

## Our Contributors.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

### A New Testament Commercial Traveller.

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In the Scriptures reference is made to various trades and professions—carpenters, coppersmiths, farmers, fishermen, shepherds and herdsmen, lawyers, doctors, custom-house officers, politicians, statesmen and preachers. Travellers also have not been beneath the notice of inspired penmen.

Abraham was an ever restless wanderer. From Ur of the Chaldees, the home of his boyhood, we find him journeying in his mature years far away into the lands of strangers—the Canaanites and the Egyptians.

I think the first allusion to Commercial Travellers is where Joseph's brethren sell him to Midianite Merchants—who were wending their way through the desert with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt, Gen. 37 : 23-28. But the title of this paper is: A New Testament Commercial Traveller, and you naturally ask: "Who is he?" I reply: The great Apostle to the Gentiles, the unwearied, the undaunted, the ever zealous St. Paul.

That he was a great traveller is not open to question by any who have followed the narrative of his life as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and as referred to in his own eloquent and profoundly logical epistles and addresses.

From the day that Jesus spoke to him and said, "Depart: for I will send thee afar hence unto the Gentiles," Acts 22 : 21, his life became one of almost continual travel—visiting and revisiting all the provinces and cities of the then world wide Roman Empire.

It is most interesting and profitable to accompany him in his travels by land and by sea as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Selucia: and from thence they sailed to Cyprus," Acts 13 : 4.

The journey thus begun was pregnant with experiences that would have daunted many an heroic spirit; but Paul never consulted with 'flesh and blood,' but being constrained with the love of Christ he manfully faced all dangers, both of human hatred and of the raging elements and went on with his God sent enterprise, trusting in the Almighty Arm alone. To use his own words: "In labors more abundant, in stripes beyond measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times, received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

And yet he knew no discouragement. He was the Prince of Travellers as well as the Prince of Apostles.

But this only makes Paul out to be an untiring, a fearless and an energetic traveller.

You may reasonably ask: How do you associate him with commerce? In this way: Paul followed the occupation of a tent maker; he was thus the manufacturer of a marketable commodity. The goods thus produced would have to be sold, thus bringing him within the scope of a salesman.

Luke, in the 18th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, says of Paul: "And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them (Aquila and Priscilla) by occupation they were tent makers."

We have every reason to believe, from the statements in the New Testament, that Paul all through his missionary travels followed his secular calling. He thus speaks of himself: "Yea, ye, yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me, I have showed you all things that so laboring ye ought to support the weak," Acts 20 : 33-34.

Thus he combines self support and Christian benevolence.

Paul says still further of himself, in 1 Corinthians 4 : 12, "And labour, working with our own hands." Paul's primary purpose in travelling was Christian Evangelization. His trade, or business, or commercial pursuits were secondary, still necessary, for his temporal support. He says in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians 2 : 9: "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail; for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you."

Thus the great Apostle to the Gentiles combines the duties of a Christian missionary with the honorable duties of a secular calling; and wherever he went he toiled with his hands and worked unceasingly to advance the Kingdom of God and spread the Gospel of His Son.

Paul still further allies himself with commercial pursuits by the principles he enjoins upon those who embrace the truths he taught. For instance:

1st. In writing to the Church at Rome he enjoins upon all its members commercial diligence, "Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit serving the Lord."

2nd. In writing to the Church at Thessaly, he advises its members not to be meddlesome in the affairs of others, but to mind their own business, "And that ye study to be quiet, and do your own business, and to work with your own hands as we commanded you."

3rd. In his second letter to the Thessalonians he combines work with sustenance, and makes the one contingent upon the other: "For even when we were among you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work neither should he eat."

4th. In writing to Timothy he points out the impossibility of any man being a Christian who does not adequately work for the support of those dependent upon him, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel."

5th. Thus Paul, the traveller, by example and precept unites himself and the churches he founded with business and physical toil.

Paul's life, is one pregnant with valuable and useful lessons; the first being that wherever he travelled, whatever country or

city he visited, he never let an opportunity pass in which he could proclaim the message of Salvation to sinful men through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

When he had left Selucia on his first journey and arrived at Salmals, we are told "He preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews." So at Perga, at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra and Derbe, where he preached the Gospel, and in Lystra cured, by divine aid "the man impotent in his feet, being "a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked." And as a reward, the natives lifted up their voices and said, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men," but the "Jews stoned Paul and drew him out of the city supposing he had been dead." But though so treated and persecuted, he returned again to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 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."

There was much in such treatment to discourage and depress. Paul could endure and could "do all things through Christ" who "strengthened him." In prosecuting their duties, Commercial Travellers many times think themselves badly used and feel disposed to give up in very despair when they meet with the frown and the unkind, uncouth, and ungentlemanly word from those with whom they sometimes come in contact. What would be their feelings if they had to endure such conduct as Paul had to endure? Patience and forbearance, with tact, will generally turn the frown into a smile and make the most uncultured and unrefined respectful and transform them into friends. In our lesser trials let us not forget Paul's greater ones and receive from him the inspiration an encouraging example is calculated to give.

Antioch seems to have been a great centre from which Paul radiated to the surrounding cities. Here the disciples appear to have been somewhat strong in numbers, and here the followers of Christ were first called Christians.

From Antioch he wanders through Syria, "confirming the churches." Then he visits Greece and its various provinces. At Thyatira he meets with Lydia, a seller of purple "whose heart the Lord opened that she should attend to the things which were spoken by Paul."

He then proceeds to Thessalonica and Berea. The people of the latter city are eulogized as being "more noble than those of Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so."

From Berea he is conducted to Athens, the capital of the Grecian Kingdom, the seat of learning and philosophy; but with his usual devotion, his spirit is stirred within him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry, and at once he commences to preach to those heathen sages and philosophers: "Jesus and the Resurrection."

From Athen's he goes to Corinth and we are told "many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized." It was at Corinth God appeared to Paul and gave His seal to Paul's work and spoke to him in 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." Paul remained 18 months in Corinth preaching and working at his tent making, living with Aquilla and Priscilla his wife who were of the same craft, and he abode with