

20/20 VISION OF THE CHURCH

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Before the Lord left this earth, he charged his disciples saying.

Go ye therefore. and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father. And of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Mat. 28:19.10).

Mark 16:15,16 carries with it the same command to go and preach the gospel to all the world. Jesus added in Luke 24:27 that such should begin at Jerusalem. The work of the church in evangelism is thus spelled out. I believe with all my heart that the apostles did the very thing that Jesus commanded. They started at Jerusalem (Acts 2) then Judaea and Samaria. From there the gospel went into all the known world at that time. One who was chosen out of due time to be an apostle, Paul by name, committed himself to these same ideals insomuch as his words of inspiration are recorded by Luke in Acts 20:20 as follows: **“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house.”** This represents the heart and soul of Paul. The church and her work cannot become second place in our lives today. We are very lax in our work for the Lord as a general rule. Surely some are working very hard, but the whole church was at work at that time. Acts 8 indicates that they went everywhere preaching the word of God.

Paul said that he kept back nothing that was profitable. It is essential that we know about sin. We must know about our sin and what to do about it. Sometimes it goes “against the grain” for us to hear the things that are profitable to us. We had rather hear smooth and fair speeches. We want someone to make us “feel good.” How can we feel good when the very thing that we need we refuse thus making us lost? Is some slick-tongued orator to make us feel good about living in sin? Do we want a pat on the back and be told all is well, when in fact we are lost, and all is not well? Medicine sometimes is profitable to us for physical ailments. The doctor says take this prescription in order to get well. We think the medicine costs too much, but we take it just the same. Why? The doctor said that it would make us well. From a spiritual point of view all that will make us well is the gospel of Jesus Christ and our faithful obedience to the same. Some think that this is not profitable because one must start where he or she is—living in sin—and learn from there what to do. There is nothing pleasant about being told that we are wrong. However, it is profitable to our souls.

Paul also shewed them and taught them publicly and privately. The Jews were told to teach their children whether they were standing up or sitting down or walking around the tent. Paul used every occasion to tell people of their spiritual needs. His life had been in shambles. Some of the Jews at first did not trust him. He did not get discouraged and quit. He had to leave some places very quickly. He also left in the darkness of night so that he would not be observed for some wanted to

kill him. He never let up nor gave up. He kept right on with the mission that the Lord gave him and all the redeemed.

Acts 20:20 has been called the *20/20 vision of the church*. Congregations would do well to practice those things today. We have majored in minors long enough. Our shell must be broken, and we come out with the Sword of the Spirit in our hands and hearts and tell men their lost condition. Most probably will not hear. Some will and be saved. Let us be faithful and find the few who will obey. We cannot be satisfied with what we presently are doing. Let us reach up and out and beyond ourselves to those who are in the clutches of Satan. What vision do we have for those about us? A phone call, a tract handed with love, a home Bible study if such can be arranged. When we have done all that we can do, then all is well. ~