

BARNABAS

The truths in the Bible are so inexhaustible that we never cease to wonder at them. Nor do we cease to marvel that they are a guide to every generation and timeless in their application.

Another fact about the Bible is that when we think we have discovered all the truth in it we run across some great new light of truth. And this new discovery may be the one thing that will save your ideals and even your soul.

Likewise we may find hidden away in these pages a character that we never really knew before. I have met one of those characters recently in this new light. We have heard of him always. It was the lot of this man always to have his name connected with that giant of a character St. Paul. When you get through reading about Paul you have no time left for the man whose name was connected with his.

We speak of Barnabas who in the early church was a saint, one of the immortals, and the layman after God's own heart. Paul was such a genius that it was perfectly natural for Barnabas to be by-passed. He is looked upon as a sort of shadow, echo, second fiddle, or satellite of Paul. Members of families are sometimes the same way., "Where will they send Mrs. Neblett this year?" etc.

A friend of mine said that if he should organize a new church he would insist that it be named St Barnabas. There is not too much said about this man but when you put all the references to him together you will have a fine character. Some characters you will admire may have volumes as their biography but this man biography is in one sentence, as follows: "He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." NOTE THAT IT WAS GOD CALLING HIM GOOD. We have misused the word good till it does not mean so much. If a man pays his debts, taxes, etc we say he is a good man.

But here we are talking about the divine standard of goodness. God, through Luke, said that he was a good man and not only so but that he was a man that the third member of the Holy Trinity dwelt in. In other words a God possessed man. He was a layman.

The Bible has another word to say, "He was a man full of faith. Faith that God is able, that God will work out his purpose through instruments such as you and I. With his heart full of the Holy Ghost and faith there was no room for little ness, selfishness, pessimism or any of those creatures that hurt and harm and hinder us as channels of God's love.

We can find at least four fruits as evidences of his goodness:

1. His generosity toward God. A mighty revival swept across part of the country in those days and amongst the converts was one Joseph from the Ilse of Cyprus. He went and sold all he had and gave proceeds to the church. God's estimate of ones gift, as some one has said, is what he keeps for himself. He gave all. He was rhe man that was to become Barnabas. Covetousness is per haps the greatest bondage a person ever experi- ences..greater than alchoholism, gambling etc. That is why Jesus had more to say about mans possessions than He had to say about conversion, heaven or hell.

2. He was a man of world vision. He was the first layman to go out as a missionary. A revival broke out in Antioch and Peter, James, John, and Andrew got disturbed about it so they sent this layman over to see about it. He went..he gave his money, self and time. Things you can imagine him say:

My business requires my time
They have had their religion 2000 years
Why go away from home when we have need here?

3. He was a big man. Do not know physical size

a. He could forgive and forget. Soon after his conversion there was another conversion..Saul of Tarsus. He came to Jerusalem and Peter, James, John, and Andrew were afraid of him. It was Barnabas that said, "The same God who forgave us has forgiven him let's receive him"

b. Barnabas knew his limitations and when a bigger man came along he could step back and support the bigger man. This he did. The revival at Antioch got so big he could not handle it and he said to them I know a man who can. The called Paul. He was not only a leader but willing to follow..we need followers.

4. Final fruit that showed his goodness was his name. When he was converted his name was Joseph. But his friends that knew him best changed his name from Joseph to Barnabas for the the word Barnabas means "to encourage" How many people are discouraged by the calamity howler that will give you 99 reasons why you can not do a thing. We need a Barnabas who can give the hundredth reason why you can do it...he went around encouraging people.

