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AN APOSTOLIC FORTNIGHT.

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Text: "I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."—Galatians 1: 8.

The verse records a memorable visit made by one good man to another, more than eighteen centuries ago. The visit lasted but fifteen days, but it left an impression on both men that lasted for a lifetime, and on their cause that lasted for all time. It was a noteworthy event for many reasons.

The visit was notable because of the men. They belonged to that limited and elect class known as "the world's great men." Their names are catalogued in that list, whose numbers are few, but who live at the top of humanity and are recognized as its leaders. They were prophetic souls, men with the vision of seers. A visit from John Milton to Oliver Cromwell would interest us, or from George Washington to Frederick the Great, or from Homer to Shakespeare. In some respects of deeper interest, for of greater moment, was Paul's visit to Peter.

The visit was notable also because of the cause these men represented. They stood near the natal hour of the world's greatest religious movement. Christianity was as yet an unknown force in the world. Next to Christ, these two men were to do more than any others in establishing the church.

It was a crisis hour for mankind. The gospel fount was about to stream. How shall the river flow? What direction is the movement to take? What are Christians to proclaim? How are they to live? These and many other such vital questions made it an important day when Paul went up to Jerusalem to see Peter.

It was notable again because of the part each man's personality was to play in the later history of Christendom. Paul is the apostle of Protestantism. The cardinal doctrine of his preaching was "The just shall live by faith." This is the central theme of the Protestant view of salvation. The Reformation was the revival of the Pauline doctrine of "Justification by Faith." Peter, on the other hand, is claimed as the apostle of Roman Catholicism, and as the founder of the Romish hierarchy. To the devout Catholic, the most sacred piece of statuary in the world is the marble figure of St. Peter at the Vatican, whose great stone toe has been kissed away by the pious osculations of the faithful. And yet here we have Paul, the apostle of Protestantism, and Peter, the apostle of Roman Catholicism, closeted for an apostolic fortnight. Perhaps if Christendom could get back to the founders, it would be more united. If we could get back to the spirit of those two men and to the fellowship of that hour, there would be fewer divisions in the Church of Christ.

Because of the men, their cause, and the part each man was to take in the establishment of the Christian Church, it was a memorable day that brought Paul and Peter together.

ENEMIES MADE FRIENDS.

The first thing to arrest our attention, in connection with the visit, is that Christ has made two men, who were enemies, friends.

Peter was recognized as the leader of the early Christians. He was the preacher on the day of Pentecost, and the head and front of the movement. To the public, it looked as if

the movement might be stopped, if Peter could be gotten out of the way. On the other hand Paul was the recognized leader of the persecution. He was the head and front of the opposition. To the early Christians it looked as if persecutions might cease, if Paul could be gotten out of the way. His very name filled them with terror. If God would only smite him! The two men were known to each other by name. To Peter, Paul was the incarnation of brutality. To Paul, Peter was the embodiment of anarchy. They dwelt in hostile camps, and had nothing whatever in common.

Now they are under the same roof and fast friends. The hostility is all gone, the mists of prejudice have lifted, the barriers of hate have fallen away, and they are ready to dare and do and die in a common cause. It must have been a wonderful day when Paul walked in on Peter and said: "I am Paul, and I have come to make you a visit." I fancy Peter said: "Art thou that Paul that didst persecute the church, but that, on the Damascus road, hadst a revelation of the Holy One, and in the house of the devout Ananias of Damascus, wast baptized?" "The very same." "Then thrice welcome!"

They had both seen the face of the same Lord and could be enemies no longer. This is what the gospel of Christ does. It makes enemies into friends. It wins, not by destroying the foe, but by changing him into a friend. It was better for the Christians to have Paul there in Peter's house, than to have him in his grave.

"By force of arms we nothing can.
Christ wins and conquers by love."

This is what He is doing for the whole world. As men see Christ, the mists lift, the barriers fall away, hostility ceases, and they recognize that they are brothers. It is in order that men may discover this, that we send the missionaries to non-Christian lands. Men are in darkness. They have lost the truth that God is their Father and that they

are brothers. The heralds of the cross go forth to tell the gospel story—for what? That men may learn that if they do not repent, they will be everlastingly punished in hell! May be so, but I think rather that they may learn that God loves them and wants them to love each other. Let us rejoice that the world has more of this spirit of brotherhood than ever before. The kingdom is coming!

"Fold the banners; smelt the guns,
Love rules, her gentle purpose runs."

THE VISIT.

One can not help wondering what passed between those two men during those fifteen days. What did they do? Where did they go? How did they spend the time? What subjects did they discuss?

They talked about what they held in common. Their themes were the things nearest and dearest to their hearts. I imagine they were not together very long before the name of Christ was mentioned. He was more precious to them than all else. His name was the tie which bound them together, and I fancy that almost the first word to fall from the lips of each man as he looked into the other's face was "Jesus."

Yet, nowadays, Christians can spend days and weeks together without the mention of their Saviour's name. We can talk fluently on almost every other subject; trade, politics, the weather, the panic, our neighbors; but when it comes to Christ, a strange silence falls on us. When we do speak of Him it is in a **strained, scared, restless** way, as if the topic were unpleasant. This ought not so to be. Christ is our hope, the part of life that is most real and enduring. In a perfectly natural and normal way, free of all reticence and restraint, let us talk with one another about our best friend.

Probably some of the questions which are of absorbing interest in religious circles to-day, were not even mentioned

by Peter and Paul. I doubt if they discussed the critical study of the Old Testament, the redactors of the Pentateuch, the origin of the Davidic Psalms, the dual authorship of Isaiah. I fancy they were not interested greatly in such matters as the mode of baptism, the form of church government, the order of worship, the posture in prayer, apostolic succession and church millinery. It may be that certain doctrinal matters were mentioned, for in one of his epistles, Peter writes: "Our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you: as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Peter seems to have found some of Paul's doctrinal discussions rather beyond him, and we can sympathize with Peter in this respect. However, I do not think the talk of those days turned much on matters of doctrine. There was something else of deeper interest and profounder concern. Paul did not go up to Jerusalem to see Peter, in order to get his views on election and fore-ordination made orthodox.

THE THEME OF THE VISIT.

Paul's deepest religious need at this time was to know Jesus of Nazareth.

Our religious experiences differ. We do not have the same spiritual perplexities and problems. Some of us are attracted to Christ because of His lovely character, some by His matchless teaching, some by His marvellous works, some by His holy cross. Some of us drawn by His humanity, some by His divinity. Some adore Christ, some love Jesus. Let us not fall out with one another because we are not attracted to the Saviour by precisely the same magnet point of His compelling personality. It is enough that we are drawn and have Him. We can not take a part without having all, for

Christ is not a system of dogmas, a volume in history. He is a person, and whatever may have attracted me to Him, if He be mine, He is mine in the totality of His blessed person. Paul's experience of Christ differed radically from that of the twelve.

They had first learned to know Jesus as a man. They had come into contact with His humanity. At first they had no thought that He was other than a man. They accepted Him as the promised Messiah, but it did not occur to them that He possessed Godhood. Nevertheless, as they came to know Him better, as they listened to His teachings, and watched His miracles, and became acquainted with Him, all unconsciously there dawned upon them the glory of His deity, and after awhile they found themselves saying: "He is Son of God."

Paul's experience was just the opposite. He had never known the Man of Galilee. There is no evidence that he had ever seen Jesus, face to face, in the flesh. We wonder how he could have escaped such a meeting? Was he so preoccupied with his course of training in the school of Gamaliel? Did he look with such contempt on this situation created by a Nazarene provincial, as to be unwilling to dignify it even with an investigation? Jesus was walking the streets of the city, but Paul did not think it worth while to step out and see Him.

How often do we make the same mistake! Divinity passes our door, but we are so blind with bigotry, so intolerant of anything outside our little sect, that we refuse to investigate.

When Paul was converted, the first fact which confronted him was the deity of Christ. It burst upon him in a dazzling revelation as the vision halted him on his way to Damascus, and the voice of glory cried: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Paul seemed to answer: "Art thou that Jesus that was nailed to the cross on Calvary and laid in Joseph's tomb?" And Jesus answered, "I am." Then Paul's soul broke out with the over-mastering convic-

tion: "This Jesus of Nazareth is none other than God Himself. He has conquered death, He has risen from the dead. He was dead and is alive forevermore. He is divine!" Every doubt was swept away. Paul could easier doubt the fact of his own being than the deity of Jesus of Nazareth.

Then came those three years of devout retirement in the Arabian desert during which Paul "conferred not with flesh and blood," but, in mystic fellowship with his new Lord and Master, readjusted his beliefs and dedicated his life in harmony with his faith in the Godhood of Christ.

All along, however, the desire had been growing stronger to know Jesus, the man. What did He do? How did He live? What did He say? Paul would know the Man of Galilee.

How? The knowledge might have been given to him, I suppose, in some supernatural way, and yet God does not waste miracles. He does not draw on the supernatural to do that which may be accomplished by the natural. Indeed, those incidents which seem to us to set aside the laws of nature and to be the product of a direct miraculous intervention, might seem perfectly natural if we knew more about nature. A friend of mine brought a native African lad from the Congo to America to spend a year. The boy had never seen ice. When the river froze and he saw people walking across, he was amazed. He said to the missionary: "Why did you never tell me of this?" "Because you would have said I was not telling the truth; I was asserting what was impossible," was the reply. The boy walked out on the ice and lay down upon it, and declared that on his return to Africa, he would tell his people that he had walked and slept on water. What is an ordinary phenomenon to us was a miracle to him. Perhaps, as our knowledge increases, we may find the same true of other events we are now disposed to regard as miraculous. However this may be, of one thing we may be sure; God never wastes power. He might have given Paul a supernatural revelation of the humanity of Christ, but it was possible for him

to get it in a perfectly natural way, and God let him get it that way.

This was why he went to see Peter. He would talk face to face with a man who had known Christ intimately in the flesh. He tells us that during this visit the only apostles he saw were Peter and James, "the Lord's brother." They were the very two who could best give him what he sought. James could tell him of the boyhood of Jesus and Peter could tell him of Christ's manhood. This was the great theme of that apostolic fortnight.

CONVERSATIONS AND WALKS.

No report has been left us of what took place during those fifteen days. There is no record of what was said and done. Nevertheless, a reverent imagination should not find it difficult to reconstruct some of the sayings and doings of those days.

As the two men talked together, I fancy it was not long until Paul said: "Peter, tell me about your conversion." And Peter said: "It was just at the beginning of the fishing season and I was busy preparing, when Andrew came to me and said 'We have found the Messiah.' I dropped my work and hastened with him to Jesus. There could be no doubt. He had come at last. For a thousand years our nation had been praying for His coming and there He was with such a look in his face that I could not doubt. But, Paul, you know one must live, and the season would not wait; so I hurried back to the boats and nets. We were just about pushing out from shore when suddenly He stood there and called us, saying: 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men,' and without stopping to talk it over or ask why, we left all and followed him." "Did you know He was the Son of God?" asked Paul. "No, we thought nothing of that. We only knew there was a wondrous charm about Him that could not be resisted; but as we went on following Him, one day He said: 'Whom say ye that I am?' and

before I knew it, I found myself saying: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' "

Then Paul said: "Tell me some of the things He said," and Peter began to repeat the sayings of the Master. He told him of how tenderly He talked to sick people and sinners. and of how He scourged the Pharisees with denunciation. He repeated His intercessory prayer, and His words at the institution of the Holy Supper. Then he told him of the Sermon on the Mount. Paul listened spell-bound. He began to recite the Beatitudes, and when he came to where Christ said: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," Paul stopped and said: "Did he say those very words, Peter? Did He really say 'Blessed are they which are persecuted?'" And Peter said: "Those are His very words." "And to think," said Paul, "that I tried by persecution to drive you from Him! How stupid I have been!"

Then Paul said: "Tell me some of the things He did," and Peter tried to tell him the story of that blessed ministry. He told him of how one day a timid, needy woman tremblingly touched the hem of His garment and He blessed her; of how He stopped the throng and answered the prayer of blind Bartimaeus; of how one day He went home to dinner with that notorious publican, Zaccheus, and gave him such a vision of the beauty of a better life that Zaccheus gave up his infamous business forever and tried to undo the wrong he had done by making restoration to those he had defrauded and by giving half of his great fortune to the poor.

He told him of how He fed the hungry multitude and healed the sick and raised the dead. He told him of the son of the widow of Nain, and of Mary Magdalene, and of Lazarus.

As Paul listened to the story of how Christ had carried comfort and blessing and hope to all, he cried out, "And I was opposing Him, sending His disciples to prison, and trying to make His name hated! I did not know." Then falling

on his knees, Paul cried out afresh, "O Jesus of Nazareth, what will thou have me to do?"

Paul asked Peter, as they talked together, to tell him of his dearest experiences with the Master; and Peter said: "They are so many I can not tell all. They were all precious, but some make my heart beat faster at the very mention of them." Then he told him of that morning he saw Christ in the grey light of dawn walking on the sea and started to walk on the water to meet Him; but, doubting, he began to sink, when Christ put forth His hand and saved him. He told him of the Mount of Transfiguration and of how Moses and Elias came and talked with Christ, and of the wondrous glory of the Saviour's person, until they asked that they might stay there forever, but Jesus heard the voice of a sick child crying at the foot of the mountain and hurried down to heal it. Then he told of Gethsemane, of the agony in the garden, and of how, heavy with sleep as they were, they could hear Him groaning and praying: "Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me." As Paul listened, a silence fell between them, and the two men looked into glory and saw the vision of the Christ.

Then Peter said: "Paul, I have not told you all. There is one thing more, the very memory of which covers me with shame. Paul, I denied Him. I hardly know how it all happened. It was the night of His arrest. He had said that we would forsake Him; but in my boastful self-confidence I declared that though all the others might, I would never leave Him, yet, when they came to take Him prisoner, we all did forsake Him and flee. As I went running into the night, I remembered His words, and then cautiously made my way to the place of trial. As I entered the room, someone accused me of being His disciple, and I denied again and again, and with curses. As I stood there denying Him, He looked through the open door, full into my face; such a look of mingled love and rebuke that it broke my heart, and I went out into the darkness, the most wretched man on earth, feel-

ing that He could never love me more. But, oh Paul, His love is great, and after He was risen, when He met Mary in the garden, He bade her tell His disciples to meet Him; and he said, "Tell Peter." Mine was the only name He called. for He knew my fear, and there by the lake in the early morning we saw Him standing again as in the old days. I could not wait for the boat to get to land, but leaped into the sea and reached Him first. As I knelt on the sand He forgave me, and asked me if I loved Him, and when I said 'Thou knowest that I love Thee,' He commissioned me afresh."

As Peter told the story of his fall, the two men drew closer together. Both had sinned and both had been forgiven.

I think that during those fifteen days Paul and Peter took some walks together, to places made sacred by Jesus' presence. One morning they arose early and walked out to Bethany and saw Mary and Martha, and maybe Lazarus, whom Christ raised from the dead. They spent the morning talking about Jesus, and as the two men returned, they stopped in the garden of Gethsemane, and Peter told the story of that awful night, and showed Paul the very place where Christ kneeled when His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground.

He showed the places about Jerusalem where Christ had spoken and wrought. Then he took him one day out to Calvary. Perhaps the three crosses were still standing. Then Peter told him of the world's greatest tragedy. He told him of how, amid His crucifixion agonies, Jesus had comforted the penitent thief and committed his mother to John's care, and then had yielded up His spirit to the Father.

From Calvary they went to the tomb and reverently stood on the spot where the body of Jesus had lain; and then to the garden where He showed Himself to Mary, after He was risen.

They went also to the upper chamber, that holy of holies of the Christian faith, where the disciples looked upon their risen Lord, and then out to Olivet where in ascension glory

they had seen Him mount triumphantly to the right-hand of the Majesty on High.

Those were days of unspeakable privilege. Paul was learning much. He was being prepared for his mission, as Jesus of Nazareth became more and more real.

The last day of the memorable visit has come. They must separate. It would have been pleasant if they could have tarried together longer, but each man had his work. Christ's words, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel," were ringing in their ears. They spent the last day, with faces toward the future, discussing their plans and hopes, and then they said "Farewell."

Their paths did not cross often afterwards, but they were never far from each other, nor neither was ever far from Christ. At last each won a martyr's crown and long since they have met in the house not made with hands.

OUR WISH.

We would like to talk face to face with some one who has known Jesus in the flesh. You are saying, "If I could only have the privilege Paul had; if I could hear some one tell about Christ who had seen Him and heard His voice and companioned with Him in the flesh, my doubts would go, and I could be a Christian."

Such a privilege is denied us; but the next best thing to a visit is a letter. We have the letters of those who knew Him in the flesh, and they tell us all that Peter told Paul, and perhaps more. Let us prize our New Testament, for it makes Jesus real. Maybe some day we shall meet Peter and Paul and the other disciples face to face in the glory, and hear from their very lips the sweet story of old. It will be one of the joys of the heavenly fellowship.

Better than this we shall see Him of whom Paul and Peter talked. There is no specific promise that we shall ever look upon the faces of these two apostles. The vast throng, in the celestial world may be too great for us to meet. There is.

however, the promise that we shall see our Lord. We shall awake in His likeness and see Him face to face.

"Some day when fades the golden sun
Behind the rosy tinted west,
My blessed Lord shall say 'well done,'
And I shall enter into rest,
And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story, saved by grace."

Then, instead of an apostolic fortnight, we shall have an eternity of celestial companionship; instead of fifteen days with one of Christ's disciples, we shall be forever with the Lord.

Newark, N. J.