

Evening Address.

Nov. 9th 1947

Hamlets United Church.

Text Acts 14 v 22

"Confirming the souls of the disciples,
and exhorting them to continue in
the faith and that we must
through much tribulation enter into
the kingdom of God"

Tonight we continue with
Paul and Barnabas on their first
missionary journey. It is well for
us to remember that these men,
Paul especially, were conducting this
missionary enterprise entirely under
the propelling guidance of a force
outside themselves. (Is the tendency
today to belittle the motive power
behind peoples actions?)

Have we other motives than
personal self aggrandizement, self
indulgence in other words pure
unadorned selfishness?

Before continuing with Paul
let us review once again the
freedom he enjoyed.

As long as you were a Roman!

Incident of the mother attitude.
Her conversion from angry spells.

"
 "I am a Roman Citizen!"

These words during the period in which Paul lived were the pass words to a freedom greater than we know even today. It meant freedom to go where one chose, to say what one felt like saying, to do what one felt like doing - witness Saul's persecution of the followers of Christ prior to his conversion (history states that he was primarily active in having Stephen stoned). Roman freedom meant a fair trial on arraignment, it meant that no Roman could receive corporal punishment and so we find Saul persecuting and destroying that new sect, the followers of Jesus.

From the incident of Paul's conversion on the Damascus Road we have a portrayal of the character and power of a moving spirit that dominated the persecutors of Christ's followers. (Incidentally, the name Christian did not originate until Paul and Barnabas prevailed upon large numbers of converts in Antioch to follow Christ's teachings.)

Persecution by Jews Gentiles
became converts.

5
man is really free until he has accepted the leadership of Christ and God. He is not free until he has acquired that boundless faith that is willing to submit itself to the present test knowing full well that though seemingly futile now through the centuries it is eminently right and good.

Perhaps you will ask - and rightly - why is a politician speaking thus? In Paul's day there were politicians too and they were converted. There is the incident of the conversion of the Roman pro-consul Sergius Paulus. It was from this conversion that hereafter Saul became known as Paul.

However politicians very often have to face the same human problems as ministers increasingly so these days when the popular demand is for governments to become more and more paternal. We see almost insurmountable problems rising to confront us and in the quest for a solution many of us turn

On this first missionary journey we follow Paul in his effort to reconcile Christ's disciples to himself. His first effort that of the very synagogue from which he had helped take Stephen and have him stoned. Here is a lesson fit for a dozen addresses. Its essence is that of repentance for a wrong and of a man trying desperately to right what he errors he had committed. Let us remember while considering this that Paul was still possessed of that Roman freedom so highly prized. There was no call upon him to sacrifice himself thus. He could have conducted himself as many then did and do now paying lip service to God while owing allegiance to Caesar.

There is no doubt but that during his missionary work Paul acted as an disturbing influence among his brethren the Jews. From the revelation on the Road to Damascus Paul had received a spiritual freedom beyond anything he had

Lowell

Burnt me o'er earth's chosen heroes
They were those who stood alone
While the men they agonized for hurled
The contumelious stone.

Street were and down its future
Saw the golden beam incline
To the side of perfect justice, mastered
By their faith divine
By one man's plain truth to manhood
and to God's supreme design.

✓

4
ever experienced and with
that freedom he had acquired
a faith that remained unshaken
through all following persecutions.
A faith that was limitless and
boundless embracing and
acknowledging the goodness of God
and of Jesus the Saviour.

We can have a little better
word picture of that faith when
we consider for a moment that
not in Paul's time did he
see the fruits of his teaching.
Not till two hundred years or more
after his death did his early struggle
bring forth fruit. Indeed his
later years were saddened by the
strifes and dissensions in the
Churches he had helped to found.

From the missionary journeys
of Paul and Barnabas we could
draw a conclusion for our own day
for after all being human our
contemporary time interests us more.

One of its most vital messages
from the lip of Paul is that no

Some politicians converted!

for comfort and inspiration to
various passages of the Bible
Our record of man's indomitable
progress through the goodness
and grace of God.

One of the weakest chains in
the armor of our democratic system
is that of the individual who
has a wrong idea or conception
of that word freedom. Until a
man will let the spirit of
God within him command his
whole life he is not free. He
may think he is, may act as
if all the freedoms were his, but
the result of his actions, by which
he is judged, are quite often those
exemplifying selfishness and greed.

So the politician finds out
slowly but surely that the
individual must be right before
the politician can right or
reconstruct faulty systems. The
individual has to learn self
government before democracy can
fully function in every definition
of the word.

We see dimly in the present what
is good & what is great
slow of faith how weak an arm
may turn the iron helm of fate

But the soul is still oracular
Amid the market's din

Perceives the ominous stern whisper from
the delphic caves within

They enslave their children's children
who make compromise with sin:

And now to God the Father God the Son and
God the Holy Ghost be ascribed all might
Majesty & Power now & forevermore Amen.

VII

and the derisive scorn heaped on the ^{one} talent
man! (One could almost recite the
story of Jesus being tempted of the
devil).