

**Devotional Thoughts :: ...A VIPER OUT OF THE HEAT...****...A VIPER OUT OF THE HEAT... - posted by endlessjoe (), on: 2015/4/13 10:56**

TEXT: ACTS 28:1-3

"And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand."

It is a common experience that whenever a man draws close to God in zeal and concentration, he spontaneously and unknowingly attracts the disapproval and hate of the adversary: no man, that is bent on pleasing the Lord Jesus in the services and business of fitting men for the sky, ever escape the attacks of the ancient foe, the Devil. The above text is illustrative of this eternal fact.

Here we see men who were cast upon an island, with chains on their legs and hands, totally in a strange environment and under a heavy rain drop and serious cold. But a fire was kindled for them. However, the fire was going out gradually. Paul employed himself to keep the fire on lest the people die. Before now God had told Paul that all the souls were his, so now that they were in peril of cold, Paul threw himself into the service of keeping them from dying.

Paul's was to keep the fire burning until the sun rises over them and the cold period was passed. The way he undertook to do this was to gather woods into the kindled fire, for "where there are no wood, the fire goes out". It was in this holy endeavour that the serpent attempted to strike down this man of God.

Friends, there is a general coldness toward the next world that has descended on the entire universe. Spiritual matters have become insipid and conspicuously uninteresting to many people...the fire for evangelism and mission have gone out in many of our churches. We run the world's errand with vigour but the race to heaven is sluggishly run. The fire of revival that burns every trace of sin and crucifies the flesh has turned into ashes. Our prayers have turned to mere babbling and meaningless repetition!

We need men and women that would gather wood from the presence of God to keep this fire burning thereby forestalling coldness in the house of God.

But those who would endeavour to do this, must glean a lesson from Paul. Nothing stirs and provokes the adversary like the work of keeping the fire burning. No man should count it strange when the adversary attacks him vehemently...for the closer a man is to the fire the more prone to the assault of the viper, our adversary. Whenever a man engages himself in this business of igniting fire in others, the viper raises its ugly head. The heat that gives warmth to men and keeps them from dying, the same actually provokes enmity from the old serpent.

Brothers and sisters, true and genuine service in God's vineyard, would provoke the devil's attention. So he attacks and fights any man that "...gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire..." he has no time to fight the indolent! No man that is at ease in Zion ever engages the darts of the devil.

There is, therefore, a viper, lurking around, to strike anytime we try to fan the flame of revival. The devil loves cold and lukewarm religion. Be strong thou pilgrim! The adversary would strike, but he shall not win: we shall shake the beast into the fire and feel no hurt. Amen!