

## **EARLY MISSIONS AND PRESENT ONES**

– *REVIEW LESSON. – SEPTEMBER 19. –*

**Golden Text: – "So Mightily Grew the Word of God and Prevailed." – Acts 16:20.**

AT FIRST it may strike some minds as peculiarly out of order that we should institute a comparison between missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul and Pilgrim-missionary work at the present time in which we are privileged to engage. Nevertheless we see many strong resemblances.

(1.) St. Paul's labors were during the Harvest time of the Jewish Age. The mission was to the Jew first. The converts were largely from amongst them. Secondarily he told the good tidings of the Kingdom to the Gentiles. We are in the Harvest time of the Gospel Age. We preach the harvest message of this dispensation to those who are professedly God's people, not with the expectation of bringing all Christian people to see the glorious features of the Divine Plan, but with the hope of finding amongst them such as have the hearing ear and of interesting them and ripening them for the garner. We, likewise, go outside of nominal Spiritual Israel to the Gentiles, to the worldly, when our message to Christians fails to bring results.

(2.) Now, as eighteen centuries ago, the laborers in the Harvest field, whether as Colporteurs or Volunteers, go forth bearing the precious seed of Truth, the Gospel of the Kingdom, for those who have the ears to hear. A few in every place may be found. In some places the results are tongue-lashings and exclusions, ostracism and scorn. In other quarters the message is more favorably received. Evidently now, as then, all who are anxious to serve the Truth find opportunity to suffer for the Truth's sake, for righteousness' sake. Now, as then, all the dear

laborers in the harvest field may note the Lord's providential care over them and his direction in the interests of the harvest work. Now, as then, we have much to encourage, as well as to discourage. Now, as then, there are surprises to the Lord's people in respect to where the Truth will be received [R4469 : page 268] and where it will be rejected. For instance, we have good word of the progress of the light in "darkest Africa," while frequently we have evidences that some of the scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law of our day are not worthy of Present Truth. Now, as then, the Lord's providences seem to tell us that bonds and imprisonments and difficulties await us, if we continue active, faithful, zealous; but now, as then, the faithful of the Lord's people are not deterred by these experiences, but, with the Apostle, say, "We are willing, not only to be bound, but to suffer death for Christ's sake."

Our Golden Text seems likely to have a partial fulfilment in a parallel way very soon. The message is gathering impetus day by day. Although opposed by various blinded ones in Babylon and by false brethren from our midst and by ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing with back-biting tactics and midnight howls, nevertheless the Truth is prospering.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the Truth will soon, or ever, become popular while the Prince of this world is free to oppose it and to stir up bitter envyings and strife against it and to blind the minds of so many.

The lesson for us is, Faithfully onward, Christian soldiers, battling for the Lord, for the Truth, for the brethren – against sin and selfishness!

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