”—Gk: “sumballó”, “contributed”, Nestle; “greatly helped”, R.S.V. How did he help? By showing from the scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

The knowledge gained from Priscilla and Aquila was put to work. The ecclesia at Corinth was greatly influenced by Apollos. He not only baptized some (1 Cor. 1:12), but he strengthened the believers by his preaching work. These two aspects of discipleship are inseparable. Neglect one or the other, and each suffers. “Now it is time only to strengthen what remains” is sometimes a reaction to ecclesial difficulties and an evil world. However, it is unlikely that an ecclesia can be strengthened without the fulfilment of its preaching obligations. Ecclesial work and preaching are mutually interdependent aspects of discipleship.

18:28 *“For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ”*

“mightily convinced”—Gk: eutonós . . . diakatelechtó”, “vehemently confute”, Nestle; “strenuously and thoroughly confuted”, Con. Ver.; “powerfully confuted”, R.S.V. He was able to answer convincingly all the counter arguments. These were rebutted by Scripture. Apollos’ public use of Scripture is an example difficult to achieve, but worthy of emulation.

“publicly”—Truth is able to stand the test of public inquiry. It is for this reason that every attempt should be made through public question-answer periods, TV open-line shows, radio talk shows and debates to advance the cause of truth. Apollos provides an excellent example to follow.

No doubt the earlier training of Apollos in the Old Testament Scriptures was a source of great conviction and power in his presentations.

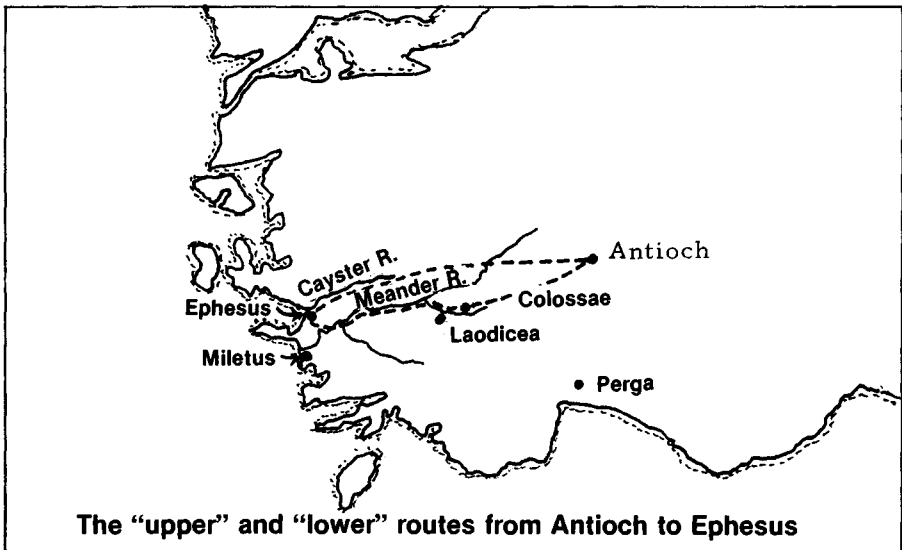
“shewing”—Gk: “epideiknumi”, “to shew in addition” (Yg); “proving”, Nestle; Diaglott; “exhibiting”, Con. Ver.

The approach of Apollos indicates a reasoned appeal using Scripture, unlike the testimonies, personal experiences and emotionalism so characteristic of contemporary evangelical “preaching”.

19:1 *“And it came to pass that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples”*

“the upper coasts”—“Coasts”, Gk: “meros”, “division, part” (Yg). The word does not relate to land bordered by water as in our usage. This was an interior route, from Pisidian Antioch he travelled the route following the Cayster River. The lower route went by Colossae and Laodicea.

“and finding certain disciples”—disciples of John (verses 2-3). Their knowledge, like Apollos’, was incomplete. Were these disciples associated with Apollos?



19:2 *“He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit”*

“Have ye received the Holy Spirit”—This question would differentiate between the baptism in Christ and any other baptism. There is only one baptism (Eph. 4:5, cf. Acts 8:16 — ‘For as yet he [the Holy Spirit] was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus’). Baptism into Christ made one eligible for the Holy Spirit gifts (Acts 2:38), i.e., while there were apostles alive to transmit these by the laying on of hands (Acts 8:14-17).

“since ye believed?”. This amounts to a proof that the Holy Spirit is not required in order to understand the gospel. The false idea that the Holy Spirit is necessary for belief is widely held in Christendom today. Similarly the Ephesians did not hold the view that the Holy Spirit was “God, the Holy Ghost”.



19:3 *“And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptised? And they said, unto John’s baptism”*

This explains the inadequate knowledge of these disciples. John’s baptism was a washing away of sins (Mark 1:4) but did not include covenant relationship with Christ.

19:4 *“Then said Paul, John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus”*

Therefore, the baptism of John, as he himself taught, was a preparation for the one who was to come (John 1:25-31).

19:5 *“When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus”*

In so doing, they became the nucleus of the ecclesia which would later develop. They became participants in the great work of making known the significance of the Name in the darkness of Jewish tradition and Gentile superstition.





19:6 *“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied”*

“laid his hands upon them”—This was the usual way the Holy Spirit gifts were transmitted. By implication, when the apostles died no one was able to transmit the gifts (Acts 8:12-20).

“they spake with tongues”—Two views have been held in this respect:

- a) that the tongues were unintelligible utterances, requiring an interpreter, or were miraculously interpreted by the hearers (hence, in this view, **two** miracles are required);
- b) the “tongues” were foreign dialects and languages which provided a sign when “unlearned and ignorant men” could converse in the native dialects of the listeners.

The two views may be presented as follows:

	a) TWO MIRACLES ARE REQUIRED:
	The Apostles speak unintelligibly
	hearers each hear in own dialect
	
	b) ONE MIRACLE IS REQUIRED:
	The Apostles speak foreign dialects
	hearers hear foreign dialects as spoken
	

Which view is correct?

Only **one** miracle was needed. Acts 2 indicates this as can be seen from the following:

- (1) The promised Holy Spirit was to be poured out on **the apostles** (Acts 1:4, 5). There is no mention of another group.
- (2) “Glossa” (Gk: ‘tongue’) is used for what the hearers **heard** and understood (Acts 2:11). The pattern is not:

speaker (‘glossa’) → hearer (‘dialektos’)

but speaker (‘glossa’) → hearer (‘glossa’ and ‘dialektos’)

- (3) Disciples were to speak with **other** tongues (Gk: ‘heteroglossa’). However, if the tongues were interpreted by a Holy Spirit miracle for the hearer, why the need for an **interpreter** (1 Cor. 14:13)?
- (4) Some who heard the disciples attributed the phenomenon to drunkenness (Acts 2:13). If the message were miraculously translated for the hearers, why did they attribute what happened to wine?

Consideration should also be given to 1 Cor. 14 where tongue-speaking is also the subject of reference.

In summary, 1 Cor. 14 supports the interpretation that tongue-speaking = speaking a foreign language.² Consider the evidence:

- (a) “Unknown” is not in the Greek text and is italicized in the A.V. Tongue-speaking is never referred to as “unknown” in Scripture.
- (b) The word “glossa” translated “tongue” = foreign languages in Rev. 5:9; 7:9; 10:11 and **intelligible** speech in Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:11.
- (c) Paul said that he spoke in tongues “more than ye all” (1 Cor. 14:18) yet it is never recorded that he spoke unintelligibly.
- (d) Tongues were a “sign” for those who “believe not” (1 Cor. 14:22). For tongues to be a sign to **unbelievers**, they must be intelligible.
- (e) There were large numbers of slaves in the Roman Empire, many of these were transported from one place to another where language was a barrier. It was therefore, a great sign to a Phrygian slave, for example, to hear the gospel proclaimed in his own native dialect.

²Charismatics, of course, nearly always insist that tongue-speaking is **unintelligible** (thereby removing the subject from any test of genuineness). Since even non-charismatics can babble and even Pentecostals themselves acknowledge that tongue-speaking can be simulated, what test can be applied for authenticity?

It becomes apparent that the contemporary magic workers are like their counterparts in Ephesus. They exploit the uninformed, the non-Bible student and the gullible.

**1 CORINTHIANS 14: TONGUE SPEAKING—AN INVESTIGATION:
A FOREIGN LANGUAGE OR AN UNINTELLIGIBLE UTTERANCE?**

Scripture	Languages	Unintelligible Utterance
13:1 though I speak with the tongues ['glossa'] of men and angels	✓	cannot be proven
13:8 whether there be tongues ['glossa'], they shall cease —i.e., the gift of tongues	✓	✓
14:2 For he that speaketh in a tongue ['glossa'] speaketh not unto men, but unto God for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries	if no interpreter present, no-one else can understand	✓
14:4 He that speaketh in a tongue ['glossa'] edifieth himself	✓	✓
14:5 I would that ye all spake with tongues ['glossa'] greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues ['glossa'] except he interpret, that the ecclesia may receive edifying.	✓	✓
14:6 If I come unto you speaking with tongues ['glossa'] what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge or by prophesying, or by doctrine [teaching]	✓	✓
14:7 An analogy between pipe, harp, trumpet and distinction in the sounds	no distinction in sounds if language foreign to listener	difficult to relate to unintelligible utterances
14:9 . . .except ye utter by the tongue ['glossa'] words easy to be understood	✓	if unintelligible could be no distinction between words, either difficult or easy to be understood
how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air	✓	✓
14:11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me [barbarian = a foreigner]	✓	× inappropriate a madman, idiot
14:12 . . .seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the ecclesia	✓	✓
14:13 Let him that speaketh in a tongue, pray that he may interpret	to simultaneously translate for the benefit of those whose tongue is not known to the speaker	✓
14:14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful	does not bear fruit in anyone else	✓

Scripture	Language	Unintelligible Utterance
14:15 I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding [mind] also I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding [mind] also	✓	✓
14:16 Else . . . how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?	✓	× how is it to be known that it is giving of thanks if, a) unintelligible b) a tongue-speaker is unaware of what he/she is saying?
14:18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all	✓	× never read of unintelligible utterances
14:19 Yet in the ecclesia I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also	i.e., in a language which others can understand	×
than ten thousand words in a tongue	a language foreign to the hearers	×
14:21 In the law it is written, with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people	✓	×
14:22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not	✓	×
14:23 all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say ye are mad?	✓	✓
14:26 everyone of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue	✓	✓
14:27 If any man speak in a tongue, let it be by two or at the most by three and that by course; and let one interpret	✓	✓
14:28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the ecclesia	✓	✓
and let him speak to himself and God	✓	✓
14:39 Forbid not to speak with tongues	✓	✓

“and prophesied”—The gifts of the Spirit would be of great value in a cosmopolitan city like Ephesus—so given to pagan superstition and Jewish fanaticism.

It is not stated how or when the gifts were used. The view which suggests the gifts were only confirmatory (of the legitimate standing of the disciples as with the Gentiles, Acts 10:44-48) may have some foundation, but the evidence is not sufficient to hold such a restrictive view with certainty.

19:7 *“And all the men were about twelve”*

This was a small but encouraging beginning. Many hardships were to follow, and at times converts must have been difficult to make. It was for this reason that God performed extraordinary miracles by the hand of Paul (19:11).

19:8 *“And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God”*

“he went into the synagogue”—The Truth went to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. It was Paul’s desire for Israel that “they might be saved” (Rom. 10:1).

“spake boldly”—Gk: “parrhésiazomai”, “to use free utterance” (Yg).

He besought the Ephesians by letter:

“Pray . . . also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel” (Eph. 6:18-19, R.S.V.).

“for the space of three months”—This was a much longer period of synagogue witnessing than he was usually permitted (e.g., three sabbaths at Thessalonica). Opposition was not so swift at Ephesus. Paul had earlier received a favourable hearing (18:20) and Apollos had also engaged the Jewish community through the synagogue (18:26).

“disputing”—Gk: “dialegomai”, “arguing”, R.S.V.; Con. Ver.; “fearless candour”, Bullinger.

Many disagreements on doctrinal points would arise. Today, most Evangelical religionists decry argumentation as an un-Christ-like attitude and prefer the altar-call method suitably enhanced with contemporary music and atmosphere. This is a departure in approach from the apostolic method.

“persuading”—Gk: “peitho”, “to win by words”, Bullinger. Paul was not arguing simply for the love of arguing. He was reaching out with the armour of light to invite others to the same light.

“concerning the kingdom of God”—This is the gospel which men and women believed in Samaria (Acts 8:14), which Jesus taught (Acts 1:3), and which the churches either misrepresent (by annexing it to the rapture doctrine) or do not understand (i.e., the kingdom is the church). Later, as a prisoner in Rome, the same message was preached (Acts 28:23, 31).

So many preachers of Christendom erroneously think the gospel is simply “accepting Jesus as your saviour”. The Kingdom of God is the forgotten good news! It is the obligation of those with “loins girt about with truth” as spiritual soldiers to pull down these strongholds of error and herald the good news.

19:9 *“But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus”*

“divers were hardened”—“Some were stubborn and disbelieved”, R.S.V.; “hardened and disobeyed”, Nestle.

The idea conveyed is that they refused to believe. This is characteristic of the great apostasy (2 Thess. 2:10-12) which in many of its rituals has mimicked Judaism.

“They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

“that way”—“the way”, R.S.V. A description of the beliefs of the disciples.

“he departed from them”—He was not thrown out, as he was at Antioch (Acts 13), but rather left of his own accord as he did at Corinth (Acts 18:6-7). As he left, however, a number of disciples went with him.

“disputing daily”—Gk: “dialegomai”, “argue”, R.S.V.; “arguing”, Con. Ver.

“in the school”—Gk: “scholé”, “lecture hall”, Phillips; “hall”, R.S.V.

“Tyrannus”—It has been noted that work stopped between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.—siesta time in the cities of Ionia. Presumably Paul would use the siesta time for preaching (while others rested) and then worked when others worked—“and labour, working with our own hands” (1 Cor. 4:12)—as a tentmaker? (Acts 18:3). He reminded the Thessalonians of this when he wrote:

“For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you . . .” (1 Thess. 2:9).

Similarly, he was able to say to the Ephesian elders:

“I have coveted no man’s silver or gold or apparel: Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, **and to them that were with me**” (Acts 20:33, 34).

19:10 *“And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks”*

“two years”—Cf. Acts 20:31, “three years”. Paul spent three months in the synagogue (19:8) and then two years in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. In Greek reckoning, anything over two years would be regarded as three years.

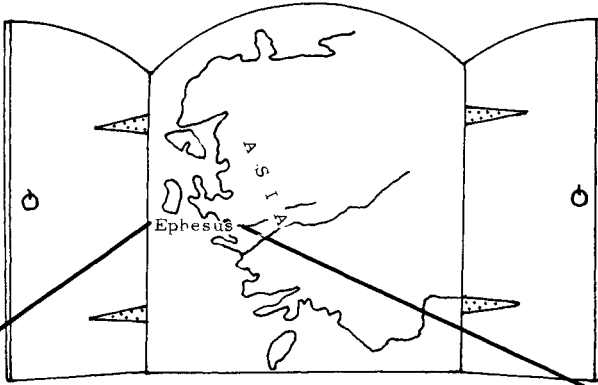
“all they which dwelt in Asia”—Those in the province of Asia, not Asia Minor, the much larger area. It is likely that the seven ecclesias of Asia Minor referred to in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 were established during this time (cf. 1 Cor. 16:19). Since there are no recorded trips of the Apostle Paul throughout this area at this time, the spread of the gospel must have been due to the work at Ephesus.

19:11 *“And God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul”*

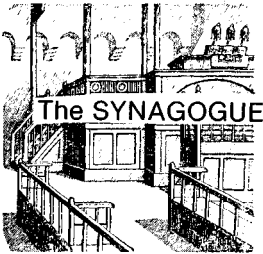
“special”—Gk: “ou tas tuchousas”, “not ordinary” (Yg); “extraordinary”, R.S.V.

“miracles”—Gk: “dunamis”, “act of power” (Yg). This is the usual word for “miracles” when associated with the Spirit gifts. These extraordinary miracles are set out in verse 12.

“MAKING THE GOSPEL MANIFEST IN THE HEAVENLIES”

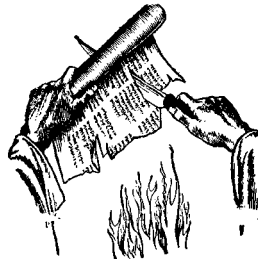


The **WIDE DOOR** for **EFFECTIVE WORK**
(1 Cor. 16:9, R.S.V.)



3 months, spoke boldly
arguing, pleading
(Acts 19:8)

Books of magic burned



The word of the Lord
grew and prevailed
mightily—Acts 19:20

The Lecture Hall of **TYRANNUS**



2 years—all Asia heard—Acts 19:10

“I FOUGHT WITH WILD BEASTS. . .”

When it is realised that Paul's work was continually challenged by the "principalities and powers in the heavenlies", i.e., Jewish exorcists (relying on trickery, 'magic', hypnotism, etc.) and superstitious pagans using "magical arts", it required signs to accompany the spoken word which were **extraordinary**, not capable of simulation by the charlatans in order to make headway under such unfavourable conditions.

19:12 *"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"*

The handkerchiefs were sweat cloths or handkerchiefs in common use for wiping the face in a hot climate. The aprons were half girdles—a working man's apron.

These miracles had counterparts in the following:

- a) the miracles of Jesus—the faith of the woman with an issue who touched the hem of his garment (Matt. 9:20-22).
- b) the miracles of Peter—"they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them" (Acts 5:15).

It is recorded in Acts that "by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people" (Acts 5:12).

"*evil spirits*"—Gk: "ponéra pneumatí". Every disease was regarded as due to an evil spirit. When these persons were healed the evil spirit was "cast out".

19:13 *"Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth"*

"*vagabond*"—Gk: "perierchomai", "to come or go round about" (Yg); "itinerant", R.S.V.; "wandering", Con. Ver.

"*exorcists*"—Gk: "exorkistés", "one who adjures out demons" (Yg). Like Simon, such charlatans made their living through deception. An earlier example in Acts shows the character of exorcism:

"But there was a man named Simon who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the nation of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. They all gave heed to him, from the least of them to the greatest, saying, 'This man is that power of God which is called Great'. And they gave heed to him, because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic" (Acts 8:9-11, R.S.V.).

"*adjure*"—Gk: "horkizó", "to cause to swear by an oath, thus putting the person who swears under an obligation" (Vine).

Despite the rationalistic age in which we are now living (with its share of sceptics), faith healing—the counterpart to the magic workers of Ephesus—continues to flourish. Scripture predicted that miracle working would be a characteristic of the time of the end:

"But evil men and **seducers** shall wax worse and worse, **deceiving**, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13).

"[Even him], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and

signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2:9-11).

The charismatic movement today is a counterpart to the exorcists and magic workers of the Apostolic period. Like Simon and the Jewish exorcists, money intrudes into their appeals under the thin veneer of religion.

Many of the "faith healers" try to duplicate or imitate New Testament miracles. For example:

- (1) "Prayer cloths" are sold through the public media and letters are used as a point of contact between the faith healer and the listener. These are "take-offs" on the handkerchiefs and aprons of Acts 19:11, 12.

What is obvious is that Oral Roberts receives your \$25.00 and all you get in return are his prayers! If God can answer your prayers as well as his, why not write asking him for \$5,000 to pay off the mortgage and advise Oral Roberts that you will pray for him! If God can work a miracle in **your** life (as Roberts says), maybe He can work a miracle in Roberts' life too!

- (2) The Pope touches the sick and holds out his hand for his papal ring to be kissed, thereby imparting blessing to the admirer.
- (3) Big-business Evangelism in which the leading preachers are carefully tutored in psychology and human relations (auto-suggestion and hypnotism?) provides many examples of psychosomatic "healing", "great signs and wonders". The words of Jesus are appropriate:

"For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if [it were] possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24).

These words, true of 70 A.D., are equally true for today!

19:14 *"And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew and chief of the priests, which did so"*

Like Simon (Acts 8:9), the Jewish sorcerers saw in the apostles an opportunity to extend their influence by using the "Jesus" whom Paul preached. Being Jewish (presumably they could speak Hebrew) and from a priestly background, they would no doubt have a pseudo-religious connection with Judaism and some exposure to the Scriptures.

19:15 *"And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?"*

Obviously it was the man who did the speaking. A point not so obvious is that there are two different words for "know":

to **know** Jesus = "ginóskó", to know by being influenced by the person;
to **know** Paul = "epistamai", to have knowledge of; "to be acquainted with", Diaglott; "I understand", Nestle; "am I versed", Con. Ver.

The question which arises is whether Paul through his Holy Spirit power influenced what the demented man said or whether the utterances were simply a result of his demented mind.

19:16 *“And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded”*

“leaped on”—“Sprang at them”, (Phillips’ translation). The element of surprise and the force with which the demented man overpowered them, resulted in the exorcists fleeing “naked and wounded”.

19:17 *“And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified”*

These events drew greater attention to the work of the Apostle Paul in the midst of superstition, magic and exorcism. It resulted in a dramatic change in the lives of charlatans.

19:18 *“And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds”*

“many that believed”—Many that **had** believed; “have believed”, Con. Ver.; “now believers”, R.S.V. In other words those who were “secret” believers were now prepared to publicly acknowledge their conviction.

“came”—Continued to come—an ongoing relationship.

“confessed shewing their deeds”—“Openly to admit their former practices”, (Phillips’ translation); “divulging their practices”, R.S.V.

19:19 *“Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver”*

“curious arts”—Gk: “periergos”, “practised magic”, R.S.V.; “curious things”, Nestle; “magical arts”, Diaglott. These formulae, potions, rites, etc. were recorded in books which would sell for a considerable sum of money.

“burned them”—This was a most significant **public** renunciation of the work of darkness and a great triumph for the light of the gospel since these books could have been sold for a considerable sum of money. It may be thought that they should have been sold rather than burnt, and the money used for a worthwhile cause to advance truth. However, there are at least two reasons why this would be inappropriate:

(1) God does not want money wrongly obtained:

“You shall not bring the hire of an harlot or the wages of a dog [‘sodomite’, mg.] into the house of the LORD your God . . .” (Deut. 23:18, R.S.V.).

(2) The books of magic, if sold, would serve to continue the practices of witchcraft, magic, incantations, etc. It was the purpose of the gospel to liberate men’s minds from these iniquitous practices.

19:20 *“So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed”*

This is another progress report which Luke provides. See Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 13:49; 16:5.

It was not literally “the word of God” which grew, but rather the word of God is the **cause** for the **effect**—the ecclesia. This figure of speech is called “metonymy”.

Contemporary

Exorcists &

Miracle workers

WIFE'S MONTHS OF AGONY BEFORE DEATH

A 43-YEAR-OLD Geelong woman has been allowed to suffer months of agony before dying of cancer because of her belief in talking-in-tongues revivalism preached by "Pastor" Lloyd Longfield at the old Rialto Theatre in Kew.

One commentator, Dr. John Mackay, has described the charismatic movement as "the chief hope of the ecumenical tomorrow."

Rowarth does not know how Murrells explained to the family the failure of the divine healing he so confidently assured them would result from their prayers, or how he justified the terrible suffering of Jessie Rowarth and her inevitable death to those of his followers who prayed at her pained sickbed.

One speaker, Rev. Garhet Gunter of Gilmore, Ont., told the convention he had read a report giving as a conservative estimate that two years ago there were more than 100 million "tongue-talking, charismatic pentecostals."

"I PRAYED for her, commanding the tormenting spirits to come out of her. Piercing screams followed as six spirits of fear were cast out. Some of them cried, 'Satan is king, Satan is king' . . ."

"As I laid hands on him and began to pray a voice immediately cried through his lips. 'Spirit of cancer, spirit of cancer.' It said it had been sent to destroy him."

Hamilton-born Ottawa evangelist Rev. Bill Prankard, holding a miracle service on the final night of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship regional convention, told of that power of the Holy Spirit which was demonstrated during the evening.

Healings take place at Prankard service

another room prayed for her there, commanding the tormenting spirits to come out of her. "Piercing screams followed as six spirits of fear were cast out. Some of them cried, 'Satan is king. Satan is king.'"

The state of the woman's mind, if she exists outside Harris' propaganda, is indicated further on in his story. "She was a Christian," he writes, "wife of a lay-preacher, BUT SHE HAD SERIOUS PERSONALITY PROBLEMS, TERRIBLE FEARS AND HAD LIVED LARGELY IN A WORLD OF HER OWN, SHUTTING HERSELF OFF FROM PEOPLE."

HEALED

If a woman were in the state described by Harris, she would be in need of skilled and qualified psychiatric treatment.

In the realm of the physical, Harris writes of his treatment of a youth suffering from cancer: "He had had a malignant growth removed from his back, but it had refused to heal. We had prayed for him previously in a service, with a temporary result, but now the condition was as bad as ever."

"As I laid hands on him and began to pray a voice immediately cried through his lips: 'Spirit of cancer, spirit of cancer.' It said it had been sent to destroy him before Christ could use him. "For two and one-half hours we continued to firmly command the spirits to come out of this young man, but it screamed its defiance. Then suddenly there was a cry and it left. . . ."

Telling of another of his "patients," Harris writes: "Just the other day I did what I rarely have time to do — I went to pray for a lady in her home. THIS LADY HAS CANCER IN ADVANCED STAGES."

"Many Christians had been praying for her. However, as we challenged the spirits of cancer and pain in the woman's body, there was a violent and noisy manifestation and several of these malignant spirits were cast out of her."

"At the time of writing HER BELIEF IN MIRACLES WAS NOT COMPLETE, BUT SHE AND OTHERS NOW KNOW THAT THE CAUSE OF HER SERIOUS SICKNESS IS DEMONS AND THEIR DESTROYING WORK. We shall continue to administer to her."

The charismatic movement involves a deep unity of spirit across traditional and denominational boundaries, says Dr. Williams. Groups meeting for prayer may include Pentecostals, main line Protestants, Roman Catholics and Orthodox church people.

Severely retarded five-year-old Stephen Rodriguez lay near death with pneumonia in a San Antonio, Tex., hospital. Doctors refused to offer hope. Desperate, her policeman father vowed to run 300 miles in five days from San Antonio to the Church of Miracles — regarded as a religious shrine by the Mexican people — in the hope that God would bless him with a miracle if he could accomplish the feat.

Contemporary

Silversmiths

Afflicted drawn to Goa by St. Francis-Xavier

If you have been reading our magazine, *Abundant Life*, you will remember God saying to me to tell my partners to get out of debt as quickly as possible. Therefore, I am counting on your \$25.00 to be a seed of faith for you to get all your bills and obligations paid. I've got faith your gift is going to count with God for some special needs in your life to be met soon.

I close with a prayer of anointing over this letter as I drop it in the mail to you. You can make it a point of contact and lay it upon your body for God's guidance and blessing.

Stanley Rader really lives it up as treasurer of the Worldwide Church of God but, heck, he says 'God wants his servants well-paid'

All the publicity only helps the church become better known anyway, he said, and its Canadian membership has risen from 7,500 to 9,000 in the past two years.

Those 9,000 members contributed \$8 million to the church coffers this year — more than the combined donations to Rex Humbard, Oral Roberts, the PTL Club and the 700 Club, the other top evangelical churches in Canada.

Armstrong makes even more money than Rader and the two regularly travel to foreign lands in Armstrong's \$5 million Gulfstream II jet, wining and dining kings and heads of state and lavishing presents

Brother Roberts, I expect to receive a great miracle harvest from God through this seed of \$
I'm planting in your work.

Stanley R. Rader, by his own account, lives the good life.

The 50-year-old lawyer-accountant lives in what he boasts is "the finest home in Beverly Hills," jets around the world at company expense, has a salary and a lavish expense account that add up to well over \$300,000 a year and drives, among other things, a Ferrari.

In April, Rader signed a new seven-year contract with the church giving him an annual salary of \$220,000, plus a tax-free \$30,000 parsonage allowance, a car, corporate expense account and life insurance. Last year, the perks came to another \$99,000 and two years ago, to \$162,000.

Armstrong also signed a new contract this year (presumably with himself since he is the president and there is no board of directors) which gives him a salary of \$258,000 a year plus the perks that, in his case, gave him an additional \$179,000 last year.

OLD GOA, India — One by one, the Indian pilgrims touch the glass coffin, then kiss their hands. Some, hoping to be cured of disease, leave behind wax models of their afflicted parts as offerings.

Each day this scene unfolded as pilgrims pray in front of the substantially decayed remains of St. Francis-Xavier, Jesuit missionary of the 16th Century.

The six-week-long exposition of the remains ends tomorrow. It is the 13th since St. Francis died in 1552. Born in Navarre (in what is now Spain), he was sent to the Portuguese settlement at Goa on the southwest coast of India in 1541. Jesuit historians claim he converted 700,000 people to Catholicism there, but the figure is disputed.

They also auctioned off land to merchants to set up stalls around the Se Cathedral, where the exposition is taking place. Under a temporary arch bearing the legend, "He gave his life that we may live," merchants sold handicrafts, toys, hardware, jewelry, refreshments and religious objects,

To some outsiders, the exposition is a grisly spectacle. The body's initial "incorruptibility" or lack of decay following St. Francis' death was said to be a miracle which contributed to his canonization in 1622. But there is no question now that decay has set in. At points where clothing does not hide the body, it appears only slightly more than a skeleton.

Called the Apostle of the East, St. Francis arrived in Goa in 1542. Through his missionary effort he played a large part in the growth of Catholicism in India. He died of fever in 1552 on a voyage to China.

19:21 *“After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome”*

“in the spirit”—This is probably a reference to the Holy Spirit which guided the work.

“to go to Jerusalem”—This was the collection taken for the poor Jews in Jerusalem. It was a very important part of the Apostle’s work to knit the hearts of Jews and Gentiles in the bonds of the faith (cf. 1 Cor . 16:1-8; Rom. 15:25, 26).

19:22 *“So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season”*

This verse implies that Timothy and Erastus were with Paul at Ephesus, but were sent into Macedonia to make arrangements for the Jerusalem Poor Fund, and to prepare the work for Paul’s later arrival.

Erastus may originally have come from Corinth (Rom. 16:23; 2 Tim. 4:20).

19:23 *“And the same time there arose no small stir about that way”*

“no small stir”—“A great commotion” (Phillips’ translation); “no slight disturbance”, Con. Ver.; “trouble”, Nestle.

“that way”—“The Way”, R.S.V.—a term by which the followers of Jesus were identified (cf. Acts 9:2; 24:22).

19:24 *“For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen”*

“a silversmith”—A union association of workers who made a living by manufacturing shrines of Diana (Artemis).

The modern day counterparts of these are everywhere:

- the magazines (Awake and Watchtower) and many millions of books sold by Jehovah’s Witnesses.
- the prayer cloths, special gifts, pictures, records of the Evangelical Pentecostals.³
- the crosses, crucifixes, prayer beads, amulets and images of the Greek and Roman churches.

“no small gain unto the craftsmen”—Their chief concern was money. Similarly, in Christendom, religious leaders almost invariably live comfortably and sometimes are under scrutiny for irregularities in the use of money⁴.

19:25 *“Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth”*

The concern of Demetrius was obviously with money matters.

³In Orangeville, Ontario, a number of Christadelphians attended a “miracle” service by a Pentecostal minister in which a simple inexpensive wall hanging was sold for nothing less than \$100.00. In 5 minutes \$3,000 was raised. The same clergyman was so busy selling cassette tapes that he had no time to discuss anything from the Bible about his sermon.

⁴E.g., Herbert Armstrong—Ambassador Bible College and Rex Humbard.

19:26 *“Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands”*

“almost all Asia”—Paul had stated that there was a “wide open door for effective work” (1 Cor. 16:9, R.S.V.) which had opened to him. The widespread conversion is now acknowledged by his opponents.

“they be no gods, which are made with hands”—The message which Paul preached must have been similar to his presentation in Athens:

“. . .whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. . .”

(Acts 17:23, 24)

19:27 *“So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth”*

“our craft is in danger to be set at nought”—Demetrius again indicates his concern for his pocket book.

“her magnificence”—The original building was destroyed by fire in B.C. 356. The building which replaced this one took 200 years to complete. All of Asia made contribution for its building. Diana (Artemis) has been described as follows:



“Grotesquely represented with turreted head and many breasts, the goddess [Diana] and her cult . . . like the Temple of Aphrodite at Corinth by a host of priestess courtesans . . . Ephesus became a place of pilgrimage for tourist worshippers . . . hence shrines.”⁵

19:28 *“And when they heard these sayings they were full of wrath, and cried out saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians”*

“were full of wrath”—Gk: “thumos”, “filled with rage”, Amplified Bible; “full of fury”, Con. Ver.; “were enraged”, R.S.V.

“Great is Diana of the Ephesians”—Literally, “Great Artemis of Ephesians”.

19:29 *“And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre”*

A mob riot ensued. Unknown to Demetrius and his comrades, the providence

⁵Zondervan Bible Dictionary

of the Almighty would only allow the opposition to go so far. Great work still awaited Paul in Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem and Rome.

“*Gaius*”—a common name (1 Cor. 1:14; 3 Jn. 1), but probably the same person as Acts 20:4—the ecclesial delegate from Derbe to carry the ecclesial contribution to Jerusalem for the poor Jews.

“*Aristarchus*”—a native of Thessalonica (Acts 20:4; 27:2), see also Col. 4:10, 11; Philemon 24. He was the ecclesial delegate from Thessalonica selected to travel with Paul to Jerusalem bringing the Thessalonian ecclesial contribution to the Jerusalem Poor Fund.

“*rushed with one accord into the theatre*”—The theatre has been excavated and found not only to have excellent acoustics, but it is estimated to have been capable of seating 25,000 people. A person speaking at the centre could be heard perfectly from the outside edge—600 feet away. The theatre was not like a modern theatre (in a building) but was an open-air site with stone seating. The theatre at Ephesus is the largest one ever constructed.

The Amplified Bible reads as follows:

“. . .and they rushed together into the amphitheatre, **dragging along with them Gaius and Aristarchus. . .**”

The R.S.V. gives the same sense.

19:30 “*And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not*”

“*entered in unto the people*”—“Wished to go in among the crowd”, R.S.V.

“*the disciples*”—Converts at Ephesus, possibly those rebaptised “who knew only the baptism of John” (Acts 19:1-7). No doubt they were concerned for his safety. Paul had previous experience with large unruly crowds, and probably would have used the opportunity to address them.

19:31 “*And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre*”

“*chief of Asia*”—“Asiarchs”, R.S.V. These were high-ranking officials who were chosen each year to conduct the sacrificial services and the games held in honour of the goddess. They derived their name from the province which elected them.

It is not indicated how or why they became friends of Paul. It is interesting to note that the work of making the manifold wisdom of God known in the heavens evidently resulted in some favourable response by those in political high places.

“*sent unto him*”—they used messengers.

“*desiring him*”—Gk: “parakaleó”, “to call alongside of” (Yg); “begged him”, R.S.V.; “entreated”, Con. Ver.; “besought”, Nestle.

19:32 “*Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together*”

“Now some shouted one thing and some another, for the gathering was in a tumult, and most of them did not know why they had come together”, Amplified Bible.

19:33 *“And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people”*

“they drew”—“Put forward”, R.S.V.; “pushed forward”, Diaglott.

“would have made his defence”—“Defence”, Gk: “apologia” = explanation (similar to Stephen’s defence before the Sanhedrin—Acts 7).

As to why Alexander attempted to make a defence is not indicated. He was a Jew, but evidently not an ecclesial member. Was he attempting to disassociate the Jewish community from Paul’s work? If such were the case, it would be an attempt to exonerate the Jews and stir up the crowd against Paul who earlier had left the synagogue (Acts 19:8, 9). Were the Jews involved in the silversmith business?

19:34 *“But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians”*

“that he was a Jew”—How did they know this?

“about two hours”—This is a considerable length of time to sustain mob unison. It is indicative of the intensity of the riot.

19:35 *“And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?”*

“town clerk”—The scribe or secretary of the city. The Romans had granted Ephesus a democratically elected municipal senate.

“goddess”—Not in the Greek text. Hence the R.S.V. “the great Artemis”.

“the image which fell down from Jupiter”—The town clerk may have intended this to show the supernatural nature of pagan worship and to counter Paul’s reasoning that “they be no gods, which are made with hands” (Acts 19:26).

The Greek of this section is difficult to translate. See R.S.V. mg. The R.S.V. translates it as follows: “the sacred stone that fell from the sky”. There is no word for “image” in the Greek text, as the italics in the A.V. indicate.

19:36 *“Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and do nothing rashly”*

The appeal of the town clerk seemed to restore confidence in the worship of Artemis thereby preventing further unruly conduct. Proper decorum was in keeping with the prestigious position Ephesus held in Asia.

19:37 *“For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches nor yet blasphemers of your goddess”*

“these men”—Gaius and Aristarchus (v. 29)

“robbers of churches”—Gk: “hierosulos”, “robber of temples”, (Yg)—sacrilegious. This was forbidden under pagan law and was a criminal offence.

19:38 *“Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another”*

“the law is open”—Gk: “ennomos”, “in conformity to law” (Yg); “the courts

are open”, R.S.V. In a city under Roman jurisdiction there was a set procedure for handling disagreements.

“*there are deputies*”—“Proconsuls”, R.S.V.; Con. Ver.

“*implead*”—Gk: “egkaleo”, “to call into (court)” (Yg); “bring charges against one another”, R.S.V.

19:39 “*But if ye enquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly*”

If there were matters in addition to the religious matters raised, a lawful assembly could be convened. These assemblies were held in the “agora” (cf. Acts 16:19; 17:17).

19:40 “*For we are in danger to be called in question for this day’s uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse*”

The riot had jeopardised the position of Ephesus in the eyes of Imperial Rome. There was no cause for such a commotion. The matters raised should be settled in the courts. This was the view of the town clerk.

“*concourse*”—Gk: “sustrophe”, “a turning together, gathering” (Yg); “commotion”, R.S.V.; “crowding together”, Nestle.

19:41 “*And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly*”

“*assembly*”—Gk: “ekklesia”—ecclesia. This is one of the few occurrences of “ecclesia” in a secular setting. The word means “called out ones” without implying the purpose for which they had been called. “Church” is an inappropriate translation of “ekklesia” because church is popularly associated with a **building** or denomination rather than **people**.

This section concludes the Apostle’s major work at Ephesus. He had already been preparing for work in Macedonia by sending Timothy and Erastus ahead (Acts 19:22). He told the Corinthians that he had “fought with beasts at Ephesus” (1 Cor. 15:32), and no doubt many of his difficulties are not recorded in Acts. He was to write to the Corinthians in a later letter:

“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life” (2 Cor. 1:8, 9).

Ephesus: Beware of Grievous Wolves!



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“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

“Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

CHAPTER 3

BEWARE OF GRIEVOUS WOLVES

Paul meets with the Ephesian elders on one more occasion referred to in Acts 20:16-18. It is a very sad parting at Miletus as he exhorts them to faithfulness and bids them farewell.

20:16 *“For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost”*

Paul was on his way to Jerusalem, accompanying him were the ecclesial delegates carrying their ecclesial contributions to the poor Jews at Jerusalem. There was great urgency and importance to the work. It was Paul’s prayer that the recipients of the gift—the Jews—would accept not only the gift, but also the givers—the Gentiles.

20:17 *“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the ecclesia”*

Two routes were possible—a land route (which would require more time) and a boat trip across the bay and then by land to Ephesus (about 35 miles—a day’s journey).

“the elders”—Gk: “presbuteroi”—“bishops” (cf. Titus 1:5, 7).

20:18 *“And when they were come unto him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you in all seasons”*

Adversaries, of which there were many at Ephesus, continually attempted to undermine his apostolic authority and demean his credentials (cf. 2 Cor. 11). The ecclesia apparently was well informed of his difficulties and his great loyalty to Christ in all the circumstances of life.

20:19 *“Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews”*

“serving”—Gk: “douleuó” = as a servant or slave.

“humility”—Gk: “tapeinophros”, “lowliness of mind” (Yg). Paul lived humbly—experiencing hunger, thirst, nakedness and buffeting . . . “being reviled and persecuted” (1 Cor. 4:10-13).

“temptations”—Gk: “peirasmos”, “trial and proof” (Yg)—not temptation to sin, but rather trial or proof of his integrity and loyalty to Christ.

“the lying in wait of the Jews”—The trials experienced at the hands of the Jews are not detailed in Acts. The Asian Jews, however, stirred up trouble in Jerusalem which led to Paul’s arrest. Evidently at Ephesus they tried to take his life (cf. 2 Cor. 1:8-10).

20:20 *“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house”*

“kept back nothing”—“I did not shrink”, R.S.V. The idea is expressed in Paul’s instruction to Timothy, “God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control” (2 Tim. 1:7, R.S.V.). The spiritual soldier must not shrink back with timidity when the evil day comes. Courage is a wonderful characteristic in a spiritual soldier. It is not foolhardiness, but rather a **confidence** in one’s strength (i.e., the armour of God’s providing) and **commitment** to Christ as Lord in the life of discipleship.

“from house to house”—Paul’s preaching was both public—in the synagogue and the lecture hall of Tyrannus and probably in the open air, too (cf. Acts 17:19). The “Jehovah’s Witnesses” twist this passage to mean that preaching means going door-knocking “two by two”. Paul **may** have introduced the gospel to the unenlightened in this way (we are not told), but the expression, “he taught them from house to house” refers to instruction of **believers**. Cf. Acts 5:42, R.S.V.—“And every day in the temple and **at home** they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”



A Watchtower depiction of “door-knocking”. Notice the dragon of Rev.12 in the garden. What is missing is the bag of J. W. publications which invariably accompanies the Society’s representative.

20:21 *“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”*

“testifying”—Gk: “diamar”, “to bear thorough witness” (Yg); “certifying”, Con. Ver.; “solemnly witnessing”, Nestle. This was done from the Scripture (Acts 28:23, 24).

“repentance”—Gk: “metanoëó”, “to have another mind” (Yg). It was a change of mind—from dead works to the living faith toward God (cf. Heb. 6:1).

“faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”—A trust and confident assurance in the reality of his sacrificial work and his promises.

20:22 *“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there”*

“bound in the spirit”—The trip to Jerusalem was apparently undertaken by God’s direction through Holy Spirit revelations. These were probably revealed either directly to Paul or through other Spirit-gifted men.

“not knowing the things that shall befall me there”—He knew that sufferings and hardship lay ahead (Acts 21:4-14), but he did not know the precise details. Paul was ready to be imprisoned and even to die (Acts 21:13), that his ministry might be completed to knit Jewish and Gentile hearts in the bonds of the gospel (cf. Rom. 15:16, 25-28).

20:23 *“Save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me”*

An example of Holy Spirit prophecies to this effect is recorded in Acts 21:4 when Paul arrived at Tyre. Another prophecy was given at Caesarea (Acts 21:10-14).

20:24 *“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God”*

“neither count I my life dear unto myself”—“Life”, Gk: “psuché” — the word often translated “soul”. This usage of “psuché” proves that that it **cannot** refer to an immortal soul. The Concordant Version translates the verse this way: “nor yet am I making my **soul** precious to myself”.

“my course”—Gk: “dromos”, “race, running” (Yg). To finish the course alludes to the running of a foot race (at the Olympic Games). Despite the heat and fatigue, a runner determines to finish the race; similarly Paul had a spiritual race to run. He was not a quitter. The same word is used of John the Baptist’s work in Acts 13:25.

“with joy”—This is a wonderful expression and shows how labours unto weariness are united in a “first love” (cf. Rev. 2:1-4). What encouragement for the Ephesians to run their course!



A foot race at Olympia.

“and the ministry which I have received”—This is the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18-21). Paul had received this ministry or service by direct revelation:

“We turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, ‘I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth’ ” (Acts 13:46, 47, R.S.V.).

“the gospel of the grace of God”—The Ephesian epistle provides a commentary on this expression:

“Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ . . .” (Eph. 3:7-8, R.S.V.).

20:25 *“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more”*

“preaching”—Gk: “kerussó”, “to cry or proclaim as an herald” (Yg).

“the kingdom of God”—This is the forgotten doctrine of the churches, but it was the **gospel** of Paul’s preaching (Acts 28:23, 30, 31).

“shall see my face no more”—Paul’s work was completed with his three-year stay in Asia. Other places required his efforts.

20:26 *“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men”*

“I take you to record this day”—“I testify to you”, R.S.V. Paul had faithfully warned the wicked of his wicked way and admonished the believers to continue in the Faith. In so doing, he was like the watchman of Ezekiel 33:1-33.

“pure”—Gk: “katharos”, “clean, pure, clear” (Yg); “innocent”, R.S.V. Phillips’ translation gives the sense in contemporary language:

“I must tell you solemnly today that my conscience is clear as far as any of you is concerned.”

20:27 *“For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God”*

“I have not shunned”—see Acts 20:20.

“to declare”—Gk: “anagelló”, “to tell again” (Yg); “informing you”, Con. Ver.; “announcing”, Diaglott.

“all the counsel”—Gk: “boulé”, “counsel, purpose, will” (Yg).

This is an important aspect of discipleship. The history of Christendom is chequered by doctrinal changes to accommodate kings, politicians and vested interests. It requires courage and loyalty to truth to be a “faithful and true witness” to declare the **whole** counsel of God without accommodating the truths of the gospel to please one’s friends or to placate the foe: this is characteristic of Christ (Rev. 3:14; Jn. 17:8, 14, 17, 19, 20).

20:28 *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the ecclesia of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood”*

“take heed unto yourselves”—“Heed”, Gk: “prosechó”, “to hold toward” (Yg); “now be on your guard”, Phillips.

Even the elders—the respected older men in the ecclesia can have feet of clay. These elders were responsible for faithfulness in doctrine and for setting the “spiritual tone” for the ecclesia. Similarly there was the care for the **whole flock**, not just for themselves. They were to “feed the flock of God. . . taking the oversight. . . willingly” (1 Pet. 5:2).

“*the Holy Spirit*”—The Holy Spirit operated through Spirit-gifted men “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12, 13).

“*overseers*”—Gk: “episkopos”, “guardians”, R.S.V.; “supervisors”, Con. Ver.

“*feed*”—Gk: “poimanó”, “to feed as a shepherd” (Yg).

“*which he hath purchased with his own blood*”—“Purchase”, Gk: “peripoieomai”, “to acquire”, (Yg).

Trinitarian clergymen try to make this verse support the doctrine that it was “God the Son” who shed his blood on the cross. The A.V. translation is not supported by the rest of Scripture. Nowhere else is the blood of **God** the subject of reference. If God could shed His blood, then God could die—which He cannot (1 Tim. 6:16).

Note the R.S.V. mg. “or ‘with the blood of his own’.” The ellipsis is to be supplied by the reader, e.g., the blood of His own “lamb”, “son” etc. “Through the blood of His Own”. Con. Ver.; Nestle; Diaglott. “This = his own blood or the blood of his own [?Son]”, Nestle mg.

20:29 “*For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock*”

“*my departing*”—After Paul left Ephesus.

“*grievous wolves*”—“Grievous”, Gk: “weighty, heavy” (Yg); “fierce”, R.S.V.; “rapacious”, Diaglott; “burdensome”, Con. Ver. This metaphor comparing false teachers to wolves occurs elsewhere in Matt. 7:15; 10:16; John 10:12. The background idea is found in Ezek. 22:27. The elders were instructed to **feed** the flock. The wolves would **destroy** the flock.

The following commentary on the wolf is taken from the notes on “The Flora and Fauna of Canada”¹:

Wolves are carnivores—to live they must eat the meat of other animals. They are specially designed to do just this. The power of a wolf’s bite is incredible. Wolves on the run can leap at the rump of an adult moose and rip it open even though this means tearing through 4 inches of finely packed hair and a thick hide. A wolf can hook its teeth into the rubbery nose of a moose and cling tenaciously, despite the swinging head of the moose which may even raise the wolf off the ground. The wolf has massive jaws and strong chewing muscles. Forty two teeth line the jaws; the largest teeth, the “canines”, are sometimes 2½ inches in length. These teeth are like self-sharpening shears and are used to flail tendons on the legs of deer, caribou and moose.

Nevertheless, life is hard for wolves. Often they must rely on a surprise encounter to capture their prey. Moose are very hard to kill. A healthy bull moose may weigh up to 2,000 lbs. With its huge set of antlers, powerful legs and sharp hoofs it can impale or kick a wolf to death. Wolves usually leave a bull moose alone. They prefer young calves, the sick or the very old. They especially like the ones which run rather than face them. Wolves are made for running. They range over as much territory as 30 square miles and may travel 45 miles in a single night. They can run about 25 miles an hour for short distances and can run long distances with great endurance.

¹Ist Christadelphian Youth Camp, Manitoulin Island, Ontario, 1980.

Unless wolves just happen to run into prey, they rely on direct scenting and tracking. Their sense of smell is about 100 times better than humans. As they close the gap between themselves and their prey, the wolves become excited, but remain restrained. They quicken the pace, wave their tails, and peer ahead intently. Although they seem anxious to leap forward at full speed, they continue to hold themselves in check. This stage of the hunt is called the “stalk”.

The wolves sneak as close to the prey as they can without making it flee. They approach upwind, slowly and alertly (so that they cannot be smelled). When the prey detects the wolves, it will either freeze and stand its ground (as moose often will do) or run.

The “rush” of the wolves is an important part of the hunt. If the wolves fail to get close enough to their quarry, the animal may run off at top speed and escape. If the wolves cannot catch the animal in the first few minutes, they give up—although they may stalk it for miles, hoping for a better chance to rush later on. The technique which wolves use of careful stalking, and then suddenly rushing with great speed; is not always successful. Studies have indicated that only one moose in ten that is rushed, is actually taken. Once an animal is downed, the wolves gorge themselves, eating up to 25 lbs apiece.”

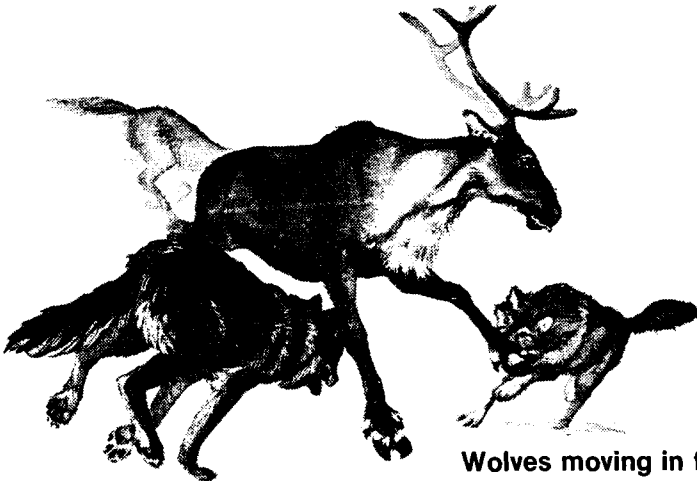
The Scripture refers to this: “as evening wolves that leave nothing until the morning . . .” (Zeph. 3:3). This makes up for the days and sometimes weeks when nothing is taken.

“When the range of wolves borders agricultural land, they often find domestic livestock like sheep and calves much easier to kill than bull moose and caribou. This brings the wolves into conflict with humans—a conflict which the wolves are almost certain to lose. As a result, they have been poisoned, trapped and hunted nearly to extinction in some places. Since 1972 the government of Ontario has provided compensation to farmers who lose livestock to wolves. This applies to sheep, swine, poultry, cattle and goats.”

The characteristics of the wolf make it a fitting comparison with false teachers. Jesus makes this association in his plain warnings to his followers that false prophets would be busy accomplishing their wicked work:

“Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matt. 10:16).

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matt. 7:15).



Wolves moving in for a kill

RECOGNISING THE WOLF—“By their fruits you shall know them”

1. False teaching.

Recognition of false teaching is sometimes difficult when it is couched in pleasant words or believed by those who are highly respected. As the Apostle Paul was to say to the Corinthians: “Even Satan is transformed into an angel of light.” In this respect the false teacher is like the “stalk” of the wolf. The colour of the wolf blends with the grey surroundings, the darkness of the night provides cover and the body advances close to the ground, inching its way with great stealth until the opportune moment to rush the prey. Early detection of the wolf’s intentions is critical to the escape of the animal. Similarly, detection of false teachers must come before they have “torn the flock”, “shedding blood, destroying lives” (Ezek. 22:27). Early detection requires competent Bible students “who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).

The epistles are full of admonition regarding the evils of false teaching. The Apostle Paul commented: “O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?” He marvelled that they had been so quickly removed from the gospel. “My little children with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you . . . I am perplexed about you” (Gal. 3:1; 4:19, 20).

The clergy of the churches are the wolves of Christendom. The Christadelphians have never had paid clergy to teach as have the churches. This wise policy followed the practice of Paul and Barnabas in the New Testament (1 Cor. 9) and ensures that all Christadelphians have to study and reflect on Scripture, not just a minister. All are responsible to guard and cherish the truth which God had provided through the Scriptures. Fellowship protects all of the other doctrines. Fellowship is reserved for those who share the same basis of belief. For this reason we do not break bread with Pentecostals, Baptists and members of other faiths (cf. 2 Jn. 1-11).

2. False teachers seek a following.

One of the fruits by which false teachers can be recognised is their craving for followers. Seldom is a false teacher a “lone wolf”—a reject from the pack. False teachers are more like the “alpha male”—the dominant male wolf who attempts to control the whole pack. In other words, false teachers seek supporters. This characteristic can be inferred from the following Scripture: “And from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, **to draw away the disciples after them**” (Acts 20:30).

The word “heretic” means one who is factious or who seeks a following. It is for this reason that an heretic is to be admonished “once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned” (Titus 3:10).

3. False teachers do not care for the flock.

False teachers may wear a disguise of sheep’s clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves (Matt. 7:15). Their teeth will tear and their

claws will rip, for this is the nature of wolves. Once a flock of sheep is encountered, wolves have been known to go on a killing spree, destroying far more sheep than they are capable of eating. Similarly, if unchecked, false teachers have been known to split ecclesias (e.g., 2 Cor. 11:1-5) and families. It should be remembered that those who destroy God's household, God Himself will destroy (1 Cor. 3:16, 17), and those who offend one of the little ones who believe in Christ, it were better for him if a millstone were tied about his neck and that he were drowned in the sea (Matt. 18:6). Like Amalek of old, who picked off the stragglers in the camp of Israel (Deut. 25:17-18), it is the marginal Christadelphians—the novice and the unstable—who are taken by false teachers. Wolves who trouble ecclesias must be confronted. As Paul said, "to them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you" (Gal. 2:5 R.S.V.). It is only a hireling who runs for his own safety when he sees the wolf coming. The good shepherd stays to vanquish the intruder (Jn. 10:11, 12).

KEEPING IN THE FOLD

It is the wandering caribou which is picked off by wolves in the Arctic. A lone caribou is usually so nervous that the slightest noise may send it running. But a caribou in the middle of a herd is almost unconscious of wolves nearby. A caribou prefers to have others around. When it is in a group, a caribou need not always be worried about detecting danger by its own senses, since the reaction of others in the herd will warn it. For the disciple, to stay with the company of believers is a matter of life and death. Mutual help can be provided, encouragement in times of need given, exhortation to watchfulness and steadfastness provided in times of weakness. It is a command of Scripture that the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please themselves (Rom. 15:1, cf. Phil. 2:19-22). It is a very serious mistake to let the attraction of climate, employment or education take one away from the ecclesia. To do so is not only to attract the attention of wolves, it is an invitation to let the ravens of self-interest and apathy pick clean the carcass of spirituality.

Unlike the caribou which relies on others in the herd to detect the stalk of the wolves, every believer has to be alert and watchful—to be personally pure in doctrine as well as to ensure that the community of believers is found without spot, wrinkle or any other blemish (Eph. 5:27). This responsibility cannot simply be left to others; it must be borne and shared by all. "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16, 17 R.S.V.).

20:30 *"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them"*

"of your own selves"—The gospel net gathered in all manner of fish (Matt. 13:47). Some were bad fish—their sins going beforehand unto judgment, others followed afterwards (1 Tim. 5:24). The Apostle Paul lamented to the Galatians that false brethren had crept in secretly "to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 2:4). To such, submission was not to be yielded "even for a moment that the truth of the gospel might be preserved" (Gal. 2:5, R.S.V.).

“speaking perverse things”—Some who spoke perverse things are listed elsewhere: Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20); Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:17); Phygellus and Hermogenes (2 Tim. 1:15).

The apostasy from the faith was predicted in 2 Pet. 2:1-2; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:13; 1 Jn. 4:1.

20:31 *“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears”*

“watch”—“Keep spiritually awake”—1 Thess. 5:6-9, R.S.V.

“three years”—See note on Acts 19:10.

“warn”—“Admonish”, R.S.V.; Nestle; Diaglott.

20:32 *“And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified”*

“the word of his grace”—The Old Testament Scripture and those parts of the New Testament which had been completed. The Revelation and certain other epistles had not at this time been written.

“to build you up”—Gk: “*epoikodomeó*” = to build upon; “to edify”, Con. Ver. This “building up” takes place from personal reading and reflection on Scripture. This “renewing of the mind” is called a “transformation” (Rom. 12:2).

“and to give you an inheritance”—i.e., life eternal in the kingdom of God (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:24).

“them which are sanctified”—The set apart ones (cf. Acts 26:18)—“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;” to show forth the praises “of him who hath called [us] out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

20:33 *“I have coveted no man’s silver or gold, or apparel”*

Covetousness is idolatry (Eph. 5:5). Many exhortations are recorded against this sin (Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5). Big business evangelism and the untold wealth of the papacy are examples of the way in which the apostle’s words have gone unheeded.

20:34 *“Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me”*

Paul did not give his adversaries any cause for arguing that he only preached to make a living (see 1 Thess. 2:9; 1 Cor. 9:14-17).

20:35 *“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring 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”*

“I have shewed you all things”—The Apostle Paul matched precept with personal example, as did Jesus (Jn. 13:15).

“support the weak”—By toil helping the weak. The context suggests those in financial need. The exhortation elsewhere extends to spiritual weakness, too (Eph. 4:28; 1 Thess. 5:14; Rom. 15:1).

“It is more blessed to give than to receive”—There is no written record of these words in the New Testament. However, the idea is expressed in Luke 6:38:

“Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

20:36 “*And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all*”

See the similar scene in Acts 21:5.

20:37 “*And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him*”

“they all wept and embraced Paul and kissed him”, R.S.V.; “[fervently]”, Nestle.

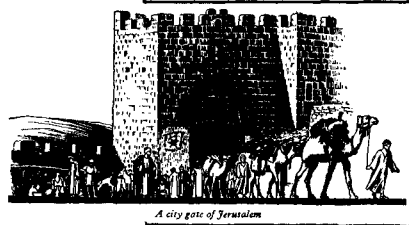
20:38 “*Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship*”

“sorrowing”—Gk: “adunaomai”, “to be pained” (Yg); “suffering”, Con. Ver.; Nestle; “distressed and sorrowful”, Amplified Bible.

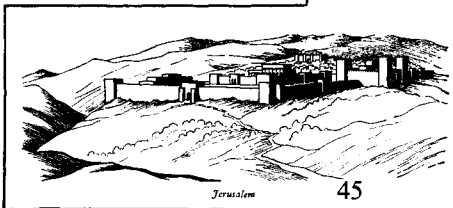
This is the close of a powerful section of Scripture. It highlights the deep affection with which the Apostle held his converts and fellow brethren. It is history which provides the real-life examples of the oneness and inter-relationships within the Christ body.

The Ephesian brethren knew what lay ahead. It required toil—unremitting labour and patient endurance and an abiding first love. The book of Revelation written some 40 years later provides the assessment of Jesus himself as to the spiritual progress of the ecclesia.

“*and they accompanied him unto the ship*”



A city gate of Jerusalem



Jerusalem

Ephesus: the Spiritual Warfare



“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

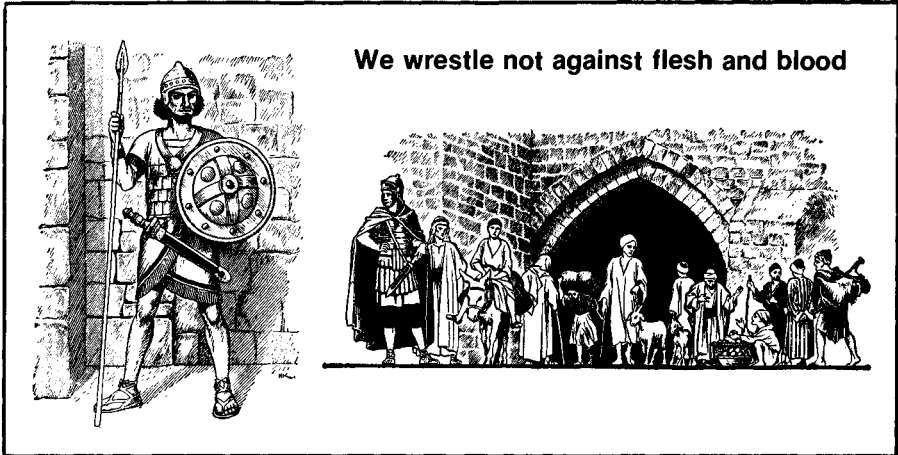
“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

CHAPTER 4

THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE

THE WARRIOR METAPHOR

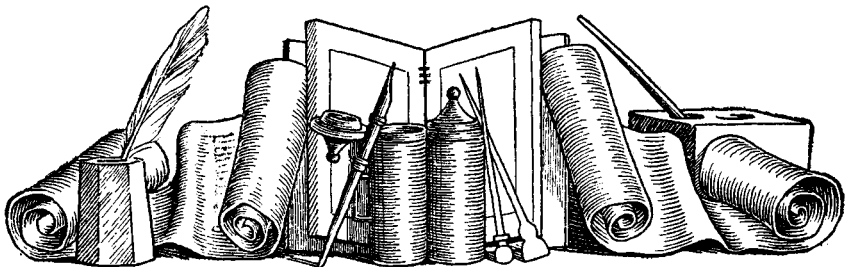
In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul develops an exhortation based upon the comparison of a disciple to a soldier:



The disciple is a soldier, but has nothing to do with literal warfare in this life: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

Elsewhere, Paul had made the same point very explicit:

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:3-5).



The order in which each piece of equipment of the Warrior is listed in Ephesians 6 is the order in which a Roman soldier would dress (according to Homer).¹

¹See Ellicott—1896, Vol. III, p.57

Although the metaphor in Ephesians 6 is the most extensive military metaphor in Scripture, the idea is contained in other passages. Note the following:

MILITARY METAPHORS

- 2 TIM. 2:3,4 **ENDURE HARDNESS**—"take your share of suffering", R.S.V.; "hardship and suffering", Amplified Bible.
BE A GOOD SOLDIER—"first class soldier", Amplified Bible.
ON ACTIVE SERVICE (R.S.V.)—"that warreth", A.V.
DOES NOT BECOME ENTANGLED IN CIVILIAN PURSUITS (R.S.V.)—"the affairs of this life", A.V.
SEEK TO PLEASE Christ WHO ENLISTED YOU (R.S.V.).
- 1 COR.16:13 **QUIT YOU LIKE MEN, BE STRONG**—cf. 1 Sam. 4:9—the battle cry of the Philistines.
- PHIL. 1:27 **STAND FIRM** (R.S.V.)—a military term meaning an unbroken battle line while striving for the faith of the gospel.
- PHIL. 1:17 **SET**—to be posted as a military guard (for the defence of the gospel).
- PHIL. 1:28 **DO NOT BE TERRIFIED** [A.V.] **BY OPPOSITION**—"frightened", R.S.V.—the idea is of a startled horse, bolting when an ambush is discovered.
THE OFFENSIVE—"to destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10:3-5, R.S.V.).
THE ARMOUR—light (Rom. 13:12), i.e., "put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to gratify its desires" (Rom. 13:14, R.S.V.). "By the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left" (2 Cor. 6:7 A.V.); see R.S.V.—"the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left". "Putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. 5:8).

Paul was chained to a Roman soldier during his confinement in Rome. He besought the Ephesian brethren to pray for him—

"that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:19, 20, R.S.V.).

All who visited the Apostle would have seen the soldier. The metaphor, therefore, was drawn from a real-life situation and would be easily visualised.

THE OLD TESTAMENT MESSIANIC WARRIOR

It may not be realised that some of the details of the warrior metaphor have an Old Testament background and no doubt were drawn on by the Apostle Paul. In Isaiah's prophecy, the Messianic figure is a combination of both the first and second advents. The following diagram shows the relationship between the warrior of Ephesians 6 and the warrior of Isaiah's allusions.

THE WARRIOR IN ISAIAH

LIKE A RUSHING
 STREAM
 DRIVEN BY
 THE LORD



HELMET OF SALVATION 59:17

BREASTPLATE OF
 RIGHTEOUSNESS—59:17

LOINS—GIRDLE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,
 FAITHFULNESS—11:5

FEET—BRING GOOD TIDINGS . . .
 PUBLISH SALVATION—52:7

THE BACKGROUND TO THE WARRIOR METAPHOR

EPHESIANS 6	ISAIAH AND PSALMS
loins girded with truth (6:14)	girdle of righteousness and faithfulness (Isa. 11:5)
breastplate of righteousness <i>[faith and love]</i> (6:14, cf. 1 Thess. 5:8)	breastplate of righteousness (Isa. 59:17)
feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (6:15)	bring good tidings, publish salvation (Isa. 52:7)
shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked (6:16)	allusion—"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day" (Psa. 91:4,5).
helmet of salvation <i>[the hope]</i> (6:17, cf. 1 Thess. 5:8)	helmet of salvation (Isa. 59:17)
the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (6:17)	allusion—"And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword" (Isa. 49:2)

THE OPPONENTS OF THE GOSPEL

The wrestling against "principalities", "powers", and "rulers" are terms in Ephesians 6:12 which relate to the opponents of the gospel. Acts of the Apostles records the history of this opposition:

"THERE ARE MANY ADVERSARIES" (1 Cor. 16:9)			
Reference	Disciple	Opponent	Opposition
Acts 4	Peter & John	the people the captain ('ruler', A.V. mg.) of the temple Sadducees	—were grieved —laid hands on them —straitly threatened them —commanded them not to speak at all, or teach in the name of the Lord Jesus
Acts 5	Peter	Ananias & Sapphira the high priest captain of the temple Sadducees the council (Sanhedrin) all the senate of the children of Israel	—lied to the Holy Spirit —laid hands on them —imprisoned them (in the common prison) —beat them —commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus
Acts 6-7	Stephen	synagogue of the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, those of Cilicia and Asia the people the elders the scribes	—disputed —set up false witnesses —stirred up the people —caught him —accused him of blasphemy —"cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord" —cast him out of the city and stoned him

Reference	Disciples	Opponent	Opposition
Acts 8-9	Jerusalem ecclesia Paul	Jewish leaders Saul The high priest and the chief priests Jews Grecians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —great persecution —scattered believers —made havoc of the ecclesia —entering houses and haling men and women to prison —breathed out threatenings and slaughter —destroyed them —took counsel to kill him —went about to slay him
Acts 11	Believers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —scattered abroad —persecution
Acts 12	Jerusalem ecclesia Peter	Herod the King ecclesia Herod and the Jews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —“stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the ecclesia” —James (the brother of John) slain by the sword —apprehended him —imprisoned him
Acts 13	Saul and Barnabas	Elymas, a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet called Bar-jesus Antiochian Jews, political leaders, and influential people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —sought to turn a potential convert, Sergius Paulus, from the truth —filled with envy —spoke against them —contradicted and blasphemed —stirred up the people (chief men of the city, devout and honourable women) —raised persecution —expelled them
Acts 14	Paul and Barnabas	Jews and Gentiles of Iconium Jews from Antioch and Iconium who came to Lycaonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and made their minds evil affected —an assault made on rulers —attempted to use them spitefully and stone them —they persuaded the people against Paul and Barnabas —Paul stoned and left for dead
Acts 16	Paul and Silas	Philippian diviners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —stirred up the multitude and rulers and the magistrates —tore off their clothes —beaten with rods —many stripes —cast into an inner prison —placed in stocks
Acts 17	Paul & Silas House of Jason	Thessalonian synagogue (Jews) Lewd fellows of the baser sort Athenians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —set city in an uproar —assaulted the house of Jason —taken before rulers —security taken of Jason —mocked

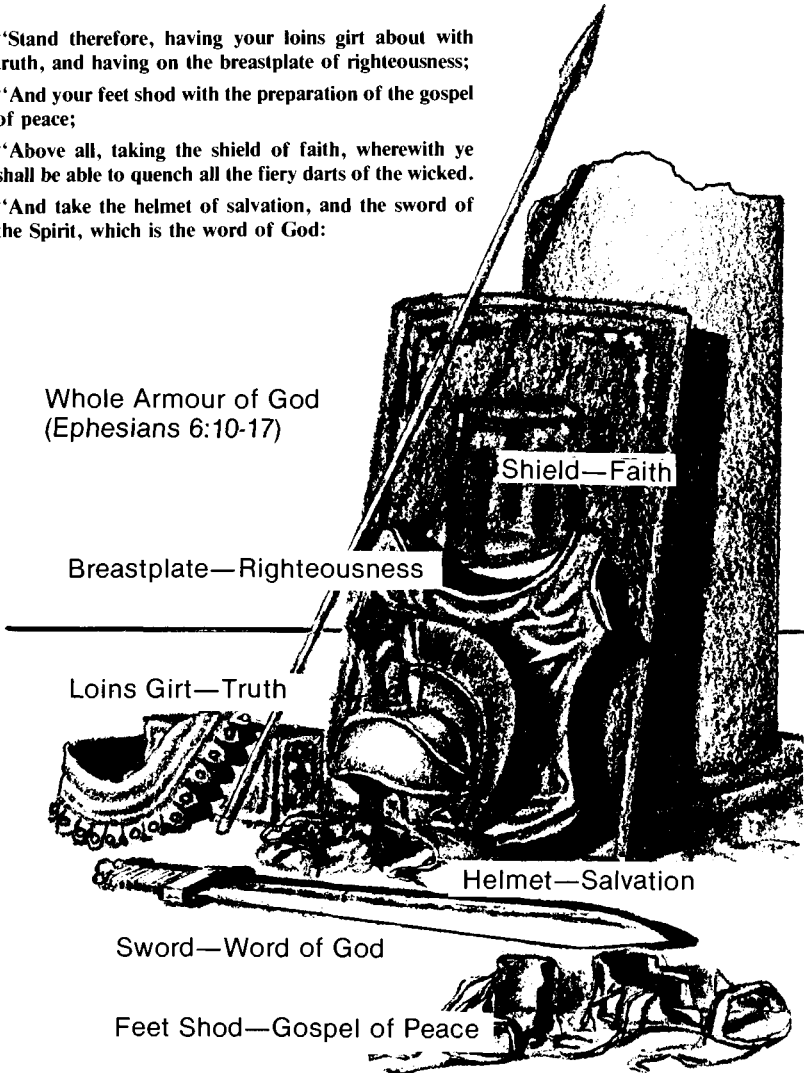
Reference	Disciples	Opponent	Opposition
Acts 18	Paul, Silas & Timothy	Corinthian synagogue (Jews) Greeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —blasphemed —“made insurrection with one accord” —taken before the judgment seat of Gallio —took Sosthenes (1 Cor. 1:1) chief ruler of the synagogue and beat him
Acts 19	Paul & travel companions Gaius & Aristarchus	Demetrius, an Ephesian silversmith, and fellow silversmiths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —whole city filled with confusion —“were caught” —“an uproar”
Acts 21	Paul	Asian Jews in Jerusalem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —stirred up all the people —laid hands on him —planned to kill him —beat him —bound him with two chains —a tumult —violence
Acts 23	Paul	Sanhedrin Council (of Jews) in Jerusalem Ananias the high priest Scribes Sadducees and Pharisees 40+ Jews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —accused by them —commanded those who stood by to smite him on the mouth —a great cry —a great dissension —Paul taken by force by the chief captain for fear he would have been torn to pieces —bound under a curse “to neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul”
Acts 24	Paul	Tertullus the Orator at Caesarea before Felix Felix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —verbally, accused Paul —“pestilent fellow” —“mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world” —“a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” —“profaned temple” —left Paul bound to show the Jews a pleasure
Acts 25	Paul	High priest and chief of the Jews from Jerusalem Festus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —unproven grievous complaints —lay in wait to kill him —“willing to show the Jews a pleasure”

A verse by verse analysis of Eph. 6:10-17

THE WARRIOR OF EPHESIANS 6

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Whole Armour of God
(Ephesians 6:10-17)



6:10 *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might”*

“*Finally*”—“For the rest”, Con. Ver.; Diaglott. The idea of “finally” is that, for the future, discipleship required what follows. The idea is not that what follows is more important than the preceding chapters and verses.

“*my brethren*”—These words are omitted in R.S.V.; Nestle.

“*be strong in the Lord*”—i.e., “in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (cf. 2 Tim. 2:1—“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”).

“Strong”, Gk: “endunamoó”, from “en” = in, and “dunamis” = power. “Be invigorated”, Con. Ver.; “empowered”, Nestle, in the “inner man”.

“*and in the power of his might*”—“Power”, Gk: “kratos”, “might”, Nestle; Diaglott. “Might”, Gk: “ischus”, “strength”, Nestle, Con. Ver.

It can be seen that three similar words are used: dunamis, kratos and ischus representing in English, power, might and strength. These describe the inner strength of a person. Cf. Eph. 1:19, “what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe according to the working of his great might . . .” (R.S.V.).

6:11 *“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”*

“*Put on*”—Gk: “enduo”, “to clothe” (Yg).

“*the whole armour*”—This is one word in the Greek text, “panoplia”, a complete coat of armour. “The whole armour of God” = the armour of light (Rom. 13:12-14). This is equivalent to “putting on the Lord Jesus”. The expression, “the whole armour of God” is repeated in verse 13.

“*that ye may be able to stand*”—i.e., unmoved. The tense of the verb is aorist = a decisive act, the effect of which continues.

The armour of God is certainly adequate against **all** enemies—i.e., “the evil day” of v.13.

“*against the wiles of the devil*”—“Wiles”, Gk: “methodeia”, “method, artifice, cunning, fraud” (Yg). “Devil”, Gk: “diabolos”—the accuser; it is defined in the next verse.

Note Eph. 4:14, “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the **sleight of men**, and **cunning craftiness**, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. . .”

6:12 *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”*

“*For we wrestle*”—Gk: “palé”, the idea is wrestling in hand-to-hand combat. “Contest”, Diaglott; “conflict”, Nestle.

“*not against flesh and blood*”—i.e., not merely mortal opponents as in a physical combat, but rather against evil beliefs (spiritual wickedness), superstitious fanaticism (as with the silversmith riot at Ephesus), and political manipulation (as with Felix and Festus).

See 2 Cor. 10:3-5, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds)."

"*but against principalities*"—Gk: "arché", "rulers", Nestle; "sovereignties", Con. Ver.; "governments", Diaglott.

"*against power*"—Gk: "exousia", "authorities", Nestle; Con. Ver.; Diaglott.

"*against the rulers*"—Gk: "kosmokratos" from "kosmos" = world and "kratéō" = to be strong, mighty. "World rulers", Nestle; Diaglott; R.S.V.; "world might", Con. Ver.

"*of the darkness of this world*"—"Darkness"—the ignorance of divine revelation (e.g., Eph. 4:17, 18, 'that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart'). This is in contrast to the disciple who has been delivered from the "power of darkness" (Col. 1:13).

"*against spiritual wickedness*"—Gk: "pneumatikos" = spiritual. "Wickedness", Gk: "poneria", "malignity, evil" (Yg).

"*in high places*"—Gk: "en tois epouraniois", "in the heavenlies", Diaglott; Nestle; "heavenly places", R.S.V. The phrase occurs in Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:6 and 3:10. The reference is to **humans** on earth, not immaterial powers of the universe. This is proven by the reference in Eph. 3:10, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church [ecclesia] the manifold wisdom of God".

If it is the responsibility of the ecclesia to make known the manifold wisdom of God to the principalities and powers in heavenly spheres, then clearly, these heavenlies are on earth, not in heaven, and involve human beings, not "spirits".

There are many examples of the wisdom of God being made known to the world rulers, steeped as they were in spiritual wickedness. The following are examples:

(i) Jesus to the Pharisees—Matt. 22:15-22; Matt. 23.

(ii) Peter to the Jews—Acts 3:26 cf. 3:17; Acts 4.

(iii) Paul—his commission—Acts 26:16-18; cf. Acts 9:15.

"Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel" (R.S.V.).

6:13 "*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand*"

"*Wherefore*"—Gk: "dia toutó", "therefore", Nestle; Con. Ver.; "on account of", Diaglott.

"*the whole armour*"—panoply, see v. 11.

"*that ye may be able to withstand*"—"Resist", Nestle. The idea is to hold one's ground.

"*in the evil day*"—Earlier, the Ephesians were instructed to "redeem the time because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16). The "evil day" probably has particular reference to the fiery darts of the wicked when persecution would arise through preaching the gospel.

“*and having done all*”—Gk: “katergazomi”, “all things having wrought”, Nestle; “having effected all”, Con. Ver.; “having achieved everything”, Diaglott.

“*to stand*”—Gk: “histémi”, “to set, place” (Yg); “stand your ground”, Weymouth. This exhortation, although very much needed, fell on deaf ears to many. Paul was later to write: “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom . . .” (2 Tim. 4:16-18).

6:14 “*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness*”

“*Stand therefore*”—Gk: “histémi”, the same word as in v.13. Note the emphasis on being steadfast—the word “stand” is repeated four times. A similar idea is expressed in the Corinthian epistle:

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye **steadfast, unmoveable**, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

The need to “stand” at Ephesus was particularly essential because of the ferocity of the opposition to the Truth.

Paul wrote:

“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. . . God delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. . .” (2 Cor. 1:8-10).

“*having your loins girt about with truth*”—The military belt served to keep the soldier’s clothing in place during rapid movement and combat. It also served to cover the place where the two parts of the breastplate joined.

Truth is the basic clothing of the disciple. Without it, one stands ill-clad and destitute before the Almighty. “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and **truth**” (John 4:24, R.S.V.).

Note the contrast:

TRUTH	FALSEHOOD
—“speaking the truth in love. . .” (Eph. 4:15)	—“Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practises falsehood” (Rev. 22:15, R.S.V.)
—“you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation . . .” (Eph. 1:13, R.S.V.)	—“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth. . . or maketh a lie. . .” (Rev. 21:27).
—“for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true” (Eph. 5:9, R.S.V.)	—“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thess. 2:11).

“having on the breastplate of righteousness”—The breastplate (Gk: ‘thorax’) protected the vital organs of the soldier. It was a cuirass or coat of mail. It was in two parts—the first from the neck to the stomach, and the second part from the waist to the knees.

The covering of the disciple is righteousness imputed by God through Christ. Paul spoke of his life in Christ as follows:

“And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the **righteousness from God that depends on faith**” (Phil. 3:9, R.S.V.).

He exhorted the Ephesians earlier in the letter:

“Put off your old nature [‘man’, A.V.] which belongs to your former manner of life. . .and put on the new nature [‘man’, A.V.] created after the likeness of God in **true righteousness** and holiness” (Eph. 4:22-24, R.S.V.).

Those who have made themselves ready for the Lamb will be finally:

“arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness [‘righteous deeds’, Nestle, R.S.V.; ‘righteous acts’, Diaglott; New Int. Ver.; N.A.S.V.] of saints” (Rev. 19:8).

6:15 *“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace”*

“feet shod—The usual footwear consisted of heavy sandals studded with hobnails to give a secure footing.

“the preparation—Gk: “etoimasia”, “readiness”, Nestle; Con. Ver. The preachers of the gospel should be willing and ready for the work of proclaiming the good news. An excellent example of the correct attitude is set out in Acts of the Apostles:

“When the members of the council heard these words [of Peter and the apostles] they were so furious that they wanted to kill them. . . They [members of the Jewish Council] had them beaten and after commanding them not to speak in the name of Jesus, they let them go. So the apostles went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin full of joy that they had been **considered worthy** to bear humiliation for the sake of the name. Then day after day in the Temple and in people’s houses they continued to teach unceasingly and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:33-42, Phillips).

The background to the Ephesians 6:15 passage is found in Isaiah 52:7:

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

This prophecy which relates to the Messiah is also applied to the believers:

“How shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things” (Rom. 10:14, 15).

6:16 *“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked”*

“Above all”—Gk: “epi pasin” = over all (not the most important, but as an overall covering).

“taking the shield of faith”—“Shield”, Gk: “thureos”, “a large, oblong shield” (Yg) which curved to cover almost the whole body (‘thureos’ is related to ‘thura’ the word for ‘door’). The shields were constructed of tough hide or wood ringed with brass and covered with oiled hide to provide a deflection surface for arrows.

“Faith”, Gk: “pistis” = firm persuasion. Faith is a most important attribute of a believer that enables him to accomplish extraordinary things. It is the dynamic force for good works; it can translate a future promise into a present reality.

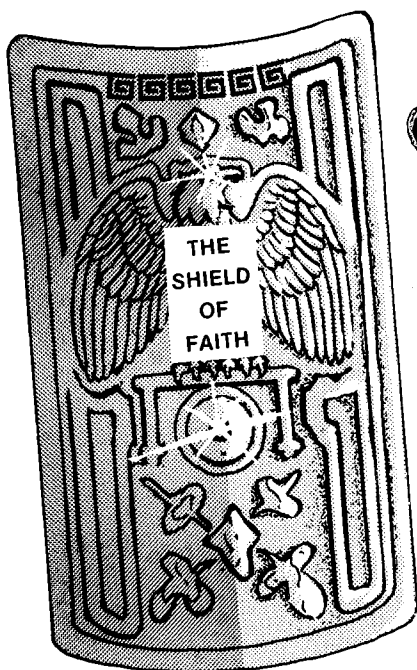
“to quench all the fiery darts”—“Quench”, Gk: “sbennumi”, “to extinguish”, Con. Ver.; Diaglott.

“Fiery darts”, Gk: “belos”, “a missile, dart, arrow” (Yg). These darts were fire arrows lit with tow and shot at the enemy. Sometimes they consisted of hammer heads filled with combustible matter which was ignited and thrown into the ranks of the opposing army.

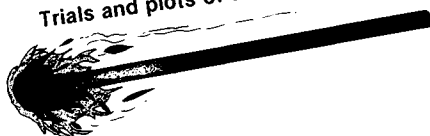
“of the wicked”—Gk: “ponéros”, “bad, malignant, miserable” (Yg). “The wicked one”, Diaglott; “the wicked [one]” italicized Con. Ver.; “the evil one”, R.S.V. It is the same word translated “**evil** day” in verse 13 and “**spiritual wickedness**” in verse 12. The ideas represented by the repetition of “ponéros” are connected. They have primary reference to the **adversaries** to the gospel.

The diagram which follows indicates some of the fire arrows shot at the Apostle Paul while at Ephesus:

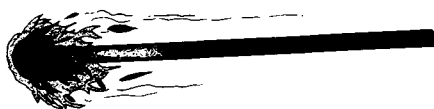
“NO WEAPON FASHIONED AGAINST YOU SHALL PROSPER”



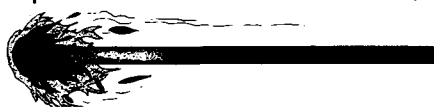
Trials and plots of the Jews (Acts 20:19)



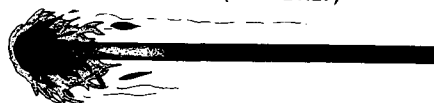
Fierce wolves not sparing the flock (Acts 20:29)



Ephesian silversmiths and theatre riot (Acts 19)



Asian Jews stirred up the Jerusalem crowds. Laid hands on Paul (Acts 21:27)



“YOU SHALL CONFUTE EVERY TONGUE THAT RISES AGAINST YOU” (Isa. 54:17, R.S.V.)

It is evident that Isaiah's prophecy was finding a fulfilment in the great work of preaching, accomplished only with great suffering:

—“no weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper”

—“you shall confute every tongue that rises against you”

(Isa. 54:17, R.S.V.).

Paul's words to the Corinthians provide an example of the character of the spiritual soldier of Christ:

“We are troubled on every side,
yet not distressed;

we are perplexed,
but not in despair;

Persecuted,
but not forsaken;

Cast down,
but not destroyed;

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body [‘mortal flesh’ R.S.V.]. . .

“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:8-10, 15-18).

6:17 “*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*”

“*the helmet of salvation*”—The head was protected against blows and arrows by a metal helmet.² Usually this has a metal ridge or crest. Likewise the disciple is protected from all the rigors and opposition to preaching by the hope of salvation (1 Thess. 5:8). Stress, disappointment, and wounded ambition, which provide death blows to mortals unenlightened in the gospel, are rendered powerless by the disciple who first seeks the kingdom of God.

Salvation, which is the object of hope for the spiritual warrior, forms the subject of his preaching—it is the gospel, “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16).

“*and the sword of the Spirit*”—“Sword”, Gk: “machaira”, “a knife, slaughter knife”, Bullinger. It was usually carried in the belt accompanied by a sword. The word “rhomphaia” is the usual word for a large sword.

“*the Spirit*” emphasises the divine origin of the Word. It is “living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword [machaira]” (Heb. 4:12, R.S.V.).

“*which is the word of God*”—“Word”, Gk: “rhéma”, “that which is spoken”, Bullinger; an utterance, declaration.

²See Psalm 140:7: “O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.” The context is appropriately the enemies of the Psalmist—the evil and violent men “which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart; continually are they gathered together *for* war . . . Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings” (vv. 1-4).

“The” is implied but is not present in the Greek text. Hence the Diaglott, “a word of God”; “a declaration of God”, Con. Ver.

The sword is the only offensive weapon of the soldier. It is intended for **close** hand-to-hand combat.

“The word of the Lord” is identified by Peter with the gospel:

“The word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is *preached unto you*” (1 Pet. 1:25).

The sword of the Spirit must be studied to be wielded effectively in the world of ideas.

“For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God. . .” (2 Cor. 10:3-5, R.S.V.).

WHAT THE WORD CAN DO:

- a) Agency of rebirth—James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23
- b) Able to save us—James 1:21; Acts 20:32
- c) The means of spiritual growth—1 Pet. 2:2
- d) Works effectually in believers—1 Thess. 2:13
- e) The sword of the spirit—Eph. 6:17
- f) Cleanses the ecclesia—Eph. 5:26
- g) The power for personal reform—Psa. 119:9; John 15:3
- h) The means to attain oneness with God and Christ—John 17:20,21
- i) It is “spirit and life”—John 6:63
- j) Sanctifies—John 17:17

QUENCHING THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED AT EPHESUS

1. TRIALS AND PLOTS OF THE JEWS (Acts 20:19, R.S.V.)

—Paul’s witness to the Jews consisted of “reasoning” (Acts 18:19).

—The initial Jewish response was favourable—“When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell. . .” (Acts 18:19-21).

—Apollos continued his bold witness in the synagogue (Acts 18:26).

—Paul returned to Ephesus and recommenced his synagogue preaching:

“And he went into the synagogue and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8).

³The word “reason” is “*dialogomai*” which means “to say thoroughly” (Yg); “argues”, Con. Ver.; “discoursed and argued”, Amplified Bible.

- The Jewish response, however, changed:
“But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus” (Acts 19:9).
- The Jewish exorcists were certain to be disaffected with the work of Paul and the brethren at Ephesus. Later, during the riot, the Jews no doubt exploited the silversmith agitation to their own advantage. This is indicated by the fact that they put forth a Jewish spokesman, Alexander (Acts 19:13-17, 29, 33-34).
- Despite the opposition, “both *Jews and Greeks*” (all they who dwelt in Asia) heard “the word of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:10).
- It was prophesied to Paul that “bonds and afflictions wait for me” (Acts 20:23, A.V. mg.). As the history unfolded, the bonds and afflictions were largely at the hands of the Jews.

2. ASIAN JEWS STIR UP THE JERUSALEM CROWDS.

- Paul arrived in Jerusalem for the Pentecost Feast (Acts 20:16). It was here that the Asian Jews “stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him” (Acts 21:27). They sought to kill Paul as “all Jerusalem was in an uproar” (Acts 21:31). Paul was rescued by the chief captain from the beating that he was receiving. He was then bound with two chains and carried to the castle. “And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people” (Acts 21:35).
- It is an amazing testimony to the soldier-like character of Paul that he rallied to deliver a stunning address to the multitudes (despite his suffering from the beating), (Acts 21:37-22:30)—after which, he was bound with thongs to be examined by scourging—illegally!
- Appearing before the Sanhedrin, he was smitten on the face (Acts 23:1-5).
- The plots of the Jews became intense: “for there lie in wait for him [Paul] of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him . . .” (Acts 23:21).

3. EPHESIAN SILVERSMITHS.

- The Ephesian silversmith, Demetrius, appears to have been accompanied by Alexander the coppersmith who did Paul “much evil”. Paul wrote:
“The Lord reward him according to his works: of whom be thou [Timothy] ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words [‘preachings’, A.V. mg.]” (2 Tim. 4:14-15).
- During the riot “the whole city was filled with confusion” (Acts 19:29). Paul’s travel companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, were taken.

4. FIERCE WOLVES, NOT SPARING THE FLOCK.

- Some of these “wolves” are referred to by name in Scripture:
- Hymenaeus and Philetus—their word ate “as doth a canker. . .who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. . .” (2 Tim. 2:17-18).
- “all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes” (2 Tim. 1:15).

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM THE SPIRITUAL WARRIOR?

1. GREATER ACTIVITY IN PUBLIC DEBATE.

The soldier has an offensive weapon—"the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God". Acts of the Apostles records how the believers in the first century engaged the most prominent religious and political leaders in the land. It was said of the disciples that "they had turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). Opportunities for public witness were certainly used by an earlier generation of Christadelphians, but the same cannot be said today. The preachers of Christendom continue to evangelize with newer errors, through the public media—over TV on a daily basis⁴ and often on prime time, and financed with multi-million dollar budgets⁵. Radio broadcasting is also used regularly and often with multi-station listings.⁶ Full page ads are placed in the most prestigious and expensive newspapers in the country.⁷ If Christadelphians with "loins girt with truth" do not sally forth to battle, who will?

The shouts of the Apostasy echo down through the valley unacknowledged and unanswered as if there were no Almighty God in heaven and no Israel of God on earth. Where are the young Davids armoured with light and defended with the shields of faith ready to run forth "to destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10:5, R.S.V.)?

"[The apostasy] is the system in whole and part against which Christadelphianism is the most active, indefatigable, efficient and formidable protest extant", The **Christadelphian**, Oct. 1, 1869, p. 287.

The growth of the Truth in Hamilton through vigorous public witness is something the less-inclined Christadelphian of today ought to reflectively reread:

"The real challenge to religious denominationalism came from . . . sects. It was sometime after the middle of the century, for instance, that the Christadelphians appear to have got their start in Canada. A division in the East Zorra 16th Line Baptist Church occurred in 1859 as a result of the spread of the teachings of this sect, and growth of Christadelphian influence was evident throughout the surrounding countryside. 'They took hold of many', an account of the history of the East Zorra church read, 'and wrought much evil in the neighbourhood generally, as well as among the different churches. Many public debates took place and the matter became widely spread and the party increased in numbers and influence for a time.'"⁸

⁴For example, "700 Huntley Street"—a born-again testimony show.

⁵Rex Humbard, Oral Roberts, among others. Advertisements for these programs are placed even in the local newspapers of small towns.

⁶Gospel Hall programs over "Back to the Bible" broadcasts from Winnipeg, Manitoba and Halifax, Nova Scotia; Richards' S.D.A. series on prophecy.

⁷Herbert Armstrong's series: "What's wrong with . . .?" currently running in the "Globe and Mail".

⁸McMaster University, Baptist Historical Collection, I. Beardsall, "History of the East Zorra 16th Line Baptist Church", manuscript, p. 10, quoted in S.D. Clarke, **Church and Sect in Canada**, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1965, p.357.

2. WHY THE TIMIDITY AND INACTIVITY IN PUBLIC WITNESSING?

a) Absorption of the existing religious climate:

(i) **“Just preach the positive message**—the errors will look after themselves”. While this is sometimes true, only a little experience with Scripture and witnessing will indicate how inadequate is this approach.⁹ The “positive only” method was popularized by Norman Vincent Peale in his book, “On Positive Thinking”. Since most preachers today are the products of the human relations courses, it is not surprising that the church leaders now emphasise “experiences” and “testimonies” and avoid reasoning out the Scriptures as did the Apostles. What is not often realised by Christadelphians is that the inactive public witness to the principalities, powers and rulers is currently due, in part, to a passivity absorbed from the Evangelical Movement.

(ii) **Argumentation and controversy are not in keeping with the true love of Christ**—Personal testimony is the current “in thing” as a mark of authenticity in religious circles. Argumentation about doctrine is deemed to be divisive and “counter-productive”, but is it? Re-read Acts 13-20. The **attitude** of the combatant is certainly important (2 Tim. 2:24) but reasoning, persuading and arguing are the very words which Scripture uses to describe the first century witness.¹⁰

b) Too much of the wrong kind of psychology

Nearly all careers in management, administration, education and medicine (to name only a few) require course work in psychology. Almost all the underpinnings for these courses are evolutionary in nature, thereby leaving out God, the nature of man, sin, and the revelation of God. The emphasis is invariably on consensus and compromise in problem-solving, and truth is always considered to be relative — there are not absolutes — one cannot know anything for certain.

There is always a danger that those with backgrounds in business and professions may attain positions of influence in ecclesias while retaining the undesirable components of their secular backgrounds. It is not difficult to perceive that a public posture which is visibly in conflict with the popular views of religious etiquette, might be regarded by such brethren as “psychologically unsound” if by psychology is meant what the world has to offer. In such an environment, the sword of the Spirit is unlikely to take the manifold wisdom of God to the principalities, rulers and powers.

3. HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT.

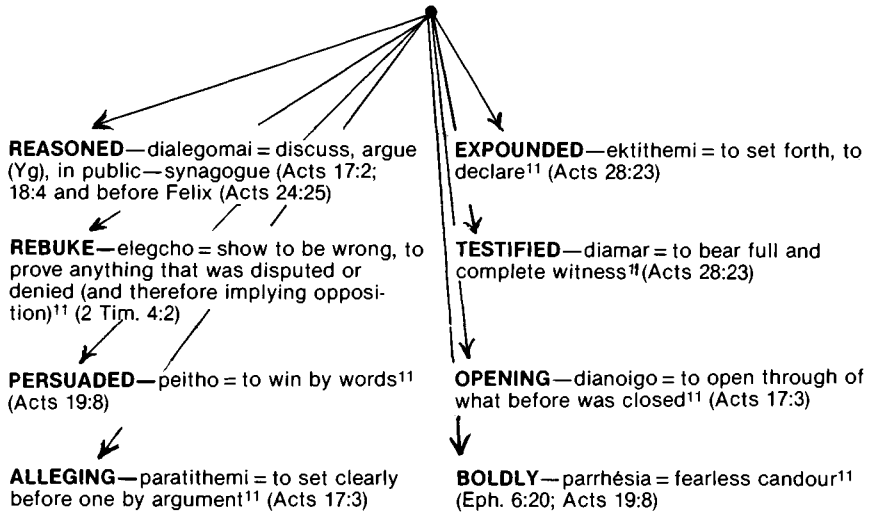
The short sword of the warrior is unlike a spear which can be thrown some distance at an enemy. Similarly, arrows can be shot to hit a target without a hand-to-hand encounter. However, the “machaira” of the spiritual soldier can only be used in close combat.

⁹Paul’s positive message at Athens was misunderstood about Jesus and the resurrection. The Athenians thought he taught two new gods (Acts 17). Similarly a person can agree that the earth will be the location of the Kingdom of God yet still hold the view of the rapture of believers to heaven at the end of the thousand years. The doctrines to be rejected are a necessary part of the Statement of Faith to preclude such inaccuracies in belief.

¹⁰Groups like the “Jehovah’s Witnesses” are trained in argumentation. See, for example, **Theocratic Aid to Kingdom Publishers** (1945), pp.201-219 and **Qualified to be Ministers** (1955), pp. 197-207.

THE PREACHING OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

The Apostle Paul was selected by God to extend the work of Jesus to the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6; Acts 13:47). Jesus was sent "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). A survey of the words used to describe the preaching of the Apostle Paul shows the **essential** component of reasoning and sets an example for us to follow:



The First Century Preaching: REASONING, ARGUING, PERSUADING

●

PAUL
argued, reasoned
"as was his custom"
(Acts 17, 18)

●

STEPHEN
debaters could not
withstand the wisdom
of his words (Acts 6)

●

PETER
Give an answer
of the reason of
your hope (1 Pet. 3)

●

APOLLOS
powerfully confuted
publicly (Acts 18)

●

JUDE
Earnestly contend
for the faith (v.3)

"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). "Contend", Gk: "epagónizomai", "epi" = "upon", "agon" = "a contest", "to contend as a combatant" (Bullinger).

¹¹E. W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance*, (London: Bagster, 1957).

THE WISDOM AND SPIRIT OF THE WORDS

Those who tried debating with Stephen found that they could not resist the **wisdom** and **spirit** of his words. This point should not be missed.

A preacher of the gospel is primarily a teacher: "The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kindly to everyone, **an apt teacher**, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth" (2 Tim. 2:24, 25, R.S.V.).

Debate, strife, wrangling and senseless controversies as an end in themselves are to be assiduously avoided by the disciple as works of the flesh. However, when the occasion arises and opportunities are provided, contention **for the faith** (not with one another) is an honour and a duty. It should always be foremost in our demeanour that "we have great treasure in earthenware vessels, to show that the transcendent power is of God, and not of us" (2 Cor. 4:7, R.S.V.). "It is by the open statement of the truth we [should] commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 4:2, R.S.V.).

Lectures which thunder from the platforms of ecclesial halls may not engage the adversaries if they choose not to fight on our territory. The effect of the "no show" is that the enemy may appear to be imaginary or even non-existent. The spiritual soldier must have his feet shod with the gospel of the preparation of peace and this may mean going into enemy territory. The shield of faith is more than adequate to do battle with the most seasoned opponents on the most difficult terrain. Jesus journeyed into Jerusalem, as did Paul, when they both knew that difficulties and arrest awaited them.

How many enemy troops have you engaged in the last week or month?

4. FULL-TIME MILITARY SERVICE?

There are many opportunities for full-time preaching work which are not given nearly enough serious consideration. A leave of absence from employment for a year is within reach of some. This time could be spent in the Caribbean where a second language is not required, or where ecclesias are already established in America. Many need help.

Young people can spend a summer studying difficult passages, marking Bibles, studying the gospels or epistles. Then, too, there are hundreds of towns and villages where a Christadelphian lecture has never been given and where the invitation to learn of the gospel has not yet been received from a knock on the door. When is the last time you spent a week on a vacation campaign to preach the Good News?¹²

When other religionists, without loins girt about with truth, can do all of these things, ought not those with loins girt about with truth be first and foremost in dedication?

5. RESPECTABILITY—A SECT OR A DENOMINATION?

The first century faith was described as a "sect. . . everywhere spoken against" (Acts 28:22). This description was in contrast to the established groups within Judaism such as the Pharisees and the Sadducees. When a religious group becomes "respectable" it has merged with the wider religious

¹²A yearly campaign is held in St. John's, Newfoundland.

world. There is almost no religious group founded at the time of the Christadelphians (1865) which is not now regarded as a denomination. This transition can be shown for example in the Mormons. Once persecuted and poisoned in America, the Mormons responded by adapting their teachings to what was acceptable (e.g. the renunciation of polygamy). Today the Mormon Tabernacle Choir is world famous, and being a Mormon is not an insurmountable obstacle to political prominence. Mormon temples are very elaborate and a source of tourist attraction throughout the world.

The Jehovah's Witnesses provide a better known example of the same trend. They were established about the same time as the Christadelphians and frequently engaged us in public discussions. But through the deliberate attempts of the Watchtower (in changing doctrines) and in minimizing differences with the churches, they have come to be regarded as a respectable "church".¹³

It remains to be seen whether or not the challenge of the Holy Spirit movement will effect a common denominator through which our own community will rescind its distinctive beliefs and move into the fold of the churches. Like the silting of the Ephesian harbour, the movement from a sect to a denomination is gradual, and for our community, just as fatal. Ephesus sank into a mucky bog surrounded with stagnant water. If the sword of the Spirit is not faithfully wielded in the high places of Christendom, then our demise may be as complete as was that of Ephesus.

6. ENTANGLED WITH THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE.

It requires perspective and godly wisdom to prevent careers, jobs, hobbies, the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches from crowding out the higher demands of our Master.

Every baptised brother ought to set as his goal, to spend one evening in the week for the instruction of interested friends. The very purpose of the armour of light is to dispel darkness in the world of ideas. Earlier brethren in this country travelled hundreds of miles on horseback, journeyed in uncertain conveyances and on foot to establish ecclesias. It seems incongruous when third-generation Christadelphians, today, find life too busy to travel a few hundred miles to look up interested friends. Especially when this is done in a comfortable car suitably equipped with radio (maybe even a stereo) and an array of power devices.

Sometimes little things in the truth are stepping stones to something "bigger". For example, open-air preaching in parks has often been regarded as having little value because of the large expenditures of time (for apparently little returns) and the difficult nature of the work with so many hecklers. Yet the experience in "the days of small things" has provided invaluable experience for the later work of radio talk shows, television tapes and newspaper editorials. If the training ground had not been used, later opportunities for service may never have arisen.¹⁴

¹³At one time they vigorously opposed the clergy and this is still done to a lesser extent, yet their literature is presented as "Christian"; "non-sectarian" and "non-denominational". Similarly by the distribution of Bibles and "Christian education" they may be viewed by the unwary as simply a "Christian Denomination".

¹⁴In the Great Lakes TV effort, 1978, every Christadelphian who worked on the 27 tape series had prior experience in open-air speaking!

There is considerable scope for developing the capabilities of the soldier. As a teenager, first principles and wrested scriptures should be given priority. By the time secondary schooling is complete, a marked Bible on **all** first principles and difficult passages should be completed. By using “Christmas” holidays, “March Break” and summer vacations this can easily be accomplished. Attending youth circles, youth weekends and ecclesial functions, important as they are, do not provide a substitute for personal, individualized Bible study.

Never miss an opportunity to discuss the Truth with people of other religious faiths like the J.W.’s, Mormons (the ones who come to the door) or Evangelicals. The Truth has nothing to fear from such continual cross-examination. It is simply untrue that these engagements are a “waste of time”. If they are ineffective to the “pulling down of strongholds”, they sharpen the sword of the wielder. For those who regard such as a waste of time, it will probably be determined that the newspaper will still be read and an hour or two of television watched at night. Meanwhile an opportunity to witness has been missed. Such an attitude is unbecoming to the spiritual soldier on active duty whose feet are prepared with the gospel of peace.

Ephesus: Unremitting Toil and Patient Endurance — Not Enough!



“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

CHAPTER 5

UNREMITTING TOIL AND PATIENT ENDURANCE—NOT ENOUGH

THE MESSAGE OF JESUS TO THE EPHESIAN ECCLESIA (Revelation 2).

After receiving the epistle of Paul about A.D. 61, the Ephesian ecclesia received another inspired communication about A.D. 96, this time from Jesus through John on the Lake of Patmos in the Aegean Sea (Rev. 1:1-9).

2:1 “*Unto the angel of the ecclesia of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*”

“*the angel*”—Gk: “angelos” can be used either for a divine messenger or a human one (e.g. the messengers of John—Lk. 7:24, 27 and the messengers of Jesus—Lk. 9:52). Ultimately the elders or the “presbuteroi” in Ephesus were held responsible (cf. Acts 20:17) for the spiritual progress of the ecclesia. They were appointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) and are explicitly charged by Paul to take heed to themselves and to the flock—to feed the sheep.

Leadership always carries great responsibility—“to whom much is given, much is required” (Luke 12:48).

“*Ephesus*”—The bright star of Asia Minor and the closest ecclesia to John on the Isle of Patmos. Ephesus was also the ecclesia from where the truth of the gospel spread to other centres (Acts 19:10). It was fitting that Ephesus receive consideration **first**.

“*he that holdeth*”—Jesus himself, greatly concerned for the welfare of the sheep for whom he gave his life.

“*the seven stars*”—see Rev. 1:16, 20. The seven stars are the **angels** of the seven ecclesias. The “angels” probably represent the elders of the seven ecclesias of Asia Minor.

“*in his right hand*”—the right hand is a general symbol of acceptance and position:

- **acceptance**— The sheep are on the **right** hand, the goats on the left (Matt. 25:33, 34, 41).
- **authority**— Jesus is on the **right** hand of the Father (Matt. 22:44; 26:64; Acts 5:31)
- **fellowship**— This was extended with the **right** hand (Gal. 2:9).

“*walketh*”—“walking”, Nestle; Con. Ver.; Diaglott; “walks”, R.S.V. The idea here is that he walks now just as he was walking in 96 A.D. The Old Testament background to this allusion is that of God walking in the midst of the camp of Israel:

“Because the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp . . . therefore your camp must be holy, that he may not see anything indecent among you, and turn away from you” (Deut. 23:14, R.S.V.; cf. Lev. 26:12; 2 Cor. 6:16).

“*candlesticks*”—Gk: “luchnia”, “lampstand” (Yg). These were representative of the ecclesias (Rev. 1:20).

The symbol conveys the idea of imparting light which is the very purpose of an ecclesia:

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye **light** in the Lord: walk as children of **light**” (Eph. 5:8).

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in **light**” (Col. 1:12).

2:2 *“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars”*

“*I know*—Gk: “oida”. Jesus had intimate knowledge of every aspect of their discipleship just as he does ours.

“*thy works*—Gk: “ergon”, “industry and activities”, Amplified Bible; “acts”, Con. Ver.

“*labour*”—Gk: “kopiaó”, “to labour, be wearied out” (Yg); “laborious toil”, Amplified Bible; “toil”, Con. Ver.

This is the very word which Paul used when he instructed the elders at Ephesus:

“. . .so **labouring** [Gk: ‘kopiaó’] 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” (Acts 20:35).

“*patience*”—Gk: “hupomoné”, “endurance, continuance” (Yg); “patient endurance”, Diaglott.

These are indeed wonderful characteristics in an ecclesia, but they are incomplete if the first love is deficient. (See v.4).

“*thou canst not bear them which are evil*”—Their intolerance of wicked men was commendable in the sight of the Lord. A disciple must not only love righteousness, he must **hate** evil. In an age of ecumenism, compromise and human relations psychology, an intolerant spirit toward “evil men” is not often appreciated. Christadelphians must be careful to maintain this intolerance.

It was prophetically revealed that the Messiah would “**love** righteousness, and **hate** iniquity” (Heb. 1:9), similarly his disciples have been instructed: “Let love be genuine, hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good” (Rom. 12:9, R.S.V.).

“*and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars*” — Although not revealed in Acts of the Apostles, false apostles evidently tried to make their presence felt at Ephesus as they did at Corinth (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

Although Paul died without knowing that Jesus commended the Ephesian ecclesia for its opposition to these errorists, it would no doubt have been a cause of great thanksgiving on his part to realise that for 40 years the ecclesia could not be faulted in doctrine.

Paul knew “wolves” would arise in the ecclesia (Acts 20:29, 30). He sent Timothy with an explicit charge “that they teach no other doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:3), and Paul personally warned them ceaselessly, for three years warning “every one night and day with tears”. The trial of these wolves could only be the test of Scripture, since it was to Scripture that Paul commended the eldership:

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

2:3 *“And hast borne, and hast patience [Gk: ‘hupomoné’] and for my name’s sake hast laboured [Gk: ‘kopiaó’] and hast not fainted”*

“*borne*”—Gk: “bastazó”, “to take up, carry” (Yg). The same word is used in the parable of the penny for those “which have borne the burden and heat of the day” (Matt. 20:21).

“*for my name’s sake*”—The name of Jesus is “Yahweh shall save”, for “he shall save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). This was the only name “given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The early disciples were to be witnesses of Jesus (Acts 1:8), and to perform miracles in his name (e.g., Acts 3:6, 16). It was the great significance of the **name** which sustained the Ephesians in their discipleship.

“*fainted*”—Gk: “kamnó”, “to toil, work out, weary” (Yg); “not grown weary”, Nestle; R.S.V. The Ephesians had toiled unto weariness without wearying of their toil. This was in itself commendable for as Paul wrote:

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not ” (Gal. 6:9).

2:4 *“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love”*

“Somewhat” gives the impression of a small inadequacy, but the loss of the ecclesia’s first love was not a small matter. “Somewhat” is not in the original manuscripts. The R.S.V. reads, “But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.”

“*left*”—Gk: “aphiémi”, “to send away, let go” (Yg); “abandoned”, R.S.V.; “relaxed”, Diaglott.

“*first love*”—An unusual expression which appears to relate to the initial enthusiasm with which the truth was first received at Ephesus. (See Jer. 2:2; Hos. 2:14). Agapé love is the underpinning of all discipleship; without it everything else is diminished (1 Cor. 13).

2:5 *“Remember therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent”*

This severe admonishment comes as a great surprise to the reader. The ecclesia which appeared to have received considerable commendation is now severely reproved.

Presumably human judgment would rate the Ephesian ecclesia as highly spiritual if vv. 4-5 had not been written. However, the discerning judgment of Jesus made manifest weaknesses as well as strengths. Jesus bears the title of the “Word of God” (Rev. 19:13). This title carried with it the significance of the Word of God, viz.:

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:12, 13).

“do the first works”—Indicates the practical nature of the change required. It was not merely a change of heart, a “feeling” or emotion—it was more than this. It was a repentance, **change of mind**, which produced works as its outworking.

The light of Ephesus was extinguished. It later became a centre for the worship of Mary as “mother of God”, supplanting the pagan worship of Artemis. Today it is predominantly Muslim under Turkish rule.

2:6 **“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate”**

The identity of the Nicolaitans is not known with certainty. They were obviously wicked to receive the mention they do here.

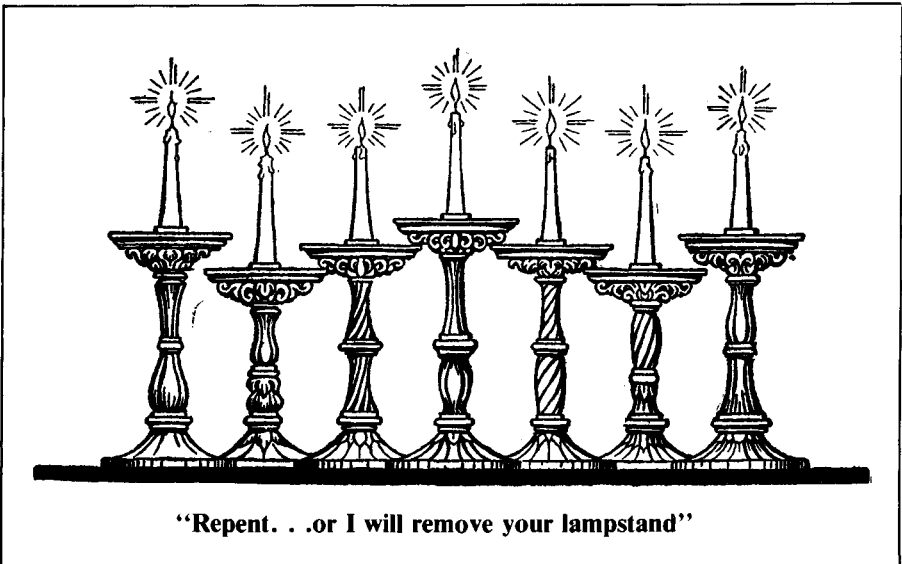
2:7 **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God”**

“He that hath an ear”—This expression is repeated seven times after the spiritual scrutiny of each ecclesia. It is an appeal to the reader to hear not a human assessment, but rather a **divine** assessment—what “the Spirit says”.

“that overcometh”—“Conquers”, R.S.V. The believer is not called to be a quitter, but rather a soldier—a warrior who overcomes and vanquishes the opposition of sin to the work of Christ (cf. Eph. 6).

“tree of life”—What was literal in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9) is here symbolic of eternal life.

“which is in the midst of the paradise of God”—Immortality will be granted to those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for it. To such will be given to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God (i.e., the kingdom of God—cf. Luke 23:42, 43; 2 Cor. 12:4).



WHAT WAS THE “FIRST LOVE”?

In Jesus’ message to Ephesus, the ecclesia is both commended and reproved as follows:

REPROVED	COMMENDED
—lost first love	—works
—had fallen, therefore, must return, repent, do the first works	—labour, Gk: “kopos” = “toil”, R.S.V. unremitting toil for the sake of Christ (2:2)
	—patience, Gk: “hopomoné” = “patient endurance”, R.S.V. (2:2, 3)
	—cannot bear (tolerate) false apostles
	—hated the “deeds” of the Nicolaitans

If the Ephesian ecclesia was doctrinally sound and commended for works and endurance, how can it be said to have “lost its first love”? The answer to this question is not as obvious as it may appear. The passage in Revelation does not provide a commentary on the expression, nor are there clear clues in the Ephesian epistle. What follows is a suggested explanation.

There is an Old Testament passage in Jer. 2:2 which provides a verbal similarity:

“. . . Thus saith the LORD, I remember thee [Israel], the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals [‘your love as a bride’, R.S.V.] when thou wentest after me.”

An ecclesia, correct in doctrine, exemplary in works (especially in the performance of duty), and patient in adversity can still be deficient in love. Divine love goes beyond the call of duty, enabling the disciple to accomplish extraordinary things. It is characterised by an enthusiasm that does not calculate the cost or expenditure of effort. A lover may drive a hundred miles to see his girlfriend, but find a two block walk to the local store an onerous chore once he has been married for several years. Divine love is not only slow to lose patience and knows no end to its endurance, but has no fading of its trust (1 Cor. 13:4-7). Works are greatly diminished apart from the superintending influence of love:

“If I dispose of all that I possess, yes even if I give my own body to be burned, but have no love, I achieve precisely nothing” (1 Cor. 13:3, Phillips’).

The importance of love in the life of the disciple was set out for the Ephesians in Paul’s epistle:

4:1, 2	“walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love ”.
3:17-19	“may <i>Christ</i> dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love . . . and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”
4:15	“speaking [‘ <i>holding to</i> ’ or ‘ <i>walking in</i> ’, N.A.S.V. <i>mg.</i>] the truth in love , may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, <i>even Christ</i> ”.
5:25	“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the ecclesia. . . nourishes and cherishes it [<i>verse 29</i>] . . . and gave himself for it.”
4:16	“the <i>Christ body</i> . . . edifying itself in love .”
6:24	“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity [‘ <i>incorruptible</i> ’, N.A.S.V.; ‘ <i>love undying</i> ’, R.S.V.; <i>New Int. Translation</i>].

There is a labour of **love** and work of faith and steadfastness of hope (1 Thess. 1:3, R.S.V.). These are characteristic of the first love, from which the Ephesians had evidently fallen.

ONESHIPHORUS—A FIRST LOVE REMEMBERED.

Onesiphorus ('bring profit', Yg.) was a member of the Ephesian ecclesia who receives a high commendation from the apostle Paul when he writes his second epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:16-19):

—he **often** refreshed Paul

—he was not ashamed of Paul's chain (he was imprisoned in Rome) as others were

—he sought Paul out diligently when in Rome when others were afraid

—his ministrations to the apostle Paul while in Ephesus were known to Timothy.

The words of Jesus are appropriate to the work of Onesiphorus:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

Paul's request indicates his high esteem for this wonderful brother from Ephesus!

"The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. . ." (2 Tim. 1:18).

ORGANIZATIONAL HARD WORK: "THE JEHOVAH WITNESSES"

—an example of what to avoid.

The Jehovah's Witnesses provides an example of what organization and works can accomplish.

Using tried and proven techniques carefully rehearsed and then practised, the Jehovah's Witness movement provides an example of the way converts can be made. It is the **basis** on which converts are made which is all important. A religious success story with remarkable convert rates is, in itself, productive of a bandwagon effect. In our own community, demands on adequate instruction make the bandwagon effect less likely. What is a concern is that unremitting toil and patient endurance can be accomplished apart from *agapé* (love). Organizational structures, especially in preaching, must not replace individual obligation, nor should the quest for expositional soundness be relinquished to others. The Jehovah's Witness movement provides a tragic example of what happens when it is left to an organization. For a Christadelphian, the question is not whether or not truths of the gospel have been correctly understood and believed, but whether or not unremitting toil and patient endurance are working together with love. The truth must work with love to merit the commendation of the Master.

ORGANIZATION WORKS OF THE "JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES"

The "works" of the Roman Catholic Church with its 950 million members, extensive real estate holdings, and financial investments are well known. However, while the Jehovah's Witnesses' accomplishments are less well known, they demonstrate what a sect which becomes a denomination can achieve by organization and effort:

1. **Considerable growth**—there are an estimated 10 million Jehovah's Witnesses in the world in 207 countries.
2. **Publications:**
 - 35 million copies of "Watchtower" each month (and in 79 languages).
 - The "Truth Book"—"The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life" is said by J.W.'s to be second in circulation in the Western world only to the Bible as the most widely read book.¹

¹This book was first published in 1968 and had a printing of "74 million copies in 91 languages, about three times as many as the next all-time best-selling book in the Western world, aside from the Bible." *Awake—Jan. 8, 1975, p.13.*

— The Society owns 32 printing plants—one is an 8-storey factory in Brooklyn.

3. **The Watchtower Society:**

— trains congregational servants or overseers with a special one month training course.

— decides the name and numbers of all bank accounts—even of J.W. congregations in other lands, through an overseer appointed by the organization.

— decides if another J.W. congregation is to be established.²

— controls all literature, especially “The Watchtower”—the principal magazine.

— “requested” that the translators of the “New World Translation” would be bound to silence until death to preserve the anonymity of the translators.³

— engaged in lawsuits (contrary to Scripture). In the miracle wheat scandal, Russell sued the Brooklyn “Daily Eagle” for \$100,000 and lost.⁴ Many successful lawsuits have been brought to the Supreme Court especially under Hayden Covington, the former legal counsel of the Watchtower.

— reinforces what it does through self-commendation, e.g., the “unselfish” spread of “true knowledge” by word of mouth and the printed page.

4. Pioneer Jehovah’s Witnesses are required to spend 3 hours and 20 minutes each day, or 1200 hours in a year in J.W. preaching.

5. Ordinary, unpaid Jehovah’s Witnesses, called “publishers” or “ministers”, are “urged” to place 100 magazines each month, make 35 back calls to those who have “appreciated” the sermons at the doors, and conduct 7 home Bible studies each month (10 hours a month).⁵

Christadelphians can easily become outdated in J.W. teaching. Many changes have taken place in their organizational expansion and belief. Details of history relating to Russell and Rutherford are not even known by most J.W.’s, so Christadelphians relying solely on dated literature may find themselves spending too much time telling J.W.’s what they are supposed to believe.

WHY CONSIDER THE JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES?

1. If J.W.’s follow the organizational plan of the Society, a J.W. will visit a home 2-3 times a year, and at different times, in the hope of finding others at home besides the husband.⁶ In a 40 year period, 120 calls may be made to the door of a Christadelphian. The J.W. may be the only contact some Christadelphians meet.

2. The J.W. provides an illustration of a religious sect which was once despised, but is now regarded as socially acceptable, even to some representatives of Christendom. The transition from a sect to a denomination is reflected in the

²Originally J.W.’s elected elders. However, under Rutherford democratic rule was replaced, a “cleansing” took place (according to Watchtower publications) and a theocratic organization set up controlled by the Society. See *Jehovah’s Witness in the Divine Purpose*, (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Dec. 1959), pp.148, 149.

³*Ibid.*, p.258.

⁴Edmond Grass, *Apostles of Denial*, (Newhall, California; 1976), p.29.

⁵*Your Word is a Lamp to My Foot*, (Brooklyn: Watchtower and Bible Tract Society of New York, 1967), p.61, 194.

⁶Hence the need for sisters to be knowledgeable in these matters.

“kingdom halls” which have replaced rented halls and homes. It is also reflected in **many** changes in teaching.

3. Major shifts in doctrinal emphasis have taken place. At least three of these are apparent:
 - a) The Ransom Sacrifice for All—very popular at the time of Bro. C. C. Walker—against which he contended;
 - b) The Vindication of Jehovah’s Name: Universal Sovereignty—Jehovah versus Satan (but generally more time spent on Satan);⁷
 - c) The Organization—the idea now stressed is the “theocratic organization”,⁸ although few J.W.’s understand the actual organization of the Society.
4. The J.W.’s provide an impressive illustration of what to avoid in our own community!

ORGANIZATION—A STRIKING SIMILARITY.

The J.W. organization appears totalitarian,⁹ with complete control over the members, similar to the organization of the Roman Catholic Church. Power in the organization is concentrated in the president (the Pope in the R.C. faith). Like the Roman Catholic Church, financial records are not open to the public, although the Society has considerable assets.

Consider the following striking similarities:

<p>1. GOD’S REPRESENTATIVE ON EARTH “[The Pope in Rome] is the only one authorised to act and teach for God.”¹⁰</p>	<p>The Society “is the visible representative of the Lord on earth.”¹¹ “But when the history of the Church of Christ is fully written, it will be found that the place next to St. Paul will be occupied by Charles Taze Russell.”¹²</p>
<p>2. THE POSITION OF THE ORGANISATION “The Catholic Church is the only organization authorised by God to teach religious truth.”¹³</p>	<p>The Society—through its governing body is “under the direct supervision of Christ Jesus at the Temple.”¹⁴ “Something else that they [contacts] need to be taught, a little at a time, is appreciation for Jehovah’s organization . . . there may be times when you discuss something about the organization before you study.”¹⁵</p>

⁷See **Your Word is a Lamp to My Foot**, (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1967), p. 210; also **Then is Finished the Mystery of God**, (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1969), p.108.

⁸**Let God Be True**, (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1946), pp. 215, 226, 232. See also p.200: “This clearly shows that the Master would use **one** organization, and not a multitude of diverse and conflicting sects, to distribute his message.”

⁹It is also self-perpetuating as new converts are re-indoctrinated by the Organization as they teach new converts by reading and studying the Society’s publications instead of the Bible.

¹⁰Radio Broadcast to America, quoted in Boettner, **Roman Catholicism**, (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), p.480.

¹¹“Watchtower”, 1938, p.182 quoted in Watchtower, 76:333, June 1, 1955.

¹²Charles Taze Russell, **Pastor Russell’s Sermons**, (Brooklyn: International Bible Students’ Association, 1917), p.3.

	<p>"...with some persons it is necessary to use just their Bible for several weeks to win their confidence before you direct their attention to the study aids provided by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. Others readily accept the use of the Society's publications along with the Bible."¹⁶</p>
<p>3. EMPLOYMENT OF SCRIPTURE TO JUSTIFY THE ORGANIZATION. Matt. 16:18—"Thou art Peter and upon this rock will I build my church". This passage is regarded as giving authority to all the popes in Rome.</p>	<p>Russell (the organization's founder) was regarded as the faithful servant who rendered "meat in due season" (Matt. 24:45, 46).¹⁷ The ransom sacrifice for all was identified with "the meat". In recent times, the Society or Organization is regarded as the "faithful and discreet slave" (N.W.T.).¹⁸</p>
<p>4. BOTH CLAIM THE HOLY SPIRIT OPERATES THROUGH THE ORGANIZATION. "The Spirit of Truth...shall abide with you, and shall be in you'...Christ assures the infant Church of the abiding presence of the Spirit of Truth guiding her on her teaching mission."¹⁹</p>	<p>"...The appointment is made under the direction of the spirit-anointed 'faithful and discreet slave' class."²⁰</p>
<p>5. "GOD" USED TO SANCTION ACTIVITIES OF ORGANIZATION. "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world'...the expression signifies that special divine assistance will be given to guarantee the success of the mission assigned."²¹</p>	<p>"The 'Watchtower' study servant leads the congregation in its weekly study of the Watchtower magazine, which is the principal publication of the 'faithful and discreet slave' class (Matt. 24:45-47). He has the assignment of helping everyone in the congregation to get full benefit from this spiritual provision that Jehovah has made for his people."²²</p>

Just as Papal authority over the Catholic Church resulted in division, similarly with the J.W.'s split. This occurred when Rutherford succeeded Russell, and power and authority were vested in the former. Four influential J.W.'s were ousted by Rutherford when they attempted to have the whole Board of Directors run the Society. One break-away group was called the "Dawn Bible Students", but dubbed the "evil slave class" by the Organization.²³

¹³Boettner, p.501.

¹⁴The "Watchtower", 76:333, June 1, 1955.

¹⁵Your Word is a Lamp to My Foot (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1967), p.97.

¹⁶Ibid., p.94.

¹⁷The Finished Mystery, quoted in **Apostles of Denial**, p.57.

¹⁸See also **Theocratic Aid to Kingdom Publishers**, (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1945), p.9; "None can afford to miss his weekly spiritual meal at the Watchtower Study", *ibid.*, p.182. See also **Then is Finished the Mystery of God**, p.112.

¹⁹John A. O'Brien, **The Faith of Millions**, (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc. 1963), p.116.

²⁰Your Word is a Lamp to My Foot, p.123.

²¹The Faith of Millions, p.115.

²²Your Word is a Lamp to My Foot, p.143.

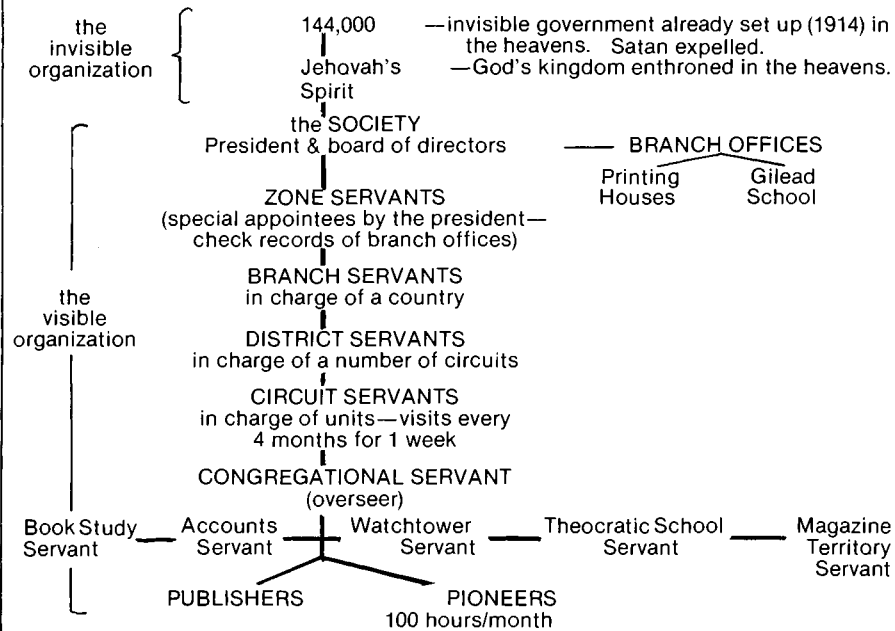
ORGANIZATIONAL “WORKS” OR A “FIRST LOVE”?

Whenever people meet for a purpose, some organization is required. The time of starting and finishing, who does what and when, are all decisions to be made if any progress is to be achieved. However, as a community of people expands in number (ours is thought to be about 3500 in North America) and the longer it lasts, organization tends to become more apparent and more intrusive. Cautions in this regard are very much in order as can be seen from the hierarchy which developed with the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A JEHOVAH’S WITNESS

1. PUBLIC MEETING
2. WATCHTOWER STUDY
“the weekly study of the ‘Watchtower’ is the most important meeting in the congregation.”
3. SERVICE MEETING
—study methods for “Field Ministry”
4. THEOCRATIC MINISTRY SCHOOL
—mutual improvement class—committee offers critical advice
5. CONGREGATIONAL BOOK STUDY
—study of a Society book
6. CIRCUIT, DISTRICT, NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLIES
—3 day circuit assemblies twice a year
—district assemblies one a year
(baptisms usually take place at these times).

THE ORGANIZATION



²³See *Apostles of Denial*, pp.54,55.

THE CONGREGATIONAL REPORT

1. No. of meetings held (including funerals).
2. No. of baptisms and “re-baptisms”(?).
3. Attendance figures at all meetings (sent to the Society through the ‘circuit servant’).
4. Totals of all Publishers’ Record Cards sent to the Society by 5th of the month.
5. The Society publishes data in “Kingdom Ministry”.
6. “Yearbook of Jehovah’s Witnesses” reports yearly.

THE PUBLISHER’S RECORD CARD

How is it used?

1. All cards kept by the “committee” to review progress in field service.
2. Filled cards are kept in a permanent file for 8 years.
3. Cards are filed in 3 sections:
 - ORDAINED MINISTERS (those dedicated and baptised)
 - TRAINEES (those dedicated and not baptised)
 - PIONEERS (regular and special, e.g., vacation).

THE WEEKLY REPORTS

on Society “Report Slips”

1. BOOKS
2. BOOKLETS
3. New “WATCHTOWER” & “AWAKE” SUBSCRIPTIONS
4. Individual magazines
5. Hours in field service
 - calculated from time of 1st call to last call
 - letter written
 - home study of children
6. BACK CALLS
 - returns to those “appreciating” sermon at door by taking literature
 - a letter written
 - a telephone call
 - an invitation to a Society meeting
7. BIBLE STUDY REPORT
 - after class meets 3 times
 - reported monthly
 - attendance figures

CHRISTADELPHIANS: ADMINISTRATORS OR BIBLE STUDENTS?

a) Organization ties up valuable time which is needed for Bible Study, adequate preparation of addresses, writing articles, witnessing and family demands. Some of the most enthusiastic students of Scripture can become enmeshed in organizational activities if forethought is not taken. This pattern is very much evident within Christendom in general. It is estimated that 40% of all time spent by ministers is spent in administration.²⁴ The typical clergyman is a skilled manager-politician, but is he (she?) a Bible student?

b) As an organization develops, so works sometimes appear more impressive. As bigger and better things are done, this in turn serves to legitimize the organization. It is also a significant element in the transition from a sect to a denomination. This fact is demonstrated in the J.W.'s organization which now mirrors the Roman Catholic organization. Works, however, are not in themselves a proof that God is with a religious community. When the disciples commented with admiration on the goodly stones of the temple, Jesus said, "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Mark 13:1, 2). A disciple must look deeper than works. The "first love" of which Jesus spoke, is more than accomplishments, however great these might be.

LEAVE IT TO THE ORGANIZATION?

As an organization develops, there is a tendency to leave the decision-making to the established bureaucracy. A Jehovah's Witness has an implicit faith that the organization has the answer to Biblical problems (an attitude carefully cultured by the organization)—one has just to find the right publication of the Society. But this is not "reasoning out of the Scriptures", nor is it "receiving the word with all readiness of mind" (Acts 17:11). It is rather, fossilized religion vested in leadership. It may be respectfully suggested that an ordinary Jehovah's Witness is only a small cog in a big wheel—a blind follower of blind leaders. Only private, individual, and deeply-personal Bible study can prevent such an occurrence in our own community.

It is very easy to "let the organization do it". For example, let the Continental Reunion Committee look after reunion matters, A.S.K. after preaching, the P.C.B.M. after preaching in foreign lands, the Television Committee after contacts, the A.B. after sick visiting, the Bible School Committee after Bible Schools and the Sunday School teachers after Sunday School. There is a committee for everything! What's left to do, except show up Sunday morning and the occasional lecture? The organization has looked after everything! In our community, the organization is you and I. There is no hierarchy. Our mutual head is Christ; we all are brethren. There is no more place for pew sitters than for mere organizational experts. There is great scope for imaginative and creative activity in a host of different enterprises. These require individual application. There are new fields beckoning in the use of computer technology, lecture-seminar presentations, booklets to be written and Bible School curricula to be developed. In other words, the enthusiastic spirit of the "first love" must never be replaced by a works-oriented approach which serves only to perpetuate the organizational structure.

The history of Ephesus is instructive. Jesus said, "Repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy lampstand out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:5). The pagan city which venerated the goddess Diana or Artemis was later in 431 A.D. to host a convention of 200 bishops which decided that the Virgin Mary would be officially known as the

²⁴This study was conducted by the Columbia University of Applied Social Research.

“Mother of God”.²⁵ Even the Bishop of Ephesus at this time took a leading role in advocating this wicked teaching. The Apostle Paul predicted, “of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things” (Acts 20:30)—and so it was.

In the place of an ecclesia which met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila, an apostate church called St. Mary’s was erected. Instead of the armour of light beaming from the spiritual warriors of Christ, there is the darkness of the Man of Sin. The official guidebook to Ephesus reads: “It is on account of this Council that Ephesus will shine for ever as a bright star in the history of catholicism”.

Ephesus, the former custodian of precious Scripture and a wonderful ecclesia which could not be faulted in doctrine, is now a malarial bog. We must see that our “first love” does not fade into an organizational “works” denomination of which the J.W.’s and the Roman Catholic Church are notable examples. The present site of Ephesus is the mute testimony to the end of such a declension from the faith.

Several quotations from the sociology of religion are worthy of note in this regard:

“The Quakers proceed with a minimum of formal leadership, and so do the Christadelphians. These sects oppose authority and become intensely anti-clerical; **their opposition is as much to the organization of the church as to its teachings.**

“Christadelphian ecclesias have remained essentially congregational. Professional clergy have always been regarded as a corruption of Christianity by them and no ministry has developed. Their democratic assemblies reject all formal organization, presidents or committees”.

“In the case of the Adventist sects which reject formal organization, we must expect to see a very different pattern of change. Here, too, the problem of maintaining the pristine revolutionist response has been met. Among the Christadelphians, who have neither a central head-quarters for subsidiary concerns like that of the Witnesses, nor a ministerial order like that of the Seventh Day Adventists, original belief persists much as it was first enunciated. Early writings have not been superseded by new ones (**whereas the Witnesses, to sustain their organization, are of course obliged to pour forth new material and to allow the old to go out of print—a procedure that is both economically necessary, and useful both in sustaining interest and in permitting changes of emphasis in teaching**). Christadelphians have not added subsequent revelations, or new injunctions for believers, as did the Seventh Day Adventists. Yet, although they remain adventists, some of the intensity has also gone from Christadelphian advocacy. As they have come, in large part, to recruit internally, and to sustain their segregation from the wider society, so they have also come to adopt a more introversionist position. There has been some shift from preoccupation with the Kingdom to more emphasis on the Cross. . . .²⁶

²⁵The reason why Ephesus was selected for this conference was because of the tradition that John took Mary to Ephesus. Later a German Roman Catholic nun alleged to have both seen and described the house in which Mary was born. In 1896 the Pope declared the “house” to be a Roman Catholic shrine. See Bro. A. Wintermoore, “Ephesus”, *The Christadelphian*, Vol. 110, No. 1307, (May, 1973), pp.220-222.

²⁶Bryant Wilson, *Religious Sects*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1970) pp.34, 239.

EPILOGUE

THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS

THE LORD'S PORTION.

What do you expect to leave as your inheritance? To this question most people would probably answer, “possessions”, “things”. There may, in fact, be some personal effects which will survive our life of mortality, but the inheritance which should arrest our attention is the inheritance of Christ which has nothing to do with **things**, but everything to do with **people**.

Paul wrote:

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. . .may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what **the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints**” (Eph. 1:17, 18).

This passage is rooted in the words of Moses in the Old Testament:

“Yet they are they people and **thine inheritance**, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm” (Deut. 9:29).

“For the **LORD'S portion** is his people: **Jacob is the lot of his inheritance** . . .he kept him as the apple of his eye”(Deut. 32:9, 10).¹

The call of discipleship is the call to preach.

In another epistle, the apostle Paul developed a similar thought when he spoke of bearing the Thessalonian believers as a coronal wreath into the Kingdom:

“For what is our hope of joy or crown² of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy” (1 Thess. 2:19, 20, R.S.V.).

What contribution are you making to Christ's inheritance? The original owners of houses and possessions are forgotten after several generations of time. However, when names are inscribed in the Lord's book of life, these are retained in the memory of the Almighty.

PRIDE, SURFEIT OF FOOD AND PROSPEROUS EASE?

How your time is spent **now**, how your money is spent **now** may reflect the vision you have for the future. Are your pursuits largely materialistic—barely discernible from unenlightened Gentiles outside of the Covenant? Jesus said that the time of his return would be like Sodom: “Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food, and prosperous ease . . .” (Ezek. 16:49, R.S.V.). This was also the failure of Jeshurun: “But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation” (Deut. 32:15).

Faith enables a believer to translate a **future** promise into a **present** reality. This is the significance to the apostle Paul's request that “the eyes of your understand-

¹See also Jer. 10:16.

²The word “crown” is “stephanos” in Greek and refers to the coronal wreath given to the victor of competitive games.

ding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the **hope** of his calling . . .” (Eph. 1:18). In essence, this is the dynamic power of faith.

A great building is now being put together as the dwelling place of God:

“In whom [Christ] the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:21-22, R.S.V.).

Our contribution to this building is, to begin with, an act of grace on God’s part (Eph. 1:5, 6). It will inevitably require “quencing all the flaming arrows of the wicked” in preaching, for which the clothing with the armour of light will prove more than sufficient if a labour of love and work of faith is accompanied by a steadfastness of hope.

The call of the Ephesian epistle is to have “the eyes of your heart enlightened” (Eph. 1:18, R.S.V.) to know the hope of his calling, and then “to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called. . .” (Eph. 4:1, R.S.V.).

ALIENS AND SOJOURNERS.

Jesus left no inheritance to others except his glorious instruction imparted to **people**. Paul left no inheritance except his instruction to others. In this, there is a lesson. We are aliens, strangers, sojourners in this life. Our citizenship is in heaven from where we look for the Saviour. Our attention, too, must be directed to teaching and instructing others:

*“As poor, yet making many rich;
as having nothing, and yet possessing all things”*
(2 Cor. 6:10).