

Inspiration & Initiative

‘... the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me ...”’

ACTS 13:2

Study 14a: The SPIRIT RULES THE BODY (12:25-13:12)

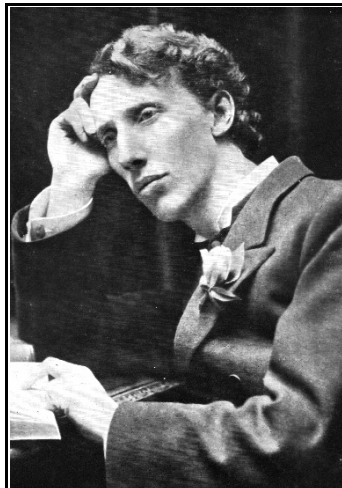
13:1-3 Mark the criteria of a *recognized* ministry (8:17)

The activity of the Church is declared in the words: “They ministered to the Lord, and fasted.” The word translated “ministered” is a most suggestive one, being that from which we derive our word “liturgy.” The Greek word was first employed of civil service in Athenian law. It came to be used in religion and of priestly service. It specially described eucharistic service, that is, the service of praise. Gradually it became the word that indicated set forms of worship. The real thought in it is that of the exercise of the proper functions of organs in the power of life ... under the dominion of the spirit of man, intellectual, emotional, volitional. These men in Antioch, not the prophets and teachers only, but the whole Church, were engaged in this sacred ministry to the Lord. -- **G. C. Morgan**, *Acts* p.242

The final word is for the individual. No man can go unless the Spirit call him. This is the high doctrine of the ministry ... But if he hear the call, then let him remember that it is his business to go forward within the fellowship and under the guidance of the Church -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, p.244

13:4-12 Paul’s being ‘filled with the Holy Spirit’ translates into which specific powers? (John 16:7-15)

In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, that swift and sudden and awful discipline, the Spirit was seen to be a Spirit of fiery discipline in the Church. It was the first manifestation of the fact that ought to be



G. CAMPBELL MORGAN
(1897)

“There is nothing in this world the devil dreads like a man who dares to think”
[on Sergius Paulus, ‘an intelligent man’]

the abiding fact, but which, alas, is not an abiding fact, that the atmosphere of the Church of God should be one in which a lie cannot live ... Filled with the Spirit, Paul uttered those strange, startling, burning, scorching words because Sergius Paulus was in danger. The severest words of the Bible, Old and New Testaments, are reserved between men and God ... What was the result of this filling? Clear discernment; he knew this man through and through, not by his own cleverness, not by mere intuition, but by that immediate filling of the Spirit which became illumination, enabling him to see to the very heart of the man who stood confronting him. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, pp.246-249

Study 14b: PAUL’S APOLOGETIC TO THE JEWS (13:13-14:4)

13:13-41 Analyse Paul’s apologetic approach to the synagogue (This is the longest sample we have)

But to read the address of Stephen ... and then to read this address of Paul, is to see that Paul consciously, or unconsciously, modelled his speech in this synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia, upon the address of Stephen. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, p.254

A. **CONTINUITY** -- with Old Testament history (Genesis through Samuel) vv.13-22

It is not strange that groups, intimately informed on the details of their history, should be ready and eager to hear again the story of their race. To their peril, people lose contact with their past; and one of the signs of a decaying culture in the West today is the increasing disregard for the history of struggle, sacrifice, and endeavor whereby familiar institutions were wrought to fullness. -- **E.M. Blaiklock**, *Acts: The Birth of the Church* p.110

B. **CONSISTENCY** -- with prophets (including John), Psalms, vv.23-36

He passes over in silence the giving of the law, which was to the Jews the greatest epoch in their history ... Instead of Moses, *David* is the greatest type of the Christ. **R.B. Rackham**, *Acts* p.212

C. **CONVICTION** -- of sin, vv.37-41

The law, he told them, was incomplete in that it could convict and not save (27,32,33,39). Through all history, God had prepared the way for such a revelation (17-32), especially in the ministry of John the Baptist, who led a mighty revival (24,25). -- **E.M. Blaiklock**, *Acts: The Birth of the Church*, p.111

13:42-14:4 Which gospel is intrinsically powerful *and* attractive? (vv.5,7, 26,44,46,48,49; compare modern-day evangelism)

Paul would impress upon these men of Israel, and the proselytes gathered in the synagogue, not the failure, but the grace that was above it, mastering it, moving through it toward the accomplishment of Divine purpose. The Divine grace was original, for He chose them. It was patient grace; He suffered them, or bare with them as a nursing Father. It was disciplinary grace; He gave them Saul that they might understand at the commencement the real

meaning of their failure and desire for a king; and He gave them David, who took hold of the kingdom and represented the will of God to men. It was fulfilling grace, in spite of Solomon, in spite of Ahab, in spite of Ahaz, in spite of Nebuchadnezzar, in spite of Assyria, in spite of Egypt, in spite of all circumstances and forces and disaster and defeat, He brought a Saviour. That is the infinite music of the Gospel. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, p.257

NOTE: Were signs necessary to effect Antioch's spiritual prosperity? (v.52; cf. 14:3)

To summarize -- this first recorded speech of the great missionary apostle declared the one God, the one purpose of God, the one Saviour. He proclaimed the evangel, which may be summarized in one word, justification by faith. -- **G.C. Morgan**, *op.cit.*, p.258

Study 14c: PAUL'S APOLOGETIC TO 'BARBARIANS' (14:1-23)

I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish -- Romans 1:14

14:5-11 Compare Paul's 'sign' with the modern variety

We have no account of such signs and wonders in Antioch of Pisidia. Observe the diversity of the Spirit's activity. In Antioch in Pisidia there was preaching, and nothing else is recorded. In Iconium there was the preaching of the same Word of grace, and an accompaniment of signs and wonders. It may be said: Why draw such emphatic attention to this? In order that we may be reminded that we cannot base a system of procedure upon any single occurrence in any given place. That is a peril always threatening the Christian Church. In Iconium there were signs and wonders; therefore there must be signs and wonders everywhere. By no means. On the method of the Holy Spirit at any given hour and place we have no right to base a doctrine of perpetuity. When men, sincere souls, attempt to teach that one sign of the gift of the Spirit is the gift of tongues, they are departing from apostolic history. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, p.268

14:12-18 For 'barbarians' how is Paul's apologetic adapted? (17:22-31)

Now in Lystra there was not a single reference in his address to the Hebrew Scriptures or Hebrew history. He began where the men of Lystra were, discovered the elements of religion present in their actual consciousness, and upon that based his appeal. His address, a brief and wonderful one, was delivered to men who had never had the light of revelation. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, p.267

At the same time S. Paul insinuates the gospel, and it is instructive to study

his method. (i) He begins with the simplest, but the fundamental, truth of religion: the doctrine of the one God and Creator -- 'I believe in God ... Maker of heaven and earth.' (ii) He uses the method of accommodation. He starts with a doctrine they would readily accept -- creation by God; he appeals to that evidence which would be most obvious to country folk -- the witness of nature; and he makes use of their present state of feeling -- the gladness and joy of a festival ... Accordingly the apostles' mission was -- not at once to subvert all their religious ideas but simply -- to turn their allegiance from one to the other. -- **R.B. Rackham**, *The Acts of the Apostles* p.233

Paul thus presented a case based on natural revelation. His approach was built on creation and providence. -- **R. B. Mayers**, *Both/And: A Balanced Apologetic* p.164

14:19-23 We are sons of the King, heirs of the kingdom; according to Paul, to what are we entitled? (Matt.5:9-12)

[The Church] thrives on persecution. Prosperity has often been fatal to it, persecution never. -- **James Stalker**, *The Life of St. Paul* p.39

As we look over the movement we are impressed by the fiery sword of the Christian evangel. Wherever these men came they brought a disturbing, dividing force. Every city was shaken to its centre, and men driven into opposite camps. As we watch we remember the word of Jesus: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not send peace, but a sword!" Unless the Christian evangel of to-day is a fiery, dividing, separating influence, flinging men into opposite camps, it is not the evangel of the apostles. It is always a disturbing element, because it makes no compromise. This evangel comes into human life, and removes and casts out the devil in human life. This evangel has no soft phrases for sin, no rose-water method with iniquity. It is the evangel of blood and fire; and those who object to such terminology are those who are without the evangel. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, p.270

