

JT on Missionary Work (extracts posted on peebs.net by Rev on 24 August 2012).

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LES....You were saying something about certain sections of the earth and geography?

JT.....The allusion to Chronicles and Japheth brings out the matter of geography; that is to say, where the gospel was to be announced. From Paul's missionary journeys one is forced to conclude that there are limitations upon *our* activities. The missionary associations generally make a way into the East, but the Spirit of God in the Acts does not direct that way. After three hundred years of missionary work in the East there is very little accomplished for God. We cannot be sure if the persons numbered as converts are converted at all. The societies have ignored the Spirit's reference to geography in Paul's service; he is directed to go to the West, not the East.

JWD....."Go into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to all the creation", (Mark 16:15). What would that include?

JT.....That has all to be taken up. You are quoting Mark, "Go into all the world; and preach the glad tidings to all the creation"(Mark 16:15). The moral side is the world, but all creation is in God's *mind. We* are not to limit that, but we are to be subject to direction in limitation in *our service* . We have rather to follow Luke as to *where* the gospel is to be preached, for through him we learn how the Spirit of God directs and controls. The facts of the case are seen in Acts.

SP.....Is there not a suggestion of this in Acts 16:6 - 8? "And having passed through Phrygia and the Galatian country, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia, having come down to Mysia, they attempted to go to Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; and having passed by Mysia they descended to Troas". Does it not suggest limitations for that moment?

JT.....Certainly, "the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them" (Acts 16:7) not the Spirit of Christ, but the Spirit of Jesus, the Man, and the testimony of that is to work out into the West. The kind of Spirit that is to appear in Christianity in the West. Because the Spirit of Jesus is, of course the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the anointed Man. You may say, How is it, that the Spirit of Jesus would prohibit the preaching of the gospel anywhere? Let us see how Paul finds things. He had a vision. Peter had a vision too, but Paul had this vision and saw a certain Macedonian man, standing and beseeching him. The Macedonian man was in the West, because Paul was in Asia at that time. And this Macedonian man says, "Pass over into Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9). Paul would have to go through Asia to Europe to get there. We have to pay attention to these things in regard of where the gospel is to be preached. We have to regard the fact that there is no record of great activity towards the East. We have much said as regards the gospel going towards the West.

HB.....Colossians 1:23 says, "... and not moved away from the hope of the glad tidings, which ye have heard, which have been proclaimed in the whole creation which is under heaven, of which *I* Paul became a minister". How would that fit in?

There is a great deal in that chapter about the Lord creating everything.

JT.....That is the general fact as stated by Mark in the end of this gospel. We have *subdivisions* in service. The whole idea in Mark is "all the creation". But the subdivisational limitations asserted in levitical service apply to Europe, as the Acts shows.

JWD.....I am sure what you are saying is right, but how do you account for those who are converted?

JT.....We know about the magi. The magi from the East came westward. The Lord is said to have bought the whole *field* . But when we come down to the idea of that field, what the Lord really bought is a particular one. We must make allowance for what has been remarked about Japheth, and how the gospel spread into Europe and the outgoings of Europe. We get

the full thought of grace here, and the Vessel through whom the gospel of the grace of God comes to us. He is the Person to learn from, also Paul and others.

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Rem.....Evangelists are mentioned in Ephesians 4, but in 1 Corinthians 12 evangelists are left out.

JT.....Well, I would say that the conditions we have alluded to would perhaps preclude normal freedom for evangelical service. The unspiritual condition at Corinth did not warrant evangelical service. The background for evangelistic services requires a spiritual structure to stand behind them. Hence the incongruity of what is commonly called missionary work, because there is no background to support it. The so-called churches do not supply the background; they supply money, of course, but they do not supply the spiritual background that is needed for evangelical service among the heathen; the effect, therefore, is very meagre; the result of missionary work in Asia is very meagre indeed. The Spirit of God has withdrawn from it really, I would say, and is working among the saints themselves in view of recovery from declension.

PHH.....Do you see the background in Acts 2; the Spirit having come, and the preaching going out with that behind it?

JT.....Yes, I think the conditions, normal conditions were there; the saints were all together in one place as the Spirit came in, and hence Peter was free to set out the gospel as it should be set out, with the proper background to it.

HC.....Is the background seen in Acts 13?

JT.....Very good; that is just the connection. We are told first of the history of the assembly that was there. We are told previously in chapter 11 that Paul and Barnabas toiled for a year, and the remarkable result was that the assembly was formed in the place. Paul and Barnabas taught the crowd in the assembly, as the work proceeded, the crowd diminished and the assembly increased, so that the full idea of the assembly was reached there. Chapter 13 tells us that in the assembly that was there, the ministry, the service of God was carried on. This corresponds with what has been said, as to the background needed for such service as missionary work; the work was going on, and it is said that they ministered to the Lord and fasted and then the Spirit of God says "Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then, having fasted and prayed, and having laid their hands on them, they let them go". Acts 13:2,3 The Holy Spirit sent them forth, the assembly did not send them. In ordinary missionary circles, the churches, so-called, send men forth, but it is not according to God at all; to send forth in His work is the sole prerogative of the Spirit of God.

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AR.....It also says in that chapter: "And we were staying in that city certain days", Acts 16:12 as if they had gone there deliberately, guided by the Spirit.

Ques.....Would we do that today? That would be in the character of missionary work, would it not, to leave one city for another, looking up christians? Would we go from city to city in the present day?

JT.....We have done it at times.

Ques.....How do you distinguish between that and what you have said as to missionary work?

JT.....As to missionary work, I think it is largely dead; with the revival it largely disappeared. Following the Reformation it was in full force, but not in the revival. It has been

greatly reduced since the revival.

Ques.....So that you would distinguish between going from city to city in this country, for instance, and going to other or heathen countries?

JT.....Yes; we do not go to other countries, such as Russia or China. I would not encourage that at all. Some years ago it was tried; we went to China where there appeared to be an extensive work; but it has gone to nothing. There was no result from it. We should be careful in undertaking such a matter, we know from experience that there is not much to be had in heathen countries now.

EAL.....Is the distinction between the so-called Reformation and the revival, that the former gave way to clericalism; whereas in the revival clericalism was set aside?

JT.....And reduction came in; it is a smaller matter; China is a big affair. There are something like five hundred million people there.

DMacd.....Then would you encourage us to go to neighbouring cities?

JT.....Well, in the sense in which we are speaking of it, but there is very little time. We do the best we can, no doubt, but there is very little time.

AR.....Would you say a word as to the righteous man in verse 41: "He that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward". The thought of a righteous man is peculiar to Matthew's gospel. Is it the characteristic of an assembly man that he is a righteous man?

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APT.....Such persons make good assembly material.

JT.....Just so, we are dealing with assembly material now. In a general way the brethren are not called upon to go out to missionary work, our occupation in the main is with assembly material, potential or otherwise. We are going on with that and it is of value, the names of such are written in heaven before the foundation of the world. We are dealing with those people and they are worth dealing with.

Ques.....Is that why she did not depart from the temple? Does that mean today that she would move in the circle of the saints?

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WHL.....Is that seen in chapter 13, where "the Holy Spirit said, Separate me now Barnabas and Saul"?

JT.....That is the same idea; where you get the Holy Spirit acting in that way, that is the point, not that He does not act in everything, but God comes down to our way of thinking. He knows us perfectly: "He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for saints according to God", Romans 8: 27. So where the Spirit says, "Separate me now Barnabas and Saul", that implies, amongst other things, that the Spirit knows that the facts show that we are trustworthy men; but there was more than that needed for missionary service amongst the heathen. How few missionaries today think of it! The Holy Spirit alone knew what was needed.

WHL.....The matter of Elymas the magician immediately follows it.

JT.....Exactly: See what they had to meet! Who could meet that man but "Saul, who also is Paul"? Well, some of us heard in recent years of magicians being dealt with in China; what has come out of that? Those who attempted it were not true. Hardly anything has come out of missionary enterprise in the last hundred years, hardly anything for the assembly. It is because of the persons being unequal to it. Paul says we are "competent, as ministers" (2 Corinthians 3: 6); competent because made so, and the Holy Spirit knows exactly what men

are.

Ques.....Is that particularly applying to eldership?

JT.....More than anything; the question of persons being admitted to fellowship and caring for them, and so on: "The flock, wherein the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers" -- the word there is 'overseers'.

Ques....Is not the "wherein" a balancing thought? They were in the flock, but overseers there.

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JT.....The question is whether modern missionary work is according to the principles of Scripture, and whether the East, so much in mind in this kind of work, has not been reserved by the Lord for a further great work through the preaching of the everlasting gospel, the pre-millennial service shortly to commence. There has been little real result in the East, as compared with the West, from the work carried on there over the past three hundred years. There is nothing at all to be compared with what we get in the Acts.

Ques.....Do you mean that in the Acts the trend of the work of God was westward?

JT.....Quite so, and it has remained so. The persons who are really in true Christian fellowship in the light of the assembly in the whole of Asia are few in number.

Rem.....It is very striking that they sought to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.

JT....Well, that is a good scripture to bring up now, showing how the Spirit of God is controlling things.

Rem.....The situation of Bithynia in Asia Minor was northward from the apostles' position at the time.

JT.....Whereas the Spirit's mind was that they should go to the West, because the man in Macedonia was towards the West.

Rem.....It was Europe that was in mind.

JT.....Quite so.

Ques.....Why does it speak of the "Spirit of Jesus" there? It says, "they attempted to go to Bithynia and the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them".