

Editorial: "Full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom"

A. T. Jones

IN the time of the early rain, when they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, there was great unity among the believers. The whole "multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32).

This unity stood the test of practical things, too; for "neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common" (Ibid.).

Accordingly, "nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need" (Acts 4:34, 35).

Presently, however, it occurred that the widows of the Grecians were neglected in the daily distribution of the funds and provisions that were common to all. And because of this, the Grecians murmured against the Hebrews.

Then the apostles "summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:2-4). This pleased the brethren all, and action was taken accordingly.

The record of this occurrence was made for us. This is true, simply because it is Scripture. But further than this, we are directed especially to study this particular part of the sixth chapter of Acts. Therefore let us study it:—

1. The apostles said, and it is written for our instruction, that it was not desirable that they should leave the word of God, and serve tables.
2. This serving of tables was the ministration, to widows and others, of the things to which they were entitled.
3. It involved the handling of money, the dealing in provisions, and the distribution of money or provisions of all sorts to the disciples. It was, therefore, very aptly designated by the apostles as "*business*."

Then, as this "serving tables" was the engaging in "business," when the apostles said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables," they said, It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God, and engage in *business*.

Inspiration says that it is not desirable that ministers of the gospel should leave the word of God and attend to business. In the time of the early rain, this was accepted and acted

upon. How long shall we continue "in the time of the latter rain" before it shall be accepted and acted upon?

Bear in mind, too, that this was not a question of really *quitting* the ministry of the word, and engaging in business as a separate thing. It was simply a question of ministers of the gospel being occupied with the legitimate business of the church,—such strictly legitimate and sacred business as is connected with distributing provisions to widows.

Inspiration says that it is not desirable that ministers of the gospel should leave the word of God and serve business, even such as that. And the record shows that to serve business, even such as that, is to "*leave the word of God.*"

For the apostles, the only ministers of the gospel at that time, to serve that "business" was to leave the word of God. They said so, and said that "it is not desirable" that it should be so. And when inspiration has endorsed that, and repeated to us that it "is not desirable," then why should it not be so, and how long shall it be before it shall be so, that ministers of the everlasting gospel *now* may leave business and serve the word of God, rather than leave the word of God and serve business, as so many now do?

When the word of God says that a thing is not desirable, no amount of "reasoning" can make it desirable. The word of God does say that it is not desirable that ministers of the gospel should leave the word of God and serve business—even the legitimate business of the church and cause of God. And no amount of "reasoning" can make such a course desirable. All such reasoning is simply setting up personal opinions and selfish preferences against the word of God - this is not Christianity: it is Christianity to cast "down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself *against the knowledge of God*, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

In the time of the early rain, when they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, the ministers of the gospel said that "it is not desirable that we should leave the word of God, and serve business." At that time, also, the saying pleased the whole multitude. And now, in the time of the latter rain, if the ministers of the gospel would say this very same thing, the saying would again please the whole multitude.

And why should not the ministers of the gospel say it now? Indeed, why *do* they not all say it? Is it because they are *not* all filled with the Holy Spirit, as those were who *did* say it for our instruction? What other cause can there be? And in this time of the latter rain, when all are to be filled with the Holy Spirit as at the first, how can this thing continue against divine, true reason, unless it be that ministers of the gospel would rather leave the word of God and serve business than to seek to be so filled with the Holy Spirit that they would see and say that it is desirable to leave business and serve the word of God?

"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). Let the ministers of the gospel receive the Holy Spirit. Let all the multitude of the believers receive the Holy Spirit. Let all, both ministers and the multitude, "be filled with the Spirit." Then the ministers will call the disciples unto them, and say: "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve

tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, *full of the Holy Spirit* and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but *we* will give ourselves *continually* to prayer and to the ministry of the word"

Then it will be again as it was before. The saying will please the whole multitude; they will choose men "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom," whom they will set before the ministers, who will pray, and lay their hands upon them. Then, too, as before, the word of God will increase; the number of the disciples will multiply greatly, and a great company of the priests will be obedient to the faith: the office and work of the minister of the gospel will be honored as it should be, and as it is not now; and there will not be the dearth of ministers that there is now.

The Book of Acts is a record of the working of the Holy Spirit, when He had *His* way in the church. The sixth chapter of Acts is a part of that record, and this is what it says. With special reference to this subject, we are directed by the Spirit to "study the sixth chapter of Acts." Will you study it with the Spirit? Will you hear what the Spirit says to the churches? Will you follow the way that He leads? Will you receive the Holy Spirit? Will you be filled with the Spirit?

"Ask, and it will be given to you." "Receive the Holy Spirit." Recognize the Holy Spirit.

The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, August 23, 1898