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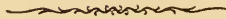
PULPIT, SUNDAY-SCHOOL, AND FAMILY.

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ACTS.

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## PREFACE

### TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

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The fifth historical book of the New Testament, bearing this title, obtained it at a very early period, though sometimes the epithet *holy* was prefixed to *Apostles*, and sometimes also it was reckoned among the Gospels, and called the *Gospel of the Holy Ghost*, or the *Gospel of the Resurrection*. The common designation, however, has chiefly been that which is still in use. Whether this title proceeded from the author himself is doubtful, but it is certainly very ancient, and occurs in the earliest notices of this book. The work is so called in the Muratorian Canon, and by Clemens Alexandrinus and Tertullian.

#### IMPORTANT PECULIARITY OF THE BOOK.

The Acts of the Apostles is distinguished from the other books of the New Testament by this important peculiarity, that it comes much in contact with many well-known facts of the ancient world, and thus admits of many illustrations from external sources of information. The Epistles treat chiefly of Christian doctrine and practice, and for the most part can only be explained and illustrated by internal criticism and mutual comparison. The scene of the Gospel narratives, on the other hand, is almost wholly confined to the narrow limits of Palestine, and profane history can therefore afford very little assistance in their study. But the Acts of the Apostles touches at every point on the history of the world. Countries and cities renowned in ancient times were visited by Paul and his companions, and persons who played an important part in the history of the world have also their places in the history of the Church. The book of Acts also contains, as already hinted, materials, more particularly in its later portion, of immense value for establishing the authenticity and genuineness of the New Testament writings. It has been by means of a minute and careful comparison of the accounts in these with the allusions in Paul's epistles, that a most convincing, and, we may say, an irrefragable argument has been formed in proof of the historical verity of both, by Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, a work which will ever remain a monument of his fine discrimination, practical sagacity and solid judgment.

#### AUTHORSHIP.

Respecting the authorship of this book there can be no ground for doubt or hesitation. It is, unquestionably, the production of the same writer by whom the third of the four Gospels was composed, as is evident from the introductory sentences of both. (Comp. Luke i. 1-4, with Acts i. 1.) That this writer was Luke may be very satisfactorily proved in both cases. With regard to the book now under notice, tradition is firm and constant in ascribing it to Luke. From the book itself, also, it appears that the author accompanied Paul to Rome when he went to that city as a prisoner (xxviii.)

Now, we know from two epistles written by Paul at that time, that *Luke* was with him at Rome (Col. iv. 14; Phil. 24), which favors the supposition that he was the writer of the narrative of the Apostle's journey to that city. The resemblance of style in this book to that of the third Gospel, also favors the opinion that Luke was its author. (For the history of Luke, see Preface to his Gospel.)

#### GENUINENESS.

The genuineness of the Acts of the Apostles has ever been recognized in the Church. It is mentioned by Eusebius among the *ὁμολογούμενα*. It is first directly quoted in the epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienne to those of Asia and Phrygia (A. D. 177); then repeatedly and expressly by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and so onward. The only parties in primitive times by whom this book was rejected were certain heretics, such as the Ebionites, the Marcionites, the Severians, and the Manicheans, whose objections were entirely of a dogmatical, not of a historical nature; indeed, they can hardly be said to have questioned the authenticity of the book, they rather cast it aside because it did not favor their peculiar views.

#### TIME AND PLACE AT WHICH THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN.

These we are left to gather entirely from indirect notices. It seems probable that the place of writing was Rome, and the time about two years from the date of Paul's arrival there, as related in chap. xxviii. Had any considerable alteration in the Apostle's circumstances taken place before the publication, there can be no reason why it should not have been noticed. And on other accounts also this time was by far the most likely for the publication of the book. The arrival in Rome was an important period in the Apostle's life: the quiet which succeeded it seemed to promise no immediate determination of his cause. A large amount of historic material had been collected in Judea, and during the various missionary journeys; or, taking another and not less probable view, Nero was beginning to undergo that change for the worse which disgraced the latter portion of his reign: none could tell how soon the whole outward repose of Roman society might be shaken, and the tacit toleration which the Christians enjoyed be exchanged for bitter persecution. If such terrors were imminent, there would surely be in the Roman Church prophets and teachers who might tell them of the storm which was gathering, and warn them that the records lying ready for publication must be given to the faithful before its outbreak or event. Such *à priori* considerations would, it is true, weigh but little against presumptive evidence furnished by the book itself; but arrayed, as they are, in aid of such evidence, they carry some weight, when we find that the time naturally and fairly indicated in the book itself for its publication is that one of all others when we should conceive that publication most likely. This would give us for the publication the year 63 A. D., according to the most probable assignment of the date of the arrival of Paul at Rome.

#### DESIGN WITH WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN.

The book commences with an inscription to one Theophilus, who was probably a man of birth and station. (See on Luke i. 3.) But its design must not be supposed to be limited to the edification of Theophilus, whose name is prefixed only, as was customary then as now, by way of dedication. The readers were evidently intended to be members of the Christian Church, whether Jews or Gentiles, for its contents are such as are of the utmost consequence to the whole Church.

The "Acts of the Apostles," says a distinguished Biblical scholar, "is not to be so viewed, as if what we had chiefly to look for here were a historical account of the life and labors of our Lord's Apostles after He had left them. Were that all, every one must be struck with the extremely defective nature of the work, and must also feel that in its object it occupies a much lower position than the Gospel of which it purports to be the continuation." But by the sacred historian himself, the two are most closely connected together: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all

that Jesus began both to do and teach." It was but the *beginning* of His mediatorial agency that the historical account in the Gospel had embraced, though it reaches from His birth to His resurrection—*now*, in this second account, he proceeds to exhibit the continued operation of that agency, and the results it accomplished among men. Jesus still is the great subject of the Evangelist's delineations—the real spring of the movements he describes; only Jesus withdrawn within the veil, and from the sanctuary above operating by the grace of His Spirit upon the souls of men, and actually setting up the kingdom, which it was the purpose of His mission to establish in the world. Hence, Jesus, as the already exalted King of Zion, appears, on all suitable occasions, as the ruler and judge of supreme resort, the Apostles are but His representatives and instruments of working. It is He who appoints the twelfth witness, that takes the place of the fallen Apostle (i. 24); He who, having received the promise from the Father, sends down the Holy Spirit with power (ii. 33); He who comes near to turn the people from their iniquities and add them to the membership of His Church (ii. 47, iii. 26); He who works miracles from time to time by the hand of the Apostles, who sends Peter to open the door of faith to the Gentiles, who instructs Philip to go and meet the Ethiopian, who arrests Saul in his career of persecution and makes him a chosen vessel to the Gentiles; in short, who continually appears presiding over the affairs of His Church, directing His servants in their course, protecting them from the hands of their enemies, and in the midst of much that was adverse, still giving effect to their ministrations, and causing the truth of the Gospel to grow and bear fruit.

We have therefore in this book, not merely a narrative of facts, which fell out at the beginning of the Christian Church, in connection more especially with the apostolic agency of Peter and Paul, but we have, first of all and in all, the ever-present controlling administrative agency of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, shedding forth the powers of His risen life, and giving shape and form to His spiritual and everlasting kingdom. If this leading idea is kept in view, it will present the book of Acts to the mind as in scope and aim perfectly akin to the Gospels, and will also supply a connecting thread to bind together into a consistent whole the apparently isolated and somewhat occasional notices it contains. Nor, if contemplated in the light now suggested, will it appear accidental that the history should terminate with Paul's work at Rome, as it commences with the work of the Twelve in Jerusalem, for the commission of Christ to His ambassadors was, that they should preach the Gospel among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and in Rome, the center and capital of the heathen world, the different nations might be said to have their representation. The truth of the Gospel, when once fairly planted there, might well be regarded as in the act of taking possession of the world. It is probable, however, that other and more personal reasons conspired to induce the Evangelist to conclude his narrative when it reached the period of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. That period formed a sort of terminating point, as well as a long pause in the Apostle's labors, and we can easily suppose that with the materials collected of the past, and amid the uncertainties of the future, the Evangelist might deem it proper to bring his account to a close.

#### STYLE.

The style of Luke in the Acts is, like his style in his Gospel, much purer than that of most other books of the New Testament. The Hebraisms which occasionally occur are almost exclusively to be found in the speeches of others which he has reported. These speeches are indeed, for the most part, to be regarded rather as summaries than as full reports of what the speaker uttered; but as these summaries are given in the speaker's own words, the appearance of Hebraisms in them is as easily accounted for as if the addresses had been reported in full. His mode of narrating events is clear, dignified and lively, and, as Michaelis observes, he "has well supported the character of each person whom he has introduced as delivering a public harangue, and has very

faithfully and happily preserved the manner of speaking which was peculiar to each of his orators."

ARRANGEMENT OF THE ACTS.

The work is divided into two distinct parts: the first part, embracing the first twelve chapters, contains an account of the progress of Christianity among the Jews, and of its extension to the Gentiles; and the second part, embracing the remaining sixteen chapters, contains an account of the missionary journeys of Paul. These two parts, again, admit of various subdivisions. Thus the first part may be divided into four subdivisions—the history of the Church before Pentecost, the progress of the Church in Jerusalem, its progress in Judea and Samaria, and its extension to the Gentiles. The second part also admits of a four-fold subdivision, namely, the three missionary journeys of Paul, each of them beginning at Antioch and terminating at Jerusalem, and the account of his imprisonment. According to this plan, the Acts of the Apostles admits of the following arrangement:

PART I. PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL IN JUDEA, AND ITS EXTENSION TO THE GENTILES.

1. History of the Church before Pentecost,	. . . . .	i.
2. Progress of the Gospel in Jerusalem,	. . . . .	ii.-vii.
3. Progress of the Gospel in Judea and Samaria,	. . . . .	viii., ix.
4. Extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles,	. . . . .	x.-xii.

PART II. THE MISSIONARY LABORS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

1. Paul's first missionary journey,	. . . . .	xiii.-xv. 35.
2. Paul's second missionary journey,	. . . . .	xv. 36-xviii. 22.
3. Paul's third missionary journey,	. . . . .	xviii. 23-xxi. 16.
4. Paul's imprisonment,	. . . . .	xxi. 17-xxviii.

CHRONOLOGY.

The Acts of the Apostles evidently proceeds in a chronological order, but it is extremely difficult to fix the precise dates of the different events recorded. We give, for the sake of reference, a table containing a list of the Roman emperors, and of the governors of Judea, along with the chief events mentioned in the Acts, chronicled under the years in which these events most probably occurred:

TABLE.

EMPERORS.	JEWISH GOVERNORS.	PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE ACTS.
33. Tiberius.	Pontius Pilate.	The ascension? miracle of Pentecost—Acts i. ii. During these years, the events recorded in Acts iii.—vi. 7 probably occurred. Martyrdom of Stephen; evangelistic labors in Samaria—Acts vi. 8—viii. Conversion of Paul?—Acts ix. 1-19.
34. . . .	. . . .	
35. . . .	. . . .	
36. . . .	. . . .	
37. Caligula.	Marullus.	Paul's first visit to Jerusalem; he retires to Tarsus—Acts ix. 23-31. The missionary labors of Peter; conversion of Cornelius; the church at Antioch; Paul at Antioch—Acts ix. 32—xvi. Death of Herod; Paul's second visit to Jerusalem—Acts xii. Paul's first missionary journey—Acts xiii. xiv. During these years, Paul appears to have been at Antioch, where he abode long time with the disciples—Acts xiv. 28. Council of Jerusalem; Paul's third visit. Commencement of his second missionary journey—Acts xv.—xvi. 5. Paul in Macedonia and Achaia—Acts xvi. 6—xviii. 1. Paul at Corinth—Acts xviii. 1-17.
38. . . .	. . . .	
39. . . .	. . . .	
40. . . .	. . . .	
41. Claudius.	Herod Agrippa I.	Paul's fourth visit to Jerusalem. Paul's third missionary journey, commencing at Pentecost 54; he resides in Ephesus for nearly three years—Acts xviii. 18—xix. 20. Paul leaves Ephesus at Pentecost, and winters in Corinth—Acts xix. 21—xx. 3. Paul's journey to Jerusalem, which he reaches at Pentecost; his arrest and imprisonment—Acts xx. 4—xxiv. 26. Paul a prisoner in Caesarea—Acts xxiv. 26, 27. Paul's defense before Agrippa; in the autumn he sails for Rome, and winters at Malta—Acts xxv.—xxviii. 10. Paul's arrival at Rome in the spring—Acts xxviii. 11-29. Paul a prisoner at Rome—Acts xxviii. 30. Close of Paul's two years' imprisonment—Acts xxviii. 30, 31.
42. . . .	. . . .	
43. . . .	. . . .	
44. . . .	Cuspius Fadus.	
45. . . .	Tiberius Alexander.	Paul a prisoner in Caesarea—Acts xxiv. 26, 27. Paul's defense before Agrippa; in the autumn he sails for Rome, and winters at Malta—Acts xxv.—xxviii. 10. Paul's arrival at Rome in the spring—Acts xxviii. 11-29. Paul a prisoner at Rome—Acts xxviii. 30. Close of Paul's two years' imprisonment—Acts xxviii. 30, 31.
46. . . .	. . . .	
47. . . .	. . . .	
48. . . .	. . . .	
49. . . .	Ventidius Cummanus.	Paul a prisoner at Rome—Acts xxviii. 30. Close of Paul's two years' imprisonment—Acts xxviii. 30, 31.
50. . . .	. . . .	
51. . . .	Felix.	
52. . . .	. . . .	
53. . . .	. . . .	Paul a prisoner at Rome—Acts xxviii. 30. Close of Paul's two years' imprisonment—Acts xxviii. 30, 31.
54. Nero.	. . . .	
55. . . .	. . . .	
56. . . .	. . . .	
57. . . .	. . . .	Paul a prisoner at Rome—Acts xxviii. 30. Close of Paul's two years' imprisonment—Acts xxviii. 30, 31.
58. . . .	. . . .	
59. Nero.	. . . .	
60. . . .	Festus.	
61. . . .	. . . .	Paul a prisoner at Rome—Acts xxviii. 30. Close of Paul's two years' imprisonment—Acts xxviii. 30, 31.
62. . . .	. . . .	
63. . . .	Albinus.	
63. . . .	. . . .	

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

PART I.

From the ascension of our Lord to the admission of the Gentiles into the Church:

1. BEFORE THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

Introduction: Promise of the Spirit: Ascension, etc. (i. 1-14).

Matthias chosen in the place of Judas (15-26).

2. ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

Descent of the Spirit: Tongues: Witnesses (ii. 1-13).

First preaching of Peter, effects of his discourse (14-41).

## 3. AFTER THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

At Jerusalem: Union, &c., of the first converts (ii. 42-47).

A lame man restored (iii. 1-11).

Second preaching of Peter (12-26).

Peter and John in prison: Peter's address to the Sanhedrim (iv. 1-22).

Prayer of the Church: its Unanimity and Benevolence (23-27).

Ananias and Sapphira (v. 1-11).

Miracles wrought by the Apostles (12-16).

They are imprisoned and delivered (17-20).

Before the Sanhedrim, &c., Gamaliel's counsel, &c. (21-42).

Deacons: Church increases: Stephen accused (vi. 1-15).

Stephen's apology or defense: his martyrdom (vii. 1-60).

Persecution of the Church: of Saul (viii. 1-4).

At Samaria, Philip the deacon preaches there (5-8).

Of Simon the sorcerer: Peter and John go to Samaria (9-17).

Peter rebukes Simon (18-24).

At other places: Philip the Ethiopian officer: (25 to 40).

Conversion of Saul (ix. 1-19).

He preaches at Damascus: first visit to Jerusalem: sent to Tarsus: the Church has rest (20-31).

Miracle wrought by Peter at Lydda: at Joppa (32-43).

## PART II.

The admission of the Gentiles into the Church:

An angel appears to Cornelius: Peter's vision (x. 1-16).

Peter visits Cornelius: his discourse: Cornelius baptized (x. 17-48).

Peter blamed: he defends his conduct (xi. 1-18).

Diffusion of the Gospel: Barnabas and Saul at Antioch: of Agabus: Paul's second visit to Jerusalem (19-30).

Herod Agrippa persecutes the Church: Peter's deliverance (xii. 1-19).

Death of Herod: Church increases: Saul and Barnabas go home from Jerusalem to Antioch (20-25).

## PART III.

First apostolical journey of Paul among the Gentiles:

Designation of Saul and Barnabas: Seleucia: Cyprus: of Elymas the sorcerer: Perga in Pamphylia (xiii. 1-13).

Antioch in Pisidia: Paul's discourse: proceedings there (14-51).

Iconium: Lystra: Derbe: proceedings: A cripple healed (v. 51, 52, xiv. 1-10).

Paul and Barnabas reputed gods (11-18).

Derbe: the Churches revisited: Pisidia: Pamphylia: Perga: Attalia: Antioch (19-28).

Paul's third visit to Jerusalem: the Council (xv. 1-11).

Account of the Gentiles: speech of James: the Decree, etc (12-35).

## PART IV.

The second apostolical journey of Paul among the Gentiles:

Contention of Paul and Barnabas: Paul and Silas go through Syria and Cilicia (xv. 36-41.)

Derbe: Lystra: Timothy circumcised: Phrygia: Galatia: Mysia: Troas (xvi. 1-8).

Samothrace: Neapolis: Philippi, conversion of Lydia (9-15).



A Pythoness dispossessed: Paul and Silas imprisoned, the jailor, &c. (16-40).  
 Amphipolis: Apollonia: Thessalonica Berea (xvii. 1-14).  
 Athens (15-34).  
 Corinth; of Aquila: Crispus; Gallio (xviii. 1-17).  
 Syria: Ephesus: Cæsarea: fourth visit to Jerusalem: Antioch (18-22).

PART V.

The third apostolical journey of Paul among the Gentiles:

Galatia: Phrygia; of Apollos (xviii. 23-28).  
 Paul two years at Ephesus: disputes with the Jews (xix. 1-12).  
 Exorcists: Paul's stay at Ephesus (23-41).  
 Macedonia: Greece: Troas: of Eutichus (xx. 1-12).  
 Assos: Mitylene: Chios: Samos: Trogyllium: Miletus: Paul's discourse to the elders of Ephesus (13-38).  
 Coos: Rhodes: Patara: Syria: Tyre: Ptolemais: Cæsarea: of Agabus (xxi. 1-14).  
 Paul's fifth visit to Jerusalem (15-26).  
 Persecuted: rescued: permitted to speak (27-40).  
 His defense before the populace (xxii. 1-21).  
 Claims the privilege of a Roman (22-29).  
 His speech before the council: dissension (v. 30, xxiii. 1-10).  
 Paul encouraged: conspiracy against him (11-22).  
 Lysias sends him to Cæsarea (23-35).  
 Accused by Tertullus before Felix: his defense (xxiv. 1-21).  
 Felix postpones the matter, trembles at Paul's discourse (22-27).  
 Paul before Festus: appeals to Cæsar (xxv. 1-12).  
 Meeting of Agrippa and Festus (13-27).  
 Paul's defense before them, &c. (xxvi. 1-32).

PART VI.

Paul's voyage to Rome:

Voyage to Crete: Paul's counsel rejected: tempest (xxvii. 1-20).  
 Paul foretells the shipwreck, &c.: Malta (21-44).  
 At Malta: various miracles (xxviii. 1-10).  
 Voyage to Rome: arrival there (11-16).  
 Paul preaches to the Jews: upbraids them (17-29).  
 Preaches during two years to all who come to hear (30, 31).



1<sup>st</sup> Journey .....  
 2<sup>nd</sup> " .....  
 3<sup>rd</sup> " .....  
 4<sup>th</sup> " .....  
 5<sup>th</sup> " .....  
 The modern names are  
 given thus (Dotted)  
 The rivers indicated thus ..... are  
 only winter torrents.

**THE COUNTRIES**  
 Embraced within the  
**TRAVELS OF ST. PAUL**

English Miles.



## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

The title, "The Acts of the Apostles," would be readily suggested by the general contents of the work, viz.: the development and diffusion of the Christian Church, which were effected by the Apostles, particularly by Peter, the Apostle of the Circumcision, and by Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles. Whether this title proceeded from the author himself is doubtful, but it is certainly very ancient, and occurs in the earliest notices of this book.

### CHAPTER I.

<sup>1</sup> Christ, preparing his apostles to the beholding of his ascension, gathereth them together into the mount Olivet, commandeth them to expect in Jerusalem the sending down of the Holy Ghost, promiseth after a few days to send him: by virtue whereof they should be witnesses unto him, even to the utmost parts of the earth. <sup>9</sup> After his ascension they are warned by two angels to depart, and to set their minds upon his second coming. <sup>12</sup> They accordingly return, and, giving themselves to prayer, choose Matthias Apostle in the place of Judas.

THE former treatise <sup>a</sup>have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, <sup>b</sup>Luke i. 1-4, &c.

*Treatise, or narrative.* The former treatise referred to, is the Gospel of Luke, which had been previously written, and of which the present book is the sequel or continuation. The authority of each of these books confirms the other. Let not new sermons and new books make us forget old ones. *Have I made*, or more definitely, *did make*, at a particular time, well known to the person here immediately addressed. *O Theophilus.* A person of distinction, to whom Luke inscribed also his former production. The word means "lover of God," whence some have fancied that it is to be taken as a general name for any or every lover of God. But there seems no foundation for this opinion, as the circumstance and style of address point to a particular person of honorable station, with whom Luke was acquainted. (See on Luke i. 3.)

Who Theophilus was, however, is a matter of little importance, the substance of the book that is dedicated to him is what is vital and momentous. *Of all, &c.* This statement divides the work of Christ into two great branches: the one embracing His work *on earth*, the other His subsequent work *from heaven*, the one in His own person, the other by His Spirit, the one complete when He ascended on high, the other to continue till His second appearing. The expression "of all," means comprehensively. It often signifies, indefinitely, a large portion or number. (Acts xiii. 10; 1 Tim. i. 16; James i. 2; Matt. ii. 3; Rom. xi. 26.) *Began.* Christ's ministry here was the beginning of a work which earth had never witnessed before, something absolutely *new*. His *works* were original, He did them in His own name, and by His own might as God. His *teaching* was original, He derived not His doctrines from others, or from any source out of Himself. *To do*—by miracles and holy deeds; *to teach*—by discourses.

<sup>2</sup> Until <sup>b</sup>the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.

<sup>a</sup>Luke xxiv. 51; verse 9; 1 Tim. iii. 16. <sup>c</sup>Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15-19.

The *day* refers to the day of ascension.

*Taken up*, or, as some express it, "taken back." This expression shows the familiarity of the subject to the writer and his correspondent. The Rhemish version has it, *he was assumed*, that is, into heaven by God the Father. *Through the Holy Ghost*. This may either refer to our Lord's choosing the Apostles, or to His giving them commandments after His resurrection; but the latter seems to be intended. (See on Luke xxiv. 44-49; John xx. 19-23.) Jesus was endued abundantly with the influence of the Spirit, and acted always in conformity with His dictates. (See x. 38; Luke iv. 1; John iii. 34, &c.) This subjection was one of the laws of His dependent nature, one of the conditions of His mediatorial office. *The Apostles* are here mentioned as a well-defined and well-known body of men, whose vocation and mission had already been recorded by this writer (Luke vi. 12-16), though their names are afterward repeated for a special reason. (See below, on verse 13.) *He had chosen*. (Luke vi. 13; John vi. 70.) Judas is treated separately in verses 16, 17.

3. To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.—4 Luke xxiv. 15; John xx. 21.

*Passion*, or, *suffering*, which was once the meaning of the former word. *Infallible proofs*. As Christ is the great miracle, so in Him the resurrection is the central miracle apparent to man, and it was important, therefore, that this miracle should be sustained by indubitable signs. Christ seems to have made ten distinct appearances of Himself to His disciples after His resurrection from the dead. The first was to Mary Magdalene, recorded in Mark xvi. and John xx.; the second was to Cleopas and another of the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Mark xvi. 12; Luke xxiv. 13-32); the third was to Simon Peter (Luke xxiv. 33-35; 1 Cor. xv. 5); the fourth was in the evening of the same day to the eleven, in the absence of Thomas, and at Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 36-43; John xx. 19-25); the fifth, when, "eight days afterward," He appeared to the eleven at Jerusalem, Thomas being present (Mark xvi. 14; John xx. 26-29; 1 Cor. xv. 6); the sixth, when he appeared to all, or part of, the women who had first visited the sepulchre, and sent a

command by them to the disciples to depart unto Galilee (Matt. xxviii. 1-10); the seventh, when He appeared unto the Apostles, and probably to the whole body of disciples, on a certain mountain in Galilee (1 Cor. xv. 6); the eighth He appeared to certain of the disciples while fishing on the lake of Galilee (John xxi. 1-24); the ninth when He appeared to James, "the Lord's brother," in Galilee (1 Cor. xv. 7); the tenth, on the morning of His ascension, when He appeared to the Apostles assembled in Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 43-51. Acts i. 4-8).

Our Lord showed Himself after His resurrection to none but His disciples. They were the most fit persons to judge of the truth of this event, as they had been intimately acquainted with Him, knew exactly His stature, voice and manner; and, consequently could not but know whether He who appeared to them, and conversed frequently, and ate with them, was not the very Person whom the Jews and Romans had put to death, for asserting that He was the Son of God, and the King of Israel. Nor could the disciples have any other motive than the love of the truth to make them persevere in publishing Christ's resurrection, in the situation and circumstances in which they afterward found themselves, and of which He had fully forewarned them. Their conduct, therefore, demonstrates their full conviction of the truth of the fact which they published to the world, and for the love of which they hazarded their lives, and in defense of which, the greater part, if not all of them, shed their blood.

*The things pertaining to the kingdom of God* constituted the grand subject of Christ's ministry. The discoveries of science, the speculations of philosophy, the politics of nations—such subjects as these which agitated the outward world, were not touched upon in His loftiest converse with His disciples. Things of a higher type, things that underlie and regulate the universe, things, compared with which the greatest realities of earth are but as passing shadows, things that restore polluted spirits to holiness, disordered spirits to harmony, apostate spirits to God—were the things of His ministry.

4. And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.  
<sup>1</sup>Luke xxiv. 49. <sup>2</sup>John xiv. 15, 16.

Being assembled, on the day of the Ascension, and either at Mount Olivet or Jerusalem, from which we read, "Jesus led them out as far as Bethany." (Luke xxiv. 50.) Commanded, &c. This last commandment of our Lord to the Apostles involved great self-denial on their part, for they would naturally feel disposed to withdraw from Jerusalem, and thus retire from the presence of men whom they dreaded, as well as escape, in a certain measure, their own painful recollections of the sufferings of Jesus, and of their previous unfaithfulness and faintheartedness. But it was the will of God that on the spot in which enmity against His Anointed had assumed the most awful form, the superior power of grace might be revealed. (See Isa. ii. 1-3.) Wait, in holy thought, earnest prayer, and rapt devotion. Such a state of expectancy is essential to a patient continuance in well-doing. In every spiritual gift the Lord would have us to meet His faithfulness with our faith. *The promise of the Father* the fulfillment, realization of the promise concerning the Holy Spirit. (Comp. Gal. iii. 14.) This gift is said to be the promise of the Father, because it was foretold in the Old Testament that He would bestow it. (See ii. 16; Joel iii. 1; Zech. ii. 10.) It is unbelief, and not humility, to distrust the promise of the Father—to wait without expectancy for the coming of the Spirit. Without expectation there will be no truth—no reality, no fervency, no prevailing power in prayer. Prayer is not the mere instinctive utterance of desire, it is the utterance of desire for things known to be agreeable to God, and therefore expected. The indwelling presence of the Spirit is the life of the soul—the plentiful outpouring of the Spirit is the life of the Church. *Have heard of me*, as recorded in Luke xxiv. 49. (See John xv. 26, xvi. 13.)

5. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.  
<sup>1</sup>Matt. iii. 11. <sup>2</sup>Chap. ii. 4, x. 45, xi. 15.

There appears to be a reference to the testimony of the Baptist himself. (Matt. iii. 11; Luke iii. 16, on which see notes.)

*With water.* Notice, the element is applied to the person, not the person to the element. *Shall be baptized, by me, with the Holy Ghost,* the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost. To the Apostles, and to the one hundred and twenty assembled at the Pentecost, the extraordinary gifts were imparted, chiefly to enable them by their inspired preaching and writings in the Gospels (John xiv. 26, xvi. 13; 1 Thes. ii. 13), with their deeds and miracles to spread the Christian faith throughout the world. This was the common baptism of the Church, for it was for the use of the Church that the gifts of the Spirit were so largely conferred on the disciples. *Not many days hence*—only ten days. Yet though the days were "not many," why so many? Why not the immediate charisma? The reasons may be several: 1. Their hearts must be yet further trained in order to be fitted to become recipients of so wonderful an outpouring of the Spirit. Errors (like their questions in verse 6) must be corrected, trials like the last departure of their Lord must be endured, hours of earnest supplication (verse 14) must be passed in order that their wills may be brought into harmony with the Divine will. 2. The final departure of the Son was a requisite condition before the advent of the Spirit. 3. As it was at the Passover that the crucifixion was to take place, so the founding of the new Church must in the Divine order be placed at the Pentecost. An epochal event must have its epochal day.

6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?  
<sup>1</sup>Matt. xxiv. 3, 4. <sup>2</sup>Isa. i. 26; Dan. vii. 27.

*When they therefore, &c.* This seems to be the same meeting to which the historian refers in verse 4. The old leaven of Jewish prejudices, and carnal ideas of the Messiah's reign, still fermented in the minds of the disciples, notwithstanding His explanation of the nature of the dispensation He was about to introduce. (Verse 3.) To this must be attributed the question, *Lord, wilt thou, &c.* The question seems to have taken for granted that the kingdom would be restored in some form or other. (See Isa. i. 26, ix. 7; Jer. xxxiii. 6, xxxiii. 15, 17; Dan. vii. 13, 14; Hos. iii.

4, 5; Amos ix. 10; Zech. ix. 10.) What they wanted to know was, would the restoration take place at *this time*? "Is the time now come, when Thou wilt deliver Thy people from the oppression of a foreign yoke, and give them the empire of the world?"

7. And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.—Matt. xxiv. 36; 1 Thes. v. 1, 2

*Seasons, occasions.* It is one thing to know the general period of an event, another to know the precise time of its occurrence. *Put, fixed, or arranged, in His own power, i. e.,* in the sovereign exercise of it. (Comp. Matt. xxi. 23.) The implied inference is, that He may be expected to reserve the knowledge of such decisions to Himself. As the question of the disciples relates merely to the time when Christ would establish His kingdom, His answer, as here given, He confines to the same point. Few errors within the limits of Christianity have been more dangerous or disgraceful in effect either upon the credit of the Bible, or upon the mind of the individuals, than the attempting by prophetic calculations to fix the precise date of any future event.

God conceals futurity from His people, 1. That they may not be diverted from their proper work and business, the work they have to do from day to day. 2. That they may not be disquieted. Let us labor to trust in Him, who has all the times and seasons which concern us, and His people, and the world, in His own power. (Deut. xxxii. 4; Isa. xxx. 18.) Let us submit to Him in a meek and quiet spirit. Since we cannot know *His* times and seasons, let us labor to know our *own*. (John vii. 6; Eccl. ix. 12; Luke xix. 41, 42.) And since we cannot look far into future time, let us look more into eternity, over and beyond all time. For it is only future time God has shut up from us, while He leaves eternity open to us.

8. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.  
9. Luke xxiv. 47-49; Matt. xxviii. 19.

*Power*—miraculous energy to work miracles, to teach infallibly, and otherwise to enable them to do the work of the ministry for which He had ordained them. *Shall be witnesses, &c.* Here the office and

mission of the Apostles are declared. Their office is that of witness: "they were not to be prophets of the future, but witnesses of the past." Their mission was to witness for Christ in *Jerusalem, &c.* We see here the actual course which the Gospel took: first it was preached in Jerusalem, and after the dispersion, by reason of the persecution which followed the martyrdom of Stephen, in Judea and Samaria, and afterward by Peter to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, and by Paul in Asia and Europe. *Uttermost part, or, extreme point of the earth.* This and other kindred phrases are employed in the Old Testament, to signify all nations, not excepting the remotest. (See Ps. ii. 8, xix. 4. Isa. xlvi. 20; Zech. ix. 10.) The mission here given was not, in its completeness, executed by the Apostles; it continues to be the mission of the Church, until the whole world shall be converted, and do homage to Christ as its Lord and King. A Church is only so far a *witnessing* Church, as it is baptized with the Holy Ghost. Witnesses shall testify while the world stands, of the love of God in Christ, of redemption through His blood, and of the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.

9. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

*Spoken these things, and still others* (Luke xxiv. 51). *While they beheld, &c.* The description is divided into two parts: at first, the Lord is raised in a visible manner, the eyes of the Apostles could follow Him for a time as He went up; then a cloud (probably a bright cloud—Matt. xvii. 5) coming down, received and removed Him from the sight of the disciples. *He was taken up.* It was not some shadowy form of Him, some apparition, some spectral outline of Him, that they saw ascend heavenward, it was He *Himself*, their veritable Friend, Redeemer, Lord—He whom they had followed three years, with whom they had often mingled in closest fellowship, whom they had seen die upon the cross, and whose living words were now vibrating upon their ear and heart.

If Christ Jesus has thus borne with Him our nature into the inmost sanctuary of heaven, if He has not hesitated to wear

the form that Adam wore, in that Holy of Holies where angels tremble as they gaze, what ought to be our feelings, as we reflect upon this astonishing transit? How ought we to be animated, as we remember that a body, spiritual, indeed, but yet tangible and visible—a nature immaculate, indeed, but yet human and *ours*—has been uplifted by the energy of indwelling Godhead, and set in the center of the Paradise of God? If this fact be believed, it is impossible it cannot leave us as it found us. To know it, and believe it, is to awake to emotions that annihilate earth, and open heaven *already* to the exulting soul! (Comp. Luke ix. 52-56.)

As to *Himself*, Jesus, in ascending, returned to the place whence He came, and assumed the glory which He had laid aside, or rather obscured. As He ascended with a body, heaven is proved to be a place as well as a state. As to His *enemies*, He showed that He had “triumphed over them,” and “received gifts for men: yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” As to His *people*, He ascended as the High Priest of their profession, to finish by intercession for them what He had done by sacrifice—as their Head and Representative—that because He lives, they may live also—as their Protector and Governor—as “Head over all things unto His body the Church,” make all things work together for their good.

10. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel. 11. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

John xx. 12. rChap. ii. 7, xiii. 31. eJohn xiv. 3; 1 Thes. iv. 16.

*Looked steadfastly*, continued to gaze long after the cloud had concealed Him. It was a look of astonishment and grief for the sudden loss of all that was dear to them, it was a look of eager desire to be again gratified with a sight of their Master. So too, the servants of Jesus, in an especial manner, should fix their eyes and hearts on Him, in all their purposes and acts, in their struggles and their sorrows, then will the glance of Jesus meet their own, for while He dwelleth on high, He humbleth Himself to behold the things

that are below. (Ps. cxiii. 5, 6.) *Two men*. That these were angels, appears, 1. From the suddenness of their appearance, for no one had seen them approach. 2. Their white, shining apparel, which was a visible representation of celestial purity and holiness. 3. The tidings which they brought to the disciples, being a message sent from heaven to the earth. *Why stand ye, &c.* “As if your now glorified Head were gone from you never to return: He is coming again, not another, but *this same Jesus*, and as ye have seen him go, in like manner shall he come—as personally, as *visibly*, as *gloriously*: and let the joyful expectation of this coming swallow up the sorrow of that departure.”

Among other reasons why Jesus should thus return, are the following: “The great transactions of redemption have been *public*, open, often grand. The apostasy was public, in the face of angels and the universe. Sin has been open, public, high-handed. Misery has been public, and has rolled its deep and turbid waves in the face of the universe. Death has been public, all worlds have *seen* the race cut down and moulder. The death of Jesus was public, the angels saw it, the heavens were clothed with mourning, the earth shook, and the dead arose. The angels have desired to look into these things (1 Peter i. 12), and have felt an intense solicitude about men. Jesus was publicly whipped, cursed, crucified, and it is proper that He should publicly triumph, that all heaven rejoicing, and all hell at length humbled, should *see* His public victory. Hence, He will come in the clouds (emblem of sublimity), with angels, with fire, and will raise the dead, and exhibit to all the universe the amazing close of the scene of redemption. . . . These verses present the most grand and wonderful events this world has ever known . . . . consolation for the Christian . . . . ceaseless alarm to the sinner.” (Matt. xvi. 27; 2 Cor. v. 10; Phil. iii. 20; Col. iii. 3, 4; Titus ii. 3; Matt. xxiii. 40, xxvi. 4; Mark xiii. 26; Rev. i. 7; Dan. vii. 13.) The attention and the hope of Christians are now directed to the second appearance of their Saviour. The ancient Church looked for His coming in the flesh, we, according

to His promise, look for His coming in glory. "Lift up your heads with joy, believers, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh." "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." Happy are they, and only they, who can say, with holy and earnest desire, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

12. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.—<sup>1</sup>Luke xxiv. 52.

*The mount called Olivet*; the same as is elsewhere called "the mount of Olives." (Matt. xxi. 1, xxiv. 3.) It was a high ridge east of Jerusalem and parallel to the city. It was formerly planted with olive trees. From this mount Jesus ascended to heaven. *Which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.* A Sabbath day's journey among the Jews, was about a mile. The expression here used is not, however, to be so strictly understood as to mean a definite number of paces, neither more nor less; but, a short distance, such as, according to Jewish custom, it was not considered wrong to go on the Sabbath to attend worship at a synagogue. Different parts of mount Olivet were, of course, more or less distant from Jerusalem. On one side, the foot of the mountain was but five furlongs distant; while Bethany, which lay on the opposite side, was fifteen furlongs. (See John xi. 18.)

13. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both <sup>2</sup>Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

<sup>2</sup>Luke vi. 13-16.

*Come in*, that is, into the city. *An upper room*, &c. Probably the idea is, not that Peter and the other Apostles made this house their home, but that they habitually resorted to it, and were generally there. They would naturally wish to be frequently together, and to be often occupied in social prayer. The circumstances of the primitive believers were such, that, not being able to have an edifice specially dedicated to the purposes of the new religion, they were obliged to assemble in a private house. All advantages, with respect to time and place, and other circumstances, for the better performance of holy duties, ought to be made use of and improved by us. This "upper room" was most raised toward heaven most remote from noise

and company, and worldly distractions. The Spirit of God descends upon, and rests with such as have raised affections above the world, and are nearest to heaven, not upon such as are buried alive in worldly business. (For sketch of Peter and the other Apostles, see Appendix A.)

14. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

<sup>1</sup>Luke xxiii. 49, 55, xxiv. 10.

*These*, whose names have just been enumerated. *Continued*—during the ten days to the feast of Pentecost. This word signifies, to go on, in performing or enduring anything, courageously, and with a certain invincible fixedness and resolution of mind. *With one accord*, or, *with one mind*. The term characterizes the entire harmony of their views and feelings. (Comp. Rom. xv. 6.) *Prayer and supplication* for the promised baptism of the Spirit. "Prayer" is the more general term, including all sorts of uttered or mental worship, whether of simply thanks or petition. "Supplication" is simply the ardent expression of our wants. *With the women*, Their names are not given. Among them may have been those who followed Christ from Galilee. (See Luke xxiii. 55, xxiv. 10.) Perhaps some of the wives of the Apostles were here, for some of them were married. (Matt. viii. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5.) Christianity has raised woman to her present position in the civilized world, and woman has ever proved the most ardent and loyal in her love to the system that has made her what she is.

*Mary the mother of Jesus*. This is the last time her name is mentioned in the holy book, and she is not mentioned with any idolatrous homage, but spoken of simply as one of the disciples of Christ. What became of her afterward is not known. One old tradition says she died early in Jerusalem, and another says she accompanied John to Ephesus, and lived to an advanced age. *With his brethren*. Or his brothers. Who were they? They were probably those who had accompanied the mother of Jesus on different occasions, as recorded in the Gospels. (See John ii. 12; Matt. xii. 46-50; Mark iii. 31-35; Luke viii. 19-21.)

If we would have a plentiful outpouring





OLIVET, FROM THE BETHANY ROAD.

of the Spirit, we must, like the disciples, be found in earnest and united prayer. Prayer is the spontaneous offspring of expectation and desire. It is hope's utterance before God. Prayer for the presence of the Holy Spirit is the first and most prominent characteristic of the regenerated soul, of the awakened or awakening Church. Secret prayer is the life of the individual, social prayer of the community, congregational prayer of the Church. In order to receive an outpouring of the Spirit, we must, also, often meet together with one accord in one place. The Lord loves to see His family dwelling together in unity, near and dear to Himself, and to one another. He is doubtless to be found wherever there is an humble and believing heart, but nowhere surely is such manifested love as in the bosom of His loving family, met together to wait for the promise of their Father.

15. \* And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

*Those days.* The ten days between the Ascension and the Pentecost. *Peter stood up.* He was the senior in age, had manifested true repentance after his fall, and chiefly was designed to the Apostleship of the circumcision. (Gal. ii. 8.) He therefore takes the lead, when the preaching was to the Jews. (See chap. ii. 3.) He was, in one sense, "the mouth of the Apostles," but he had no authority over them. He does not here take upon himself the right to fill up the vacancy in the Apostolic office, but brings the matter before the brethren. And it is not the Apostles only, but the whole assembly, who agree to the proposal of Peter, and set apart two as fit candidates for the Apostolic office. *Names,* is a Scriptural and classical Greek and Roman word for persons. (Rev. iii. 4.) *An hundred and twenty.* These were the eleven Apostles, and the seventy-two disciples. The other thirty-seven were probably (verse 21) those "who had been with Jesus from the beginning."

16. Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

\*Psa. xlii. 9; John xlii. 18. \*Matt. xxvi. 47; John xviii. 3.

*Must needs have been,* or it was necessary that it should be fulfilled, as it has been in

the death of Judas. Punishment must needs follow crime. *Which the Holy Ghost, &c.* While David prophesied of the calamities which should befall his persecutors, it was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that the *enemies and murderers* of the Messiah should inherit *those curses* in all their terror, and yet be *more miserable* than the persons on whom they were more immediately to fall. (See on John xlii. 18.) This fact is asserted in these words, as what was revealed by the same Spirit to Peter. *Which was guide, &c.* Referring undoubtedly to the course which the betrayer took in the garden of Gethsemane. (John xviii. 2-23.) Peter speaks of the grievous sin and horrible death of Judas with the greatest earnestness and candor, but also with devout sorrow and gentleness.

17. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.—\* Luke vi. 16.

As if he had said, "He helped with us to make that significant and sacred number, twelve, which is now broken and must be restored. "*Obtained part,*" &c. The clause might be more exactly rendered, *shared the allotment of this ministry, i. e.,* the Apostleship, to which the same word is applied by Paul (Rom. xi. 13), "O Lord! how possible, and yet how sad is it to preach to others, and to become castaways ourselves! to prophesy in Thy name, and yet to perish in Thy wrath! to cast devils out of others, and yet to be cast-out devils ourselves! to have our ministry blessed to others' comfort and salvation, and at the same time to minister to our own condemnation."

18. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. 19. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem, in-odm as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aeldama, that is to say, the field of blood.

\*Matt. xxvii. 5-10. †Peter ii. 15.

*Purchased a field, &c.* Matthew says (xxvii. 6, 7) that the chief priests bought with the silver pieces for which Jesus was betrayed, the potters' field, to bury strangers in. The apparent discrepancy in the accounts can soon be reconciled. It was natural that in process of time Judas should be virtually identified with the chief priests, to whom he had sold himself to do iniquity, and that he might be regarded as in effect doing what they did with the money that accrued to him for

his share in the foul transactions between them. In other parts of Scripture we find similar identifications (see Matt. viii. 5 comp. with Luke vii. 3; Mark x. 35 comp. with Matt. xx. 20; also Acts vii. 16), and it was the more natural here, as in the Psalms; applied by Peter to Judas there was by anticipation the same sort of identification of the traitor and his unbelieving countrymen. *Falling headlong*, &c. The revolting details recorded are perfectly consistent with facts. In our own day, where executions are effected with comparative skill, criminals of large stature and bulk have, on the removal of the drop, suffered precisely what is here recorded of Judas; the internal viscera being suddenly shattered and ejected with great violence . . . without any external trace of injury but in the immediate region of the passage.

*Known unto all*—a bold appeal to public notoriety, indicating the full confidence of the writer in the public truth of the narrative. *Proper tongue*—the Syro-Chaldaic. *Aceldama* . . . *field of blood*, so called as bought with the price of Jesus' blood. The field now shown as Aceldama, or, properly, Hakal-Dema, lies on the slope of the hills beyond the valley of Hinnom, south of Mount Zion. *Richardson* affirms that bodies were thrown into the charnel-house which occupies a portion of it, as late as 1818, but *Dr. Robinson* alleges that it has the appearance of having been for a much longer time abandoned.

20. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let this habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and this bishoprick let another take.

\*Ps. lxxix. 25. \*Ps. cix. 8.

*It is written in the book of Psalms*, &c. "Let none be surprised, or stumble at it, that this should be the exit of one of the Twelve for David had foretold not only his *sin* (which Christ had noticed, John xiii. 18, from Psa. xli. 9), but also his *punishment*. (Psa. lxxix. 25.) *Habitation*, properly, a shepherd's hut, with the enclosed cattle-yard, and also generally a habitation of any kind. From the rustic hut, says *Valckenber*, the word was transferred to other habitations. *Desolate*. This is the lot of all things which the ungodly possess in the world. *Henry* says, "Perhaps Judas had some habitation of his own at Jerusalem, which, upon this,

everybody was afraid to live in, and so it became desolate (people detesting the very place where the suicide lived and died)."

*And his bishoprick*, &c. This passage is from Ps. cix. 8, in the words of the Seventy. That Psalm sets forth the wickedness and desert of those who persecute the people of God, and hence, as Judas had exemplified so fully this idea, he too must be divested of his office, and its honors be transferred to another. "Bishopric," though in itself correct, because a mere corruption of the Greek word, suggests foreign ideas by its modern usage and associations. The marginal translation in our Bible (*charge or office*) is not only free from this objection, but much nearer to the meaning of the Greek and Hebrew words, which both denote official visitation and inspection.

21. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22. Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.—Luke x. 1, 2; John xv. 27.

*Wherefore*. As it is essential that the vacancy occasioned by the apostasy of Judas should be supplied, and the number *Twelve* be restored. *Companied with*, belonged to our company. *All the time*, &c. During the time that the Lord Jesus was occupied among us in the duties of His office. *From the baptism of John*, by whom our Lord was not only Himself baptized, but first officially announced and introduced to His own disciples. *That same day*, the day of the Ascension. (See on verses 2, 9.) *Must one be ordained*. The Greek word means simply *to become*, or more emphatically, *to be made*. Only such an one as had "companied with them all the time," &c., could be an authentic witness of Christ's *resurrection*, by which we are to understand the doctrine, and miracles of Jesus, as well as His rising from the tomb, because the article of the resurrection includes many other articles of faith in it, for if He rose from the grave He was buried, if He was buried He died, if He died He was born. "He who believes the resurrection of Christ," says *Bengel*, "believes all which preceded and followed." Christ's resurrection is called by *Augustine*, "the peculiar faith of Christians," by *Tertullian*, "the model of our hope, the key to our tombs," by *Calvin*, "the chief head in the Gospel."

23. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.  
Chap. xv. 22.

*Appointed two, or placed two, i. e.,* before them, in their midst. (See v. 27, vi. 6.) *Joseph called Barsabas*, most probably son of Sabas. Though the lot to supply the vacant office fell not upon him, it is more than probable that he continued still to be much with the Apostles, and to lend his aid toward the establishment of Christianity in his native land. His name, however, is not again mentioned, and the traditions given by Eusebius, that he was one of the seventy disciples, and also that having drunk some deadly poison he sustained no harm, however probable, cannot be deemed certain. *Matthias*. The name signifies, "gift of Jehovah." No other particulars of his history are certainly known, than those here given. Various traditions describe him as preaching in Ethiopia, or in Colchis, and being there martyred, or, according to yet another account, as preaching in Judea and being stoned by the Jews.

24. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, 25. That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.  
Jer. xvii. 10; Rev. ii. 23.

*Thou, Lord.* As Jesus had personally appointed the other Apostles, many expositors have argued, that this prayer was immediately addressed to Him, and the language favors the supposition. (See on verse 2.) This prayer implies, 1. A recognition of Divine omniscience: *Thou which knowest, &c.* A deep impression of the Lord's acquaintance with all hearts is essential to sincere and earnest devotion. (See John ii. 24, xxv. 21, 17; Rev. ii. 23.) 2. A desire to have their choice regulated by the Divine—*Show whether, &c.*, as if they had said, "Thy choice shall be ours, we desire only to vote for him whom Thou hast ordained for the office. Thy will be done." This is the spirit of all true prayer. Their prayer to Him attests their faith in His Godhead. (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.) *That he may take part, or lot, some read place.* "Ministry and apostleship," as an eminent commentator observes, "is not a mere hendiadys meaning apostolical ministry, but a generic and specific term combined, the one denoting service in general, the other

a particular office. *Fell*, literally, *went aside.* His own place. A euphemistic or softened expression of the awful future of the traitor, implying not only destined habitation but congenial element. Judas had fallen from what was *not his place* to go to the *place* which belongs to final apostates, hell. Every person in this world of probation has *his own place* in the world of retribution, a *place* made *his own*, by his *own* conduct and character.

26. And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

*Gave forth their lots*, perhaps gave them to those whose business it was to collect them. We know not the particular method. The account of *Grotius* seems probable, that they put their lots into two urns, one of which contained the names of Joseph and Matthias, and the other a blank and the word *Apostle*. In drawing these out, the blank came up with the name of Joseph, and the lot on which was written the word *Apostle* came up with the name of Matthias. The Apostles and the assembly of believers did not proceed to cast lots until they had themselves decided conscientiously in accordance with their personal knowledge, as far as any human decision could avail. *Matthias*. (See on verse 23.) *Was numbered*, was recognized as one of their order, and had the character of an Apostle thenceforth accorded to him. The honor God had conferred on inquiries by lots, might influence the disciples to adopt this method on this singular occasion. (Comp. Josh. vii. 14, 15; 1 Sam. x. 20, 21; 1 Chron. xxiv. 5, 7; Luke i. 9.)

"While the Lord remained with the Apostles," says *Bengel*, "they employed no lots, neither did they subsequently employ them after the coming of the Holy Ghost (chap. x. 19, xvi. 6, &c.), but in this single intermediate period and in this peculiar affair, they very fitly adopted the lot." In this age of the world, we are so differently situated from those who, in the old dispensation cast lots in order to acquire a knowledge of God's will on important and doubtful matters, that a resort to lots for deciding an important question can scarcely ever, if indeed ever, be judicious. A careful study of the Holy Scriptures, an examination of all the circum-

stances connected with any particular case, with prayer to God and consultation with judicious and pious friends, will thoroughly furnish the man of God for every good work, and will almost invariably lead to a right result. Beyond question, to cast lots upon trivial occasions, and solemnly to appeal to God's determination in ludicrous matters, is profanely to take the name of God in vain.

1. What is the "former treatise" referred to? 2. How did Jesus show Himself after His resurrection? 3. What did He command His Apostles? 4. What baptism were they to receive? 5. What did they ask Christ? 6. What was His reply? 7. What great event then occurred? 8. State the particulars of the ascension. 9. Where did the witnesses of the ascension then go? 10. What did they do in Jerusalem? 11. What is said of Peter? 12. Why was Matthias chosen to the Apostleship? 13. How was he chosen?

## CHAPTER II.

**1** The apostles, filled with the Holy Ghost, and speaking divers languages, are admired by some, and derided by others. **14** Whom Peter disapproving, and shewing that the apostles spoke by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus was risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, had poured down the same Holy Ghost, and was the Messiah, a man known to them to be approved of God by his miracles, wonders, and signs, and not crucified without his determinate counsel and foreknowledge: **37** he baptiseth a great number that were converted. **41** Who afterward devoutly and charitably converse together; the apostles working many miracles, and God daily increasing his church.

**A**ND when the day of Pentecost <sup>a</sup>was fully come they <sup>b</sup>were all with one accord in one place.  
<sup>a</sup>Lev. xxiii. 15. <sup>b</sup>Chap. i. 14.

*Day of Pentecost.* Ten days after the Ascension, the time arrived which had been appointed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The fiftieth day after the second day of the passover (the 16th), came the feast of Pentecost, called also the feast of weeks (*i. e.*, seven clear weeks from the 16th *Abib*). This was properly the feast of the completed harvest of the ground. Loaves made of the new meal and grain were offered as first-fruits. (Lev. xxiii. 17.) Many burnt offerings were now presented. (Lev. xxiii. 18-20.) This feast brought to Jerusalem a greater concourse of Jews and proselytes from all parts of the world than any other of the three great festivals. Hence the season was as well chosen for the first proclamation of our Lord's resurrection and ascension, as its occasion and its rites were symbolical of the first-fruits of the spiritual harvest, which were offered to God as the result of Peter's preaching. *Was fully come, i. e.*, when the appointed and therefore

necessary interval had quite elapsed. *All with one accord.* The same *one accord* as in i. 14, of the same body enumerated in i. 15, namely, the about *one hundred and twenty names* representative of the New Testament Church. They were of one mind. They were one in faith, in hope, and in spiritual sentiment, waiting in patience and perseverance the accomplishment of the promise which the Saviour of their love had bestowed. A spirit of unity among the disciples of Christ is greatly to be desired—unity founded upon attachment to the exalted power of the Redeemer, and guided by the hopes which the word of His promise has taught them to entertain. When such a spirit prevails, the Divine blessing may be expected to be received in the most plentiful abundance. (See on verse 4; also chap. i. 13, 14.) *In one place*, probably the upper room mentioned chap. i. 13.

**2.** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.—Chap. iv. 31.

*Suddenly.* The atmosphere does not pass at once from the serene to the tempestuous, but it was thus now, for the moment before a profound quiet reigned around them. The suddenness indicates the supernatural. *A sound from heaven, &c.* This was intended to solemnize the disciples of Christ, to awaken them to the greatest spiritual earnestness, and to make the descent of the Holy Ghost, in His miraculous presence, an event ever to be remem-

bered as of the most impressive and salutary nature. It did not sweep horizontally through the room, but came directly down, with a startling roar. It indicated that the Spirit of the Lord proceeded from heaven, whither Jesus had so lately ascended. It was an emblem of the Spirit's influence, and of his irresistible power. In the Scriptures the Spirit's influences are frequently represented by the wind. (Ezek. xxxvii. 9; John iii. 8.) We hear the sound of the wind as it sighs along the valley, or howls through the forest, or roars round the summit of the hill. We trace its effect as it waves the grass blade, or lays prostrate the giant oak, as it ruffles the smooth lake, or lashes the ocean to a storm, but it is itself unseen, and we are ignorant alike of its origin and of its destiny, and of the laws and limits of its course. So the Spirit is *real though invisible*, and produces as equally effective and manifest a change upon the souls of men, as the wind does upon the face of nature. *Filled all the house*—the whole house was filled by the Divine reverberation. The presence of the Spirit will be equal to the requirements of the whole Church, His aids will be dispensed to meet and supply the spiritual wants of every member of Christ's body. Wherever there is faith in His Divine Person, and prayerful dependence upon His influences, these influences for the glory of the Redeemer's intercession, will be bestowed for promoting all the purposes of vital godliness.

3. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

*Unto them, i. e.*, the believing recipients of the power from on high. *Cloven tongues*, that is, undivided at the root, but flaring into several points at the extremity. By this terminal division was beautifully symbolized the variety of dialect spoken by each *tongue*. *Like as of fire*, the tongues were not fire, but like fire. This was to intimate, that in the languages which the Apostles were now enabled to speak, they should communicate to the world that heavenly doctrine, which, like fire, both illuminates and purifies, or rather to signify, that their tongues, touched as with a live coal from the altar, should utter strains of glowing eloquence, not fashioned, it

might be, according to the rules observed by the orators of Greece and Rome, but capable of producing far nobler effects, eloquence, which would terrify the boldest, and alarm the most careless sinner, which would humble the proud, comfort the dejected, inspire the timid with invincible courage, and, with an energy unknown to philosophy, kindle the living fire of devotion in the coldest and most unfeeling heart.

*Each of them, i. e.*, of those assembled upon this occasion. There is nothing to restrict or qualify the wide expression used in verse 1, or to limit what is here said to the twelve Apostles. The whole assembly was collectively a representation of the body of believers, now about to be reorganized upon a Christian basis, and perpetuated as the Christian Church. *Sat upon*. Blessed be God for the promise of the same Holy Spirit to abide with all believers, though not in His miraculous gifts, yet in His sanctifying operations, and saving graces to the end of the world. (1 Peter iv. 14.) We are not to suppose that this was the first time that the Divine Spirit visited this world. He never came in such a demonstration of power and plenitude of influence as now.

4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

<sup>a</sup>Chap. i. 5. <sup>c</sup>Mark xvi. 17, x. 46.

All the disciples were filled with the presence of the Spirit. Such gifts, and in such measure, were bestowed on them severally, as were conducive to the glory of the Redeemer, and for the immediate advancement of the best interests of Divine truth. *With other tongues, i. e.*, than their native tongue. The miraculous variety was not in the ears of the hearers, but on the lips of the speakers. (Chap. x. 46, xix. 6; Mark xvi. 17; 1 Cor. xii. 10.) The miracle consisted especially in giving—without study, or any of the ordinary means of acquiring the knowledge of speech—the first disciples the power of preaching the Gospel in a great variety of languages. (1 Cor. xiv. 22.) The acquisition of a foreign language requires close application and frequent practice. It is difficult to become acquainted with the signification of the great variety of sounds

which are used in any country, so as to be able to understand them as soon as they are pronounced. Still more difficult is it to attain the power of speaking a foreign language fluently and accurately, or to become so familiar with its words, as instantly to call them up, to express the ideas, which arise in the mind. Besides, the sounds of a foreign language are, in some instances, so different from those to which we have been accustomed, that we feel ourselves at a loss to pronounce them, and that, unless we begin to learn in an early period of life, when our organs are flexible, we can hardly ever speak in such a manner as to please the ear of a native. These remarks serve to show the astonishing nature of the polyglottal miracle which was performed on the day of Pentecost. *As the Spirit gave, &c.* The Holy Spirit presided in that assembly. He who conferred the miraculous gift, also gave it direction, and as the Spirit gave the power of utterance to the disciples, so did they proclaim the truths of everlasting life. No man should dare to speak for Christ, without the Spirit of Christ. Better be dumb than speak the thoughts of a soul unrenewed by the Spirit. A divinely filled soul must break forth in divine language.

5. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

Besides the Jews settled at Jerusalem, there were, by the peculiar providence of God, no small number of foreigners dwelling there at the time, out of every nation under heaven. They had come up for the feast of Pentecost, or for the Passover, a little time before, since which many perhaps had remained. They were, however, almost entirely men who had sought Jehovah's sanctuary as proselytes, or from motives of piety. For the sound *must* go forth into all lands under heaven, that heaven was opened to all men, and that a new Sun of grace had risen on the earth. A devout spirit is precious in the eyes of God. It prompts to willing and continued obedience when God leads, and is rewarded with still more precious gifts of grace. (Matt. xiii. 12.)

6. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

Was noised abroad, or, occurred, *i. e.*, the

sound of the descending Spirit. The participial clause here may involve the idea of cause as well as time, and we may understand, therefore, that the sound in question was audible beyond the house where the disciples were assembled, that it arrested the attention of those abroad, and led them to seek out the scene of wonder. *Confounded*, confused or perplexed. *Language*, or dialect. Dialect, a kindred form to dialogue, originally means discourse or conversation, then mode of speech, style, or diction, then diversity of language, whether national or provincial. *Own* is emphatic, not merely in language which he understood, but in his own particular, peculiar tongue. (See on verses 4, 11.)

7. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?—<sup>b</sup>Chap. i. 11.

*Galileans.* Persons who know no other dialect, save that of their own country. Persons wholly uneducated, and consequently naturally ignorant of those languages which they now speak so fluently. Had the different speakers belonged to so many different countries, the wonder would have been diminished or removed. This was the name thus early given to the "sect."

8. And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9. Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia. 10. Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11. Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

<sup>a</sup>1 Cor. xii. 10, 28.

*In our own tongue.* (See on verses 4, 6.) This list of fifteen countries from which people were present, is, upon the whole, systematically arranged, proceeding from the north-east to the west, then turning to the south, and concluding with the west. *Parthia* was on the north-east of Media and Hyrcania, and north of Asia, surrounded entirely by mountains. *Media* bordered north, on the Caspian Sea, west on Armenia, east on Hyrcania, and south on Persia. *Elamites, i. e.*, the inhabitants of *Elymais* or *Elam*, which was east of the Tigris, north of Susiana (annexed to it in Dan. viii. 2), and south of Media, of which Ptolemy makes it a part. *Dwellers*, inhabitants. *Judea*—which differed in dialect from Galilee. (Verse 7.) Thus also a miracle was

given to the native Jews. *Cappadocia*, *Pontus*, provinces of Asia Minor. Pontus bordered on the south of the Euxine, or Black Sea; Cappadocia was south of Pontus. *Asia*. Asia strictly so called. (See on vi. 9.) *Phrygia*, and *Pamphylia*, provinces of Asia Minor, the latter lying south of the former, and on the Mediterranean coast. *Egypt*. The writer now glances to Africa, of which Egypt was a distinguished part. *Libya* was an extensive region on the west of Egypt. One of its principal cities was Cyrene (now Grenna), of the population of which at that time the Jews constituted a fourth part. *Strangers of* (or from) *Rome*. *Jews*, those born such, natural descendants of Abraham and Israel. *Proselytes*, converts from the heathen. *Cretes and Arabians*. The names, here added, do not violate the order previously followed, but complete the circle, as it were, by passing from the extreme west (Italy) to the extreme south (Arabia), between which two extremes the important island Crete (now Candia) lies in a direct line.

*How hear we*, &c. This extraordinary fact could be nothing else than a real miracle. In reference to the full substantiation of the truth of this miracle, observe, 1. It was predicted. "In my name they shall speak with new tongues." (Mark xvi. 17.) 2. The character and the pursuits of the men were well known; it was well known they were poor fishermen of Galilee. 3. Their judges. If they had spoken in one language only, the others might not have detected it, but every man, whether Crete or Arabian, heard them speak in the dialect of their own country. 4. The place. They did not go to a distance to tell their tale: they began when the Jews were around them, who were their bitter enemies. 5. The season—when large multitudes were present. 6. The boldness of Peter in accusing and denouncing the Jews. (Verse 23.) Would he, who had denied his Lord and Master through fear, now have *dared* to have charged them with having "killed the Prince of Life," unless God had fulfilled His promise, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you?" And unless this had been true, would the *result* have been what it

was? (Verses 37, 41.) The absence of this miracle in the Church, in the work of evangelizing the world, must now be supplied by human learning. And we ought to be very thankful to God that His word has been translated into so many tongues. But the time is coming when all the inhabitants of the earth shall read "in their own tongues the wonderful works of God."

12. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13. Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. 1 Chap. xvii. 20.

The effect upon the multitude was twofold. Some were impressed, and became inquirers. *They were amazed*, &c. *Others mocking said*, &c. Some suppose that these scoffers belonged to the hierarchical party of the Jews—the enemies of Christ. Others think that they were natives of Judea, who, not understanding that the disciples spoke in foreign languages, imagined that they only uttered incoherent words. It is probable that there was something in the excited manner in which the disciples acted, and in their ejaculations of praise in foreign languages, which would appear to those who were unsusceptible of receiving the supernatural impression, as fanaticism. (Comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 23.) *Now wine* might be more exactly rendered *sweet wine*, as the Greek word properly denotes sweetness, and although sometimes applied in classic Greek to the fresh grape-juice, before fermentation, is also used of those fermented wines, in which the sweetness was retained by a peculiar process, and some of which were unusually strong. The opposition of infidels to the Gospel proceeds, not from want of evidence, but from want of candor, a temper of mind upon which arguments and demonstrations are thrown away. A mind full of prejudice, a heart attached to the world and its pleasures, will always find something to object to a religion which teaches the purest morality, and requires, from those who embrace it, the sacrifice of their corrupt propensities, and unhallowed gratifications. Even scoffing, however, though it is one of the most mournful evidences of a Satanic opposition to the kingdom of Christ should not be allowed to arouse the indignation of the religious teacher so that



he casts the scoffer altogether from his path. Rather should he pity him.

14. <sup>1</sup> But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy: 19. And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke. 20. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: 21. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

<sup>1</sup> Thes. v. 7. Joel ii. 28-32. <sup>2</sup> Isa. xlv. 3; Ezek. xxxvi. 27. <sup>3</sup> Chap. xxi. 4, 9, 10; 1 Cor. xii. 10. <sup>4</sup> Mark xiii. 21; 2 Peter iii. 7, 10. <sup>5</sup> Plxxxv. 6; Rom. x. 13; 1 Cor. i. 2; Heb. iv. 16.

*Standing up*, perhaps in the place before the house. *With the eleven*. They probably spoke by turns, but Peter began the discourse. *Men of Judea*, &c. He begins by simply naming the people he is addressing, just as any other speaker, Jew or Gentile, might have done in every-day life. *Be this known*, &c. He bespeaks attention with a skill and grace not unlike that with which Brutus, in Shakespeare, attempts to justify the death of Cæsar. "Hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear."

*These are not drunken*, &c. Their radiant looks, their stately bearing, show that they are more like seraphs than drunkards. Mark the holy courage of Peter, in defending the innocence of the Apostles, and confuting the base and baseless calumny which was now cast upon himself and them. The *third hour of the day*, according to the Jewish computation of time, was our nine o'clock in the morning, and the improbability of so many persons, of plain character and industrious habits, plunging into so early a debauch, and staggering into public view in a state of disorderly excitement at such an hour, was so great, that the force of the Apostle's appeal is felt and admitted by all classes of readers.

*This is that*, &c. The Apostle, having in verse 15 presented the *negative* part of the defense, now follows with the *positive*, furnishing the explanation of the phenomenon. The passage is quoted with substantial faithfulness, from Joel ii. 28-32. It is plain that Peter did not intend that the completion of that prophecy was confined to that point of time, for in verse 39 he

tells them that were now awakened, and cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" that they must "repent and be baptized, and they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." For, say she, "the promise" (that promise most apparently that he had reference to before,) "*is unto you, and to your children*," &c. So that all that was intended in that prophecy is not fulfilled, till God has done calling.

*The last days*—the times of the Gospel, or the days of the Messiah, called "the last days," because the dispensation of God's kingdom among men, which the Gospel sets up, is the last dispensation. *I will pour out*, &c., *i. e.*, there shall be a most plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit, upon *all flesh*, upon Jews and Gentiles, and upon all sorts of persons without distinction of age, sex or state, old and young, sons and daughters, bond and free. *To prophesy*, has here its usual sense, to speak by inspiration, or under a special Divine influence. "If any distinction," says *Dr. J. A. Alexander*, "was intended to be made between the parallel expressions *dreams* and *visions*, the latter may denote day-dreams, waking visions, and the former visions seen in sleep, or dreams properly so called. As we do not read of any such effects at Pentecost, the terms of the prediction must have been understood by the Apostles as figures or types of extraordinary spiritual influence, and not as the precise forms in which the promise was to be fulfilled." *Servants . . . handmaidens*—without distinction of rank; no condition, however ignoble, would exclude any one from the promise. *And I will shew wonders in heaven above*, &c. Here is presented the other side of the subject. The primary reference is to the calamities which God inflicted on the Jews in connection with the overthrow of Jerusalem, and of the destruction of the Jewish state and nation. (See on Matt. xxiv. 29, with which the language here coincides almost verbally.)

*Blood . . . fire . . . smoke* denote calamitous times in general, political, civil, social and domestic. Yet here, too, we are to recognize the wider scope of the prophecy. The destruction of the Jews is held forth by the Apostle, as a type of

the destruction which is to come upon every rejecter of the Gospel. *The sun*, &c. Its light shall be withdrawn, the heavens shall become black. A day is at hand which will be one of thick gloom, of sadness and woe. (Ezek. xxxii. 7; Isa. xlii. 10; Amos v. 18, 20.) The *moon* shall give forth signs of distress. It shall exhibit an appearance like blood. Men shall see there an image of the carnage and misery which are to be witnessed on earth.

*That great and notable day*, &c. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, was, indeed a notable day—a day of judgment to the Jewish people, but there is another and more notable day of the Lord, which lies at the end of “these last days”—the day of universal judgment. *Whosoever shall call*, &c. In wrath God remembers mercy. (Hab. iii. 2; Mal. iii. 7.) How great is His goodness! He has made the way of salvation easy; it consists in calling on the name of the Lord. (Comp. Acts xvi. 31; Rom. x. 13–15.) Although contrition of heart and godly sorrow on account of our sins are indispensable, nevertheless, strictly speaking, it is faith, or the calling on the name of the Lord, by and through which we are justified and saved. (Rom. v. 1; Eph. ii. 8.) Faith is, pre-eminently, the condition which is prescribed, as well when we are converted, as when we finish our course.

22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: 24. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

John xiv. 10, 11; Heb. ii. 4. John xv. 24. Luke xxii. 22, xxiv. 44, chap. iii. 18. chap. v. 30. Matt. xxvii. 1. Luke xxiv. 1, chap. xlii. 30, 34; 1 Cor. vi. 14; Eph. i. 20. Col. ii. 12; 1 Thes. i. 10; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Peter i. 24.

*Ye men of Israel*—the orator at this point seems to collect his strength and begin anew. He addresses them by their noblest title of *Israel*, as if to show that it is from no want of love or respect that he lays upon them firmly the charge of being the slayers of Jesus. *Jesus of Nazareth*, originally used in the way of reproach, but afterward came to be used simply as a distinctive term. *Approved of God*, rather, “authenticated,” “proved,” or, “demonstrated to be from God.” *By*

*miracles*, &c. This is not a low view of our Lord's miracles, as has been alleged, nor inconsistent with John ii. 11, but is in strict accordance with His progress from humiliation to glory, and with His own words in John v. 19. This view of Christ is here dwelt on to exhibit to the Jews the whole course of Jesus of Nazareth as the ordinance and doing of the God of Israel.

*Tim, being delivered*, &c. Mark the boldness of Peter! However timid before, the disciples no sooner received the Spirit, than they began to speak the Word without fear. He who, but a little while before, had trembled in the presence of a servant maid, could not but tell thousands to their face, that Jesus whom they crucified with wicked hands, is now Lord and Christ. *Determinate counsel and foreknowledge*—God's fixed plan and perfect foresight of all the steps involved in it. *Ye have taken*, &c. The volitions of free agents, the evil as well as the good, are constantly represented as falling under the counsels and conduct of Heaven. Never did men act more freely nor more wickedly than the Jews, in the crucifixion of Christ, yet in that whole business they did no other than what “God's hand and counsel determined before to be done.” (Chap. iv. 28.) The delivery of Christ into their hands to be crucified, as performed by Judas, was a wicked act, yet was He “delivered by” (or according to) “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” That this subject is deep and difficult, in the present state, is admitted, and wicked men may abuse it to their own destruction, but the thing itself is no less true and useful, if considered in the fear of God. There is a link, as some have expressed it, that unites the purposes of God and the free actions of men, which is above our comprehension, but to deny the fact is to disown an all-pervading providence; which is little less than to disown a God. Peter, it should be observed, here unites “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” together, and seems to have had no idea of admitting the one without the other. It is also worthy of notice, that, in his manner of introducing the subject, it appears to have no tendency whatever to excuse

them from guilt, by throwing the blame on the Almighty: on the contrary, it is brought in for the purpose of conviction, and actually answered this end, in those to whom it was addressed. (See verse 37.) The decrees of God seem to be distinguishable into *efficient* and *permissive*. With respect to moral good, God is the proper and efficient cause of it. With respect to moral evil, God permits it, and His decree to permit sin does not in the least excuse the sinner, or warrant him to ascribe it to God, instead of himself. (See on chap. iv. 28.) *Raised up*, not into existence, as in chap. iii. 22, but from the dead. With their treatment of the Saviour is contrasted that of God Himself. When God gave Him up, they took Him, but when they crucified Him, God raised Him.

*Having loosed the pains of death*. "Loosing pains" is an unusual combination, "perhaps arising from the use of the second Greek word in the Septuagint, to represent a Hebrew one, which has the double sense of *cord* and *sorrow*. (Comp. Isa. xiii. 8 with Ps. xviii. 5.) Thus the two Greek nouns may have become associated, and their corresponding verbs convertible. The very combination here used appears also in the Septuagint version of Ps. xxxix. 2. It is the less unnatural because the verb to *loose* has a figurative sense (relax) no less appropriate to pains than its proper sense (untie) to cords. The Greek noun strictly, means the pains of parturition, which are often used as figures of intense, but temporary suffering. (See Isa. xxvi. 17; John xvi. 21, &c.) *Because it was not possible*, &c. 1. It was *naturally* impossible, on account of that Divine power which was inherent in His person as God. 2. It was legally impossible, because Divine justice being fully satisfied by His sufferings, required that He should be raised to life, as when a debt is paid, the prisoner is discharged, and the prison door opened.

25. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 28. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.—Ps. xvi. 8-11.

*David speaketh*. (See Ps. xvi. 1-8.) He

does not tell them anything as to the Divine authority of David's utterances: this would have been unnecessary. He assumes that the document refers to the resurrection of Jesus whom they had crucified. He is described as "having the Lord always before his face," "always on his right hand," as the "Holy One of God," who speaks with an exultant assurance of His own resurrection. *Therefore*, on account of this assurance of Divine protection, *did my heart rejoice*, &c. *My flesh shall rest*, &c. "My body shall go down to the grave in a joyful hope of resurrection." *Because*, here is the ground of the confidence expressed.

*Hell*, in its old and wide sense of the unseen world (*hades*), the world of spirits, the state of the soul separated from the body, without any reference to happiness or misery. The essential meaning is, thou wilt not leave my soul and body separate. *To see corruption*. God would bring back his soul from the invisible state, and reunite it to His body, before it was corrupted. *The ways of life*. God would restore Him to life, after having been put to death and laid in the grave. *Full of joy*, &c. The Redeemer was assured that He would not only escape the power of death, but ascend to dwell in the immediate presence of God on high. It was for the "joy set before Him, that He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. xii. 2.)

29. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne: 31. He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33. <sup>a</sup>Sam. xxiii. 2. <sup>b</sup>2 Sam. vii. 12, 13; Ps. cxxxii. 11. <sup>c</sup>Heb. vi. 17. <sup>d</sup>1 Peter i. 11, 12. <sup>e</sup>Verse 24; Luke xxiv. 48.

These verses contain the proof that David, in the words quoted (verses 25-28), was announcing prophetically the resurrection of Christ. *Let me*, allow me. *Freely speak*. The Jews esteemed David highly, and he had something not altogether favorable to say of him that the glory of Christ might be enhanced. *Patriarch*. This name is higher in dignity than that of a king. *His sepulchre*. And that with the

very body of David, in corruption. He speaks gently. *With us.* The monuments, places, institutions, manners, families and adages of the Israelites, marvelously accorded with the Old Testament Scripture. So too the New Testament books accord with the subsequent state of events.

*A prophet.* Hence the 16th Psalm is prophetic. *Sworn with an oath.* God had promised in the most solemn manner, using the form of an oath in order to express absolute certainty, and to prevent any doubt in the mind of David and of other pious men. (Ps. cxxxii. 11; comp. verse 2; see also Heb. vi. 16.) *Fruit of his loins.* Scripture speaks of propagation with wonderful correctness and delicacy. A periphrasis for, *his seed.* *His.* David's. *Sit on his throne.* David, as king, occupied the throne of the nation of Israel, the national people of God. The Messiah, who was to descend from him, was in like manner to be King of the Lord's people, namely, His spiritual people, of whom the nation of the Hebrews was only an emblem. *He seeing,* &c. Seeing by prophetic vision. Peter thus reasons: David did not speak of himself as the fact shows. Therefore he spake of Christ—the Messiah, who should rise from the dead. *That his soul,* &c. Not content with saying simply that he spake of the Messiah's resurrection, Peter repeats the very words of the prophecy in question, applying them to Christ, of whom alone it was predicted, and of which alone it is historically true. (See on verse 27.) *This Jesus,* &c. Not only had the Lord's body remained untouched by corruption, but Jesus had gone to the place of the dead, without having remained there. *Witnesses,* not merely of this resurrection, but of far more. (See 1 Cor. xv. 15; also on Luke xxiv. 48.) *We all.* I with the eleven—those who have stood forth, but without excluding all the other disciples.

33. <sup>a</sup>Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth <sup>b</sup>this, which ye now see and hear. 34. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand. 35. Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that <sup>c</sup>God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both <sup>d</sup>Lord and <sup>e</sup>Christ.

<sup>f</sup>Chap. v. 31; Phil. ii. 9. <sup>g</sup>John xvi. 7, 13, chap. i. 4. <sup>h</sup>Chap. x. 45; Eph. iv. 8. <sup>i</sup>Ps. cx. 1; Matt. xxiii. 24. <sup>j</sup>Zech. xiii. 1. <sup>k</sup>Chap. v. 31. <sup>l</sup>John iii. 35. <sup>m</sup>Ps. ii. 2, 6-8.

The last point of the Apostle's argument in proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, were the extraordinary spiritual phenomena which they now beheld in the disciples of Jesus—their miraculous utterances, and their wonderful deportment. This was the only explanation of the phenomena which astonished all. *Therefore being,* &c. Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, had not only risen from the dead, but had ascended into heaven, and was at the right hand of God, the Lord of David, and the Lord of all, and according to His promise, had now sent down the Holy Spirit, filling the souls of His disciples with wondrous sentiments, and endowing them with miraculous speech. What they now saw and heard was a proof that He had ascended to heaven, and His ascension to heaven was a proof of His Messiahship. *For David,* &c. The Apostle appeals to the prophecy as a confirmation of his testimony. "David, confessedly, did not ascend to heaven, like Elijah, nevertheless, he says: "The Lord said," &c. (Ps. cx. 1.) Peter, to whom, doubtless, the question proposed by Jesus, in Matt. xxii. 42, had occurred, assumes that the word of God, in which a seat at His right hand is promised to the Messiah, refers to Jesus. *Sit thou on my right hand.* This shows the felicity of Christ in heaven (Ps. xvi. 11, xxi. 6)—His glorious majesty (Heb. i. 3, viii. 1)—the fullness of His power (Matt. xxvi. 64, xxviii. 18; Ps. xx. 6, lxxxix. 13)—His authority in judgment (Rom. xiv. 9.)

*Until I make,* &c. An expression derived from the ancient custom toward the vanquished. (Josh. x. 24; Ps. lx. 1.) The dominion here, which Christ received, belonged to Him as Mediator, and it is to cease, therefore, when the objects of His kingdom as Mediator are accomplished. (Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 23-28.) This was the doctrinal part of Peter's sermon—it treated of the person, life, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, in a very close and convincing manner. His warm application of the whole now follows. *Therefore let all the house of Israel,* &c. That is, God the Father has ordained and appointed this Jesus whom ye have crucified, to be the Head and Sa-

viour of His Church, He being the true and promised Messiah.

*That same Jesus . . . . . both Lord and Christ.* What a fact is this! Wonderful in itself, and especially wonderful in its bearing on the men to whom it was now proclaimed, and wonderful also for Peter to declare to such an audience. What sublime intrepidity and invincible courage does he, as a poor fisherman, display in doing so, before assembled thousands of his nation! How very pungent also was he in applying what he said to his hearers! He did not rest in generals, but said plainly, This is *the same Jesus* whom by wicked hands ye have slain. (Verse 23.) An old writer observes, "Had not the application been so close, it is probable the success of the sermon had not been so considerable. Thence learn, That the success and efficacy of the Word preached depends upon a particular and warm application of it to every man's conscience, generals will not affect. See an instance of it in what follows."

37. ¶ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?  
\*Ezek. vii. 16; Zech. xii. 10. \*Chap. ix. 6, xvi. 30.

Mark the effect produced by Peter's discourse. It awakened compunctions, and an eager inquiry. Their hearts were pierced as with a sharp instrument. In how different a light did the conduct of the Jews appear to them, when the evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus flashed conviction on their minds! What a crime they had committed! The annals of human guilt could not furnish another of equal atrocity. How dreadful was the punishment which they had reason to expect! Now they remember their own imprecation, "His blood be on us, and on our children;" and they trembled lest its weight should press them down to the lowest hell. Alarmed and perplexed, tortured with a consciousness of guilt, and dreading the just vengeance of heaven, from which they knew not how to escape, they say to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were anxious to hear of these ambassadors of Jesus, whether there was any hope of pardon for so great a crime, any means of protection from the

wrath which was ready to overwhelm them.

38. Then Peter said unto them, ¶ Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.—† Luke xxiv. 47; chap. iii. 19.

*Peter said*, in the name of his brethren. *Repent.* The word denotes *change of mind*, and here includes the reception of the Gospel, as the proper issue of that revolution of mind which they were then undergoing. The change of mind required was to be attested by an outward act—*repent and be baptized.* *In the name of Jesus Christ* is not the formula by which they were to be baptized, and therefore different from the one prescribed by Christ Himself (Matt. xxviii. 19), but a description of the rite as Christian, and not merely Jewish, much less heathen baptism, or an unmeaning form, connected with no religious creed whatever. *In the name of Jesus Christ, i. e.*, by His authority, acknowledging His claims, subscribing to His doctrines, engaging in His service, and relying on His merits. *For the remission of sins*—the pardon of sins, as the visible seal of that remission. *And ye shall receive, &c.* They needed not only Divine pardon, but Divine influence; not only the remission of sins, but the *gift of the Holy Ghost.* They would require this Spirit after the remission to remove gradually the sad effects of sin from their nature, to guide them rightly in their future course, strengthening them evermore to resist the wrong and pursue the right. In order to be saved we must be *sanctified*, as well as *justified.* The Divine pardon and the Divine Spirit, are essential to the salvation of our fallen world.

39. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.  
† Joel ii. 28. † Eph. ii. 13, 17.

*For the promise*, the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in the preceding verse, and announced with so much particularity by the Prophet Joel (verse 17, &c). *Unto you, Israelites*, bad as you are, in having persecuted, derided and crucified Jesus—the promise is to you. *And to your children.* It is not easy to conceive in what other light the audience could understand these words, than that the promise of salvation through Christ was made, not to those alone who believ-

ed, but to their seed; that their families were to be admitted to the privileges of the new dispensation as well as themselves, and that baptism was to both a sign and seal of their interest in the covenant. They would naturally judge this to be the meaning of the declaration, especially as it was expressed in the same terms which had been used at the institution of circumcision. (See Gen. xvii. 7, 10.) *And to all that are afar off*, not only Jews who were scattered in different countries, but to Gentiles also, to men on every zone of the globe. However distant the heart may be from God, it can nevertheless hear His voice. God is still willing to call men unto Himself, and He has still room for all who come to Him. (Luke xiv. 21.) *Even as many as the Lord our God shall call*, which calling, when effectual, includes regeneration.

40. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

*Many other.* One must be urgent until the result is effected. *Testify.* This refers to what goes before. *Exhort.* This, to what follows. *Save yourselves*, or, rather, *be saved.* Salvation begins in conversion. (Eph. ii. 6.) *This untoward generation.* This character is descriptive of the perverseness with which the unbelieving Jews opposed all the methods of Divine grace. (See Matt. xi. 16, &c; Luke vii. 31, &c. and notes.) No result is produced by the operations of the Holy Ghost as long as the soul resigns itself to the corrupting influences of society; Christians are required to shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, and to sever every tie that attaches them to a sinful world.

41. ¶ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Peter having spoken to his hearers of "the remission of sins" (verse 38), it is here added, they *gladly received his word.* (See Ps. xxxii. 1.) Our Saviour joins these two together, "Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee." (See also Isa. lxi. 1.) Think with what joy the long-imprisoned debtor, drowned in debt, receives a full discharge, and his liberty, or a condemned malefactor the news of his pardon, and this will somewhat resemble, but yet fall far short of the joy which

faith brings by bringing Christ to the soul, and so forgiveness of sins in Him. *Were baptized.* As it is highly improbable that there should have been none of John's disciples in this large company, we may fairly infer that Christ's baptism was not precisely the same institution with John's, and that from this time, at least, John's disciples were baptized, when they were admitted into the Christian Church, according to the form appointed by our Lord after His resurrection. (Matt. xxviii. 19.)

*The same day* evidently qualifies *baptized* as well as *added*, because it was by baptism that the additions were effected. The conversion of these three thousand with these words, was a greater work than the feeding of four thousand or five thousand with a few loaves. They who are joined to Christ, are *added* to the disciples of Christ. When we take God for our God, we must take His people to be ours. "This was the true model of a *revival of religion*, and a perpetual demonstration, that such scenes as have characterized our own age and nation especially, are strictly in accordance with the spirit of the New Testament."

42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.—1 Cor. xi. 2; 11eb. x. 25.

*They continued.* The conversion of this great multitude was *sudden*, yet their profession was not transient or wavering. Observe, 1. Primitive Christians looked upon *soundness in the faith* as of great importance. They were strangers to that spirit of indifference to truth which loves to represent its doctrines as mere matters of speculation, and insinuates that "it matters not what a man believes, if his practice be but good." 2. The fellowship which they maintained with one another arose out of a union of sentiments in Apostolical doctrines. They were full of charity, but their charity was not of that kind which led them to have fellowship with men of all principles. 3. They not only listened to Christ's instructions as their Prophet, and relied upon His atonement as their Priest, but cheerfully complied with His institutions as their King. It is true, indeed, that the phrase "breaking of bread" does not necessarily mean

the Lord's Supper, but being here introduced among the religious duties of the primitive Church, it must be regarded as signifying that institution, the whole being denominated from a part. 4. They were men that dwelt much with God in *prayer*. Having obtained mercy themselves, they joined in supplicating the Divine throne for the salvation of others.

43. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.  
Mark xvi. 17.

*Fear came upon every soul.* Religious awe settled upon those who heard of the events just related, viz.: the descent of the Spirit, the miracle of tongues, the conversion of such a multitude. They felt that God was present, manifesting His great power, and they may also temporarily have had a presentiment of that "wrath to come," which was to overtake the obstinate enemies of God. This feeling of dread was deepened by many miracles which were wrought by the Apostles as instruments, while the power was God's. We are not, however, to understand their "wonders and signs" as having been restricted to that particular day.

44. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45. And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.  
Chap. iv. 32, 34. Isa. lviii. 7; 2 Cor. ix. 1, 9; 1 John iii. 17.

*All that believed,* those believing, the believers. This is one of the names given in the history to those who followed Christ and were professors of the new religion. The phrase is elliptical for those who believed in Jesus as the true Messiah. *Were together.* Not locally, probably, for no house could contain the multitude, but spiritually. They were one in spirit, they were together in soul. What one felt, all felt. They wept with those that wept, they rejoiced with those that rejoiced. *Leighton* says: "The public ministry will profit little anywhere, where a people, or some part of them, are not thus one, and do not live together as of one mind, and use diligently all due means of edifying one another in their holy faith." How much of the primitive Christians' praise and profit is involved in the word, *They were together with one accord, with one mind*: and so they grew: *the Lord added to the Church.* (Acts ii. 1, 44, 47.)

*And had all things common.* It appears, from the story of Ananias and Sapphira, that the disciples were under no obligation, or were bound by no positive law, to dispose of their property for the benefit of the Church, and that after it was sold, they could retain the whole, or any part of the price, provided that they did not, like those unhappy persons, practice dissimulation and deceit: and it is further evident from the passage before us, that although in many instances they laid down the price at the feet of the Apostles, entrusting them with the distribution, yet they sometimes reserved it in their own hands, and gave it to the indigent, according to their own ideas of their need. These considerations seem to prove that there was not, as some have supposed, an actual community of goods in the primitive Church, but that, in consequence of the fervent charity which united the hearts and interests of the disciples, "no man," as Luke informs us in the fourth chapter, "said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own," or appropriated them solely to his own use, but readily parted with them for the supply of others.

*They parted them to all men, as every man had need.* All things were common, because they were at the service of every man who wanted them. There is no evidence that the conduct of the Church of Jerusalem was followed by any other Church, even in the Apostolic age, but so far as it is an example of generous love, triumphing over the selfish affections, and exciting men to seek the welfare of others as well as their own, it is worthy to be imitated to the end of the world. (See on chap. iv. 32.)

46. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

*Daily with one accord, &c.*—observing the hours of Jewish worship. "However unlike itself," says the *Rev. John Howe*, "the Church of God is grown in a long tract of time, the Spirit of God is not grown unlike itself, and therefore when it comes to be poured forth as it hath been, it will still act as it hath done, uniformly and agreeably to itself, and make them, that now are many parties, divided and shat-

tered, broken this way and that, all one entire piece." (Col. ii. 1, 2.)

*And breaking bread from house to house.* The best authorities are in favor of explaining the words "from house to house" to mean, "in the house," or "at home," as distinguished from the foregoing phrase, "in the temple." Allusion may here be had to the charitable meals which the circumstances of many of these early Christians may have made necessary, they were received, perhaps, in companies at various houses. Such meals would partake, too, very much of a religious character, and, as to the feelings which would prevail, and the acts of thanksgiving and praise which would be connected with them, would doubtless well correspond to the language in the latter part of this verse and the beginning of the next—they would be received with gladness and singleness of heart, and with praise to God. (See on next verse.) The phrase *singleness of heart* denotes that they were characterized by simplicity of spirit. There was no pride, no ostentation, no self-seeking, no hypocrisy amongst them, but all were exquisitely child-like in spirit.

47. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.  
\*Luke ii. 52; Rom. xiv. 18. †Chap. v. 14, xi. 24.

*Praising God.* God permits none to exceed Him in liberality; the more heartily we praise and thank Him, the more abundantly does He bestow grace and comfort upon us. No one can more fully enjoy the temporal gifts of God than a true Christian, for he rejoices at the same time in God, and tastes and sees that the Lord is good. *And having*, &c. Though looking only to God, they had favor with all the people, just as their Lord had while still a child (Luke ii. 52.) A lovely picture of the infant community! Their faith the people might not approve, but their vir-

tues they could not refuse to commend. When Christianity, in the conduct of its genuine friends, puts on the lovely aspect of meekness, gentleness, and goodness, the hearts of its enemies bear an unequivocal testimony in its favor, and sometimes their lips unwittingly pronounce its eulogium.

*And the Lord*, now called upon by the believing as their Saviour, *added*, "kept adding," *i. e.*, to the visible community of believers, or to the *assembly* of the followers of Christ. "The word Church (in the Greek) properly means those who are called out, and is applied to Christians as being called out, or separated from the world." *Such as should be saved.* The Church was a growing society. It received daily accessions. The original should rather be rendered, *the saved*. This is an additional description of those called *believers* in verse 44. Men are said to be saved in reference not only to the final consummation, but to the inception of the saving work. Of every penitent believing sinner, we may say, with equal truth, that he will certainly be saved, and that he has been saved already. We here learn, 1. That the work of a thorough and saving conversion, is God's work. Hence it is said, "*the Lord added*," &c. 2. That though the Spirit of God be the author and efficient cause, yet the preaching of the Gospel, and an exemplary walk and conversation, are subordinate helps and instrumental means conducting thereto.

Let it not be supposed, that as this occasion was peculiar, the power exerted was unusual, and ought not to be looked for again. "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save." "The residue of the Spirit is with Him," and the same effects are still produced in the conversion of every sinner. The Gospel is "mighty through God" to subdue all opposition.

1. Explain the word "Pentecost." 2. What is said about a rushing mighty wind? 3. What about "cloven tongues?" 4. What is said of those who were assembled together? 5. Why were the multitude confounded? 6. What did they say? 7. What was Peter's reply? 8. Explain verse 23. 9. What was the effect of Peter's sermon on the multitude? 10. What did he tell them to do? 11. What is said of those "that gladly received his word?" 12. What did "all that believed" do with their possessions? 13. What is said of additions to the Church?



## CHAPTER III.

1 Peter preaching to the people that came to see a lame man restored to his feet, 12 professeth the cure not to have been wrought by his or John's own power, or holiness, but by God, and his Son Jesus, and through faith in his name: 13 withal reprehending them for crucifying Jesus. 17 Which because they did it through ignorance, and that thereby were fulfilled God's de terminate counsels, and the Scriptures: 19 he exhorteth them by repentance and faith to seek remission of their sins, and salvation in the same Jesus.

NOW Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

\*Ps. lv l.7; Dan. vi. 10.

We find Peter and John very frequently together in the Scripture. They seem to have been more dissimilar than any other two of the Apostles, yet their very unlikeness, perhaps, was one of the causes of their friendship. *Went up, &c.* Their friendship was religious, it took them to the house of God in company. Those connections are the most valuable, in which the Bible is a witness between us, in which another world is not forgotten. *The temple.* Public devotion has claims upon us. It is a commanded duty, and a profitable one. The worship of the sanctuary enlivens our feeling, endears us to each other, and keeps the distinctions of life from becoming excessive. *The ninth hour.* The Jews had three stated hours of prayer; the morning sacrifice at the third hour, or nine in the morning, the sixth hour, at noon (chap. x. 9), and the evening sacrifice at the ninth hour, or three in the afternoon. (Ex. xxix. 39; Num. xxviii. 3, 4.) Christians did not alter the times of prayer.

2. And a certain man, lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple: 3. Who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms.

<sup>b</sup>John ix. 8.

*Lame from his mother's womb.* For upward of forty years he had lived a cripple. (See chap. iv. 22.) His lameness was not the result of accident or disease, or some infirmity that had come upon him after a period of physical perfection, but was a constitutional defect, he was born a cripple. Consequently the cure was the harder, and the person cured the more credible a witness. What a vale of tears in this earth! To what a variety of evils are the human race exposed! And what are they all, but a commentary on sin as the text! For sin

"Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

We cannot be too thankful for our exemption and preservation from physical suffering or deformity. Such an instance of misery as this, is presented to try our disposition. *Was carried, literally, used to have himself carried. Called Beautiful.* This gate was the great eastern gate of the temple enclosure. It was erected by Herod the Great. It was above fifteen yards high, and about eight yards wide, being formed of Corinthian brass, with the most exquisite workmanship. According to Josephus, it was superior in size and decoration to all the other gates. *To ask alms, &c.* This poor wretch was not only deformed, but poor, and helpless, so that his only expedient was begging. Where could he expect aid, if not from those going into the temple. Piety without benevolence is hypocrisy. (Job xxix. 11-13.)

4. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. 5. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

*Look on us.* Their object appears to have been to gain his attention more fully to their words, so that, as they said, "In the name of Jesus Christ," &c. (verse 6), he might understand to whom he was indebted for the benefit conferred upon him. *He gave heed unto them, expecting, &c.* It was a constant custom for all who entered the temple, to carry money with them for the treasury, or poor, or both. The cripple, wondering at the unusual character of this address, of course looked on them intently and expectantly, although only under the idea that, as he desired, something in the way of alms should be given him by them. (1 John iv. 20.) With what diligence and attention we listen, when we have reason to expect temporal aid! It is already a great blessing, when a pastor, by the power of the Spirit, has awakened an expectation in his hearers that they will "receive something," they are then no longer dead, for their hearts begin to feel and to hunger. But let them not wait in vain. Alas! how often it may occur, that poor, awakened and hungry souls, look on their teacher, hoping to receive something, and are sent empty away! Here note, 1. The great mercy of God that was mingled with this

poor man's affliction, though he was lame, he was not blind. 2. That what the cripple could do, he must and did do, toward his own healing. He could not move a foot, but he could fix his eye. We are spiritual cripples, laboring under a moral impotency, being *without strength*. (Rom. v. 6.) But God expects the exercise of our faculties, and the use of our endeavors in order to our recovery, help healing (Phil. ii. 12.)

6. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee; in *the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.* (Chap. iv. 10.)

*Silver and gold, &c.* So poor were the Apostles, that they had nothing to give, either to the sacred *treasury*, or to the *distressed*. This, it should be observed, was after the possessions were sold (ii. 45), and shows plainly how far the Apostles were from enriching themselves by the riches "laid at their feet." (Chap. iv. 35.) Certainly it was from conviction that such men preached the resurrection of Jesus. *But such as I have, &c.* As if he had said, "Money I have none, I am poor in this world; but such as I have—the power that God has given me to help others—I will employ on your behalf." A man like Peter may be without money, and yet have God with him, and in him, to work His will. *In the name, &c., i. e.,* by His authority. Thus spake the servant and Apostle of Him who, in a similar case, had said, "I will, be thou opened." (Mark vii. 34; see also Luke v. 24.) *Of Jesus Christ.* Since the first enunciation of the great proposition (chap. ii. 36, 38), "Jesus is Christ," this is now become the comprehensive holy name of their Lord and God, whom they confess, and in whose name they do all that they do, and freely give to every one all that they have. *Of Nazareth, in Greek, the Nazarene.* (See on ii. 22.) *Rise up and walk.* It is difficult to decide, whether the Apostle meant to say, As an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and relying on His power, I say unto thee, Arise and walk, or, I say unto thee, Arise and walk, placing thy confidence for ability to do so in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Perhaps both views should be combined.

7. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

*And he took, &c.* Precisely what his Lord had done to his own mother-in-law. (Mark i. 31.) The seeking soul must be sustained not only by our words, but also by our acts, even as if we took it by the hand, and assisted it to walk. *And lifted him up, &c.* How much more wonderful than the change produced in this lame man's condition, is that change which God effects in the heart! But who gives heed to it? *His feet* (or soles) *and ankle bones, &c.*—the technical language of a physician. (Col. iv. 14.) The suddenness of the cure was the *proof* of the miracle: his walking and leaping were the *evidences* of it. Observe the simple and yet authoritative manner in which the miracle is performed. No solemn preparations are made, no mystic ceremonies are used, which might work upon the imagination of the patient, and excite his reverence and admiration of the persons of the Apostles. By a few words, pronounced in a serious unaffected manner, the effect is produced.

8. And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.—Isa. xxxv. 6.

The poor cripple who had never used his limbs for forty years (iv. 22), and who did not seek their restoration *leaped up, stood, &c.* This effect upon the man *himself*, shows the indubitableness of the miracle. Though the cure was well nigh instantaneous, yet there is a great gradation observed. First, the strengthening of the feet and ankle bones, at which moment the spark of faith was kindled, then the leaping up, then the standing, then the walking, then the entering the temple. The man's frame bounded with new energy, his soul was flooded with divine joy and praise, and his limbs were agile and blithe, expressing these emotions. *Entered with them, &c.* How natural now to accompany the Apostles into the temple! *Praising God*, heartily, earnestly, for giving this soundness in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. By the wonderful goodness of God toward this poor cripple, his miseries and calamities, his lameness and poverty, are overruled for his best good, namely for bringing him to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and salvation by Him. Mercies are *then* perfected when they are sanctified.

9. And all the people saw him walking, and praising God: 10. And they knew that it was he which sat for fours at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

*And they knew, &c.* This effect upon the people also shows the indubitableness of the miracle. Here was the broad seal of heaven on the divine mission of the Apostles. This patient resided in the very midst of this people. He was well known, for his forty years' affliction, and his poverty. Multitudes had seen him: many had relieved him, and many had handled him. (Verse 2). And his cure had been effected not in an obscure corner, but at the entrance into the temple, and in daylight, when there was a concourse of people. Could anything have been more open to detection, had there been any imposture? Clearly, then, the rejection of the Gospel by unbelievers cannot arise from an intellectual, but a moral cause. They do not want evidence, but disposition.

11. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.—John x. 23; chap. v. 12.

*Held Peter and John.* Did he imagine their influence was confined to their bodily presence? and that if he let them go his lameness would return? Or did he wish thus to point out his benefactors to the multitude? Doubtless it was still more the expression of his attachment. So it is in our spiritual cures. It is natural and right to feel a regard for those who have been the means of our recovery, and to keep hold of them. But let us remember we may hold them too closely. And we do so, if we suffer them to draw us away from the God of all grace. (1 Cor. iii. 4-7.) *All the people ran, &c.* Some, only to gratify their curiosity with the sight of men that had such power; others, with a desire to hear them preach, concluding that their doctrine must needs be of Divine origin, which thus had a Divine ratification. *In the porch . . . . Solomon's*, the long portico or colonnade on the east side of the temple. This noble structure, was supported by a wall four hundred cubits high, consisting of stones of an almost incredible size. (See on John x. 23.)

12. ¶ And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

¶ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

*Saw it*—the concourse of the people, and their immense amazement. *Why marvel ye, &c.* He does not intend to express censure because of their astonishment, for that was natural, but because of their ascribing the deed to them, as the primal authors. Here we see, and must admire, the true humility which the Gospel imparts to men. May not the Apostles take a little credit to themselves for this miracle? It will not materially damage their Master, while it may dignify them, and fix their authority as His ministers. But, however anxious they once had been to be advanced in Christ's kingdom, they had learned by this time not to seek their own things, but the things which are Jesus Christ's. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory!" (Ps. cxv. 1.) Such is the confession of all true servants of God.

13. The God of Abraham and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. 14. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you: 15. <sup>a</sup>Matt. xxii. 32. <sup>b</sup>Chap. v. 30, 31. <sup>c</sup>John xvii. 1; Eph. i. 20, 22; Phil. ii. 9, 11; Heb. ii. 9; Rev. i. 5, 18. <sup>d</sup>John xix. 15. <sup>e</sup>Matt. xxvii. 17-25; Luke xxiii. 16-23. <sup>f</sup>Ps. xvi. 10; Luke i. 35. <sup>g</sup>Chap. vii. 52, xxii. 14.

When the circumstances are considered, with what wonderful boldness does Peter proclaim the truth! (See on ii. 23.) The charge he prefers is of a very aggravated nature. They stood in a close covenant relationship to God, who had set them apart, and, amid many national vicissitudes, had kept them apart, for a very special purpose, viz.: that they might cherish and preserve in the world such lights and manifestations of the Messiah: as God was pleased to dispense before His advent, and then, when He came, that they might be prepared to bid Him welcome to the world—to erect His standard, guard His interests, and share His triumphs. *He has come*, was Peter's startling announcement, and gone away again. He has come—your long looked for Prince—to His covenanted people, and you have betrayed Him, and denied and killed Him. Yet He is not dead, for God hath raised Him up—nor is He dishonored, for God hath glorified Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, by the power of which has this man been made whole, whom ye both see and know. *In the presence of Pilate, &c.* Pilate, admonished by

his wife's warning dream, and convinced of Christ's innocence, wrought with you to save His life. All in vain, you insisted that He should die.

15. And killed the *Prince of life*, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses.  
John i. 4; 1 John v. 11. Matt. xxviii. 2-5; Eph. i. 20. Chap. ii. 32.

*Killed the Prince or author of life.* The word is classically applied to military leaders, or one who is first in anything (comp. Heb. ii. 10, xii. 2). "You have quenched the light of Israel, you crowned your King with thorns, and for a throne you set Him upon a cross." The contrast between their killing such a person, while they interceded for the pardon of a murderer, a destroyer of life, has peculiar energy. *Whom God hath raised, &c.* They are made aware that in the whole of this matter they have been fighting against God. They pretended to be actuated in what they did by jealousy for God's honor, and appealed to Him as judge. And He did appear upon the stage, but not upon their side. *They killed the Prince of Life—God quickened Him; they laid Him in the grave—God lifted Him to the skies. Whereof we are witnesses.* (See on chap. ii. 32.)

16. And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

*His name, by means (or on account) of faith in that name hath made, &c.* *Whom ye see* entirely restored now to bodily vigor, and *know* as a person who was formerly infirm, helpless. *Yea, &c.* This second clause of the verse repeats essentially the idea of the first, in order to affirm more emphatically that it was not their own power, but the power of Christ which had performed the miracle. *The faith which is by (or through) him.* Christ is thus represented as the author or procuring cause, as well as the end or object of the faith in question. *In the presence of you all,* and hence they must acknowledge that no other means had been used to effect the miracle.

17. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers, 18. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

Luke xxiii. 34; John xvi. 3; 1 Cor. ii. 8. Luke xxiv. 44; chap. xxvi. 22, 23.

*I wot*—old English for "I know," from

the Anglo-Saxon *witan*, to see, to know, from which comes our word "*wit*." *That through ignorance, &c.* Does Peter here state the ignorance of the Jews as an *excuse* for their crime, or merely as accounting for it? Undoubtedly it does account for it. (1 Cor. ii. 8.) Are the Jews then guiltless because they moved in the dark? Does their ignorance annihilate their crime? Not at all. It only alters the name of it. It shifts the burden of guilt from one part of the transaction to another, but it leaves the burden there. That they did not know the Lord of Glory was their sin—a greater sin than crucifying Him. He did not come from heaven without sufficient credentials, nor did He put forth His claims without giving ample proof that they were just. From Moses and the Prophets, from John the Baptist, from His own mighty works, from His Father's testimony, given from the "excellent glory"—from every quarter a decisive testimony was borne to the Messiahship of Christ, and they who resisted His claims were without excuse. Hence we are not to regard Peter's statement as a plea in justification of their conduct, but as an explanation of God's. Because they had proceeded in ignorance when they crucified Christ, God was pleased to open the door of mercy to them, and gave them an opportunity of making a quick escape from hell. Thus the 17th verse is to be sustained on to the 19th verse; along with the 18th verse it forms a ground on which Peter calls them to repentance. We learn here that ignorance does not exempt us from the punishment of sins committed through it, nor does it entitle us to pardon. At the same time it forms a ground upon which God is frequently pleased to show mercy. (John xv. 22, 24; 1 Tim. i. 13.) *He hath so fulfilled.* This verse, as connected with the preceding one, may be taken in this sense, "You fulfilled the Scriptures, and did not know it. God was *fulfilling the Scripture*, when you were gratifying your own passions." (See on chap. iv. 28.)

19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Chap. ii. 38. Isa. i. 16-20, Joel ii. 13. Isa. xliv. 25. Jer. xxxi. 23-25; Zeph. iii. 14-20; Rev. xxi. 4.

*Repent . . . . be converted.* These two forms of expression may have substantially the same meaning, namely, that of forsaking the wrong course which the Apostle's hearers had pursued in reference to the Lord Jesus, and of turning to a right mode of viewing Him and conducting toward Him, that is, acknowledging Him as the Messiah, and becoming His obedient followers. The first denotes the inner change of mind, the second the outward change of life. What is required here includes faith as a constituent part of the act to be performed. *Blotted out.* Instead of *remission*, we have here the stronger figure of abstersion or obliteration. The Greek verb is applied by Xenophon to the erasure of a name from a catalogue or roll. It may here denote the cancelling of charges against any one, and thus amounts to the same thing with the *remission* of sins. (Chap. ii. 38.) The metaphor of blotting out occurs several times elsewhere (*e. g.* Ps. li. 9; cix. 14; Isa. xliii. 25; Jer. xviii. 23; Col. ii. 14.) *When, more properly, in order that the times of refreshing may come, i. e., to you personally, that you may have part in the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, for which men can be prepared only by repentance and the pardon of their sins. From the presence of the Lord.* Since the blessings in question (a Hebrew idiom) are laid up where He is (see ii. 28), and must be received thence. The word rendered "*Lord*," which may refer to Christ or God (see on i. 24), applies to the latter here, since it prepares the way for the subject of the next verb.

20. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:—Chap. i. 11; Heb. ix. 23.

*And he shall send, rather, and that he may send forth, viz.: from heaven* (see verse 21.) *Which before was preached unto you, before appointed or prepared for you, i. e., from eternity.* (See 1 Peter i. 20.) Nearly all critics, says an eminent commentator, understand this passage as referring to the return of Christ at the end of the world. The similarity of the language to that of other passages which announce that event demands this interpretation. The Apostle enforces his exhortation to repent by an appeal to the final coming of Christ, not

because he would represent it as near in point of time, but because that event was always *near to the feelings and consciousness* of the first believers. (2 Peter iii. 12.)

21. Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.—Matt. xvii. 11. Luke i. 70.

*Whom the heaven must receive.* It was a common opinion among the Jews, that the Messiah would continue on earth. (See John xii. 24.) Peter here anticipates such an objection. The word *receive* has here the additional idea of *retaining* or *holding*. The Messiah is represented by him as having been, according to Divine appointment, taken up into heaven, where He is by the same appointment to *remain* until a certain period fixed by the Divine counsels. *Until the times of the restitution, &c.* Christ, in heaven, as the monarch of the creation, the representative of humanity, the object of universal wonder and worship, will reign there, but for a certain time only, *Until the times of the restitution, or restoration of all things, i. e., to a state of primeval, order, purity and happiness, such as will exist for those who have part in the kingdom of Christ, at His second coming. By the mouth of all his holy prophets.* All the prophets were holy, all entered heaven (Luke xiii. 28). They who are rejected as workers of iniquity, were not prophets, even though they prophesied. (Matt. vii. 22; comp. John xi. 51.) Balaam was a prophet, indeed, not in Israel, however, but only in relation to Balak. *Since the world began, or, from the beginning of time.* (See on Luke i. 70; Jude 14, 15; Job xix. 25, 26; Ps. i. 3, 4, xvi. 13, xviii. 9; Joel iii. 13.

22. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. 23. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Deut. xviii. 15-19.

*Moses truly said.* See Deut. xviii. 15-22, which contains one of the clearest prophecies ever delivered of Messiah, who is set forth as a supreme legislator, law-giver, and judge. *A prophet . . . like unto me.* Moses was a prophet, a peculiar prophet, a pre-eminent prophet. He introduced and established the whole of the Jewish dispensation with miracles, wonders and signs. He was a mediator between God

and the people. Other prophets received Divine communications through various mediums, but he received everything from God immediately. But "if the Law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Yea, in all things He has the pre-eminence. (See Heb. iii. 2-6; Deut. xxxiv. 10.) Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a Son over His own house. The commission of Moses was confined to one nation, Christ is not only the glory of His people Israel, but a light to lighten the Gentiles—the light of the world. *Him shall ye hear*—not merely with our outward ear, but also believing His instructions, and cordially submitting to them. *In all things*. Some dislike the mysterious parts of Christianity, some the humiliating, some the practical, but the only inquiry of a true disciple is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It is here supposed that some *will not hear this prophet*. This is a sad intimation; and we might wonder at the fact. But the depravity of human nature will account for it, and all history confirms it. Mark the impartiality of the sentence, *every soul*. The refusers may be many, and they may differ from each other, each turning to his own way, but none shall escape the penalty. *Shall be destroyed*, &c. Not annihilated! this would be a privilege. They shall seek death, but they shall not find it. The penalty is not the loss of their being, but of their happiness, and of their hope, the destruction of body and soul in hell forever!

24. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

Moses and all the succeeding prophets, beginning with Samuel, have all uttered predictions respecting these times. It is clear why Peter particularly mentions Samuel after Moses, for between Moses and Samuel there was but little prophesying (1 Sam. iii. 1), and he was the first after Moses who wrote his prophecy.

25. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. 26. Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

<sup>a</sup>Rom. ix. 4. <sup>b</sup>Gen. xxii. 18. <sup>c</sup>Matt. x. 5; Luke xxiv. 47. <sup>d</sup>Isa. lix. 20; Matt. i. 21; Titus ii. 11-14.

The Apostle applies the whole to his own age and to the people before him, and presents two aspects of the case: first, the promise of the blessing (made to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3, xviii. 18, xxii. 18), to Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 4), to Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 14), belongs, as he declares, to his hearers, but, secondly, on the condition that they be turned away from their iniquities. *Unto you first*. According to the glorious scheme of divine and sovereign mercy, the Gospel was everywhere first addressed to the Jews. *To bless you*, literally, *blessing you*, in the very act of executing this commission. *In turning away*, &c. Learn, 1, That it is Christ's proper work to turn sinners from their iniquities. O that we would all subserve Christ in that great work! He is the principal agent, let us be subordinate instruments, by practicing holiness ourselves, and promoting holiness in others. Learn, 2, That to be turned by Christ from our iniquities, is the greatest blessing that we can realize from Him, because it is a spiritual blessing, a fundamental blessing, a comprehensive blessing, an endearing blessing, an everlasting blessing.

1. For what purpose did Peter and John go up to the temple? 2. What is said about a certain man at the gate of the temple? 3. What was the effect of the miracle wrought? 4. What did Peter say? 5. Explain verse 17. 6. What is repentance? 7. What is meant by the "times of refreshing," &c.? 8. What did Moses say unto the fathers? 9. Why were those Peter addressed called "children of the covenant?" 10. To whom was Jesus sent first? 11. For what purpose was He sent?

## CHAPTER IV.

1 *The rulers of the Jews offended with Peter's sermon, 4 (though thousands of the people were converted that heard the word,) imprison him and John. 5 After, upon examination Peter boldly avouching the lame man to be healed by the name of Jesus, and that by the same Jesus only we must be eternally saved, 13 they command him and John to preach no more in that name, adding also threatening, 23 whereupon the church feth to prayer, 31. And God, by moving the place where they were assembled, testified that he heard their prayer: confirming the church with the gift of the Holy Ghost, and with mutual love and charity.*

AND as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them. 2. Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now even-tide. 4. Howbeit, many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand.

<sup>a</sup>Luke xxii. 4. <sup>b</sup>Matt. xxii. 23. <sup>c</sup>xxiii. 8, xxviii. 24.

Peter and John went on in their work. What they said concerned all, and they spake it openly and publicly. *The priests*, i. e., *the officiating priests*, as soon as they were released from their duties. *Captain of the temple*. The prefect of those priests and Levites who kept guard in the temple. *The Sadducees*, whose whole system was now in danger, by the preaching of the resurrection from the dead, for they believed not in the immortality of the soul, nor in any future world. *Came upon them*. The Cross always attends the true Gospel. *Grieved*—vexed or tired out. *Through Jesus, &c.*, that is, declared and proved that the dead must rise again, since it was an incontrovertible truth that Jesus had risen from the dead. *In hold*—detention or imprisonment. *Even-tide*—late in the evening, and therefore not a proper time to have them examined. *Howbeit*—notwithstanding the persecutions, the Divine cause advanced. Though the clouds gather and thicken into blackness, the sun rises. The tides flow, though the force of the mightiest tempest bears against them, and God's truth moves on to universal empire, though earth and hell combine against it. *The number of the men was*, literally, *became*, i. e., in consequence of the present addition. (See i. 15, ii. 41.) *About five thousand*, without enumerating females and children.

5. ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6. And Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

<sup>a</sup>John xviii. 13.

*Their rulers*—the great council of the Sanhedrim. *Elders, and scribes*, express particular classes represented in that body *Annas . . . . Caiaphas*. (See on Luke iii. 2.) *John, and Alexander*. No particular account has reached us of these men. They had, probably, held some official stations, and were still men of note, and members of the Sanhedrim. *Kindred of the high priest*—sustained a family relation to Annas and Caiaphas. *Gathered . . . . Jerusalem*. This seems to imply, that all the members of the Sanhedrim were not residing, or at least not actually present in Jerusalem.

7. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?—Matt. xxi. 23.

Our Apostles were put, probably, in the very same place in which Jesus had stood not long before. *By what power, &c.* They do not ask first, whether this manifest sign had actually taken place, for it was obvious to all who dwelt at Jerusalem. *By what name*, spoken as a word of power. *Have ye done this?* Thus they made as little as possible of the miracle, thinking that they should be able to mystify, and perhaps blacken, the evident fact of their high magisterial inquiry, and to put down the poor Galileans with their contemptuous *ye!*

8. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them: Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel; 9. If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10. Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. <sup>a</sup>vii. 55. <sup>b</sup>iii. 6, 18.

Peter and John were not to be intimidated, though placed at the bar for trial. (See on ii. 23.) *Filled with the Holy Ghost*, i. e., specially, for the occasion. (See on Mark xiii. 11.) *Rulers of the people and elders of Israel* may be taken as equivalent descriptions of the whole body, since the rulers of the chosen people, under the patriarchal system were not elective but hereditary magistrates. *Be it known, &c.* There was no evasion in this answer, no reluctance to bring out the truth, no attempt to palliate it, although Peter knew that it was in the highest degree offensive to his audience. *Whom ye crucified, whom*

*God raised . . . the copula (and, or but) is omitted, to make the contrast more striking. "By that same man, with whose innocent blood your hands are yet stained, has this inconvertible miracle been performed." This man—like at once a monumental proof and a firm confessor, the lame-born stands with his benefactors in the semi-circle of the court. Stand—and so his legs speak though his tongue be silent.*

11. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

<sup>1</sup>Ps. cxviii. 22; Isa. xxviii. 16; Matt. xxi. 42. <sup>1x.</sup> 43; 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. <sup>1</sup>Ps. xiv. 17.

*This is the stone, &c.* This application of Ps. cxviii. 22, already made by our Lord Himself (Matt. xxi. 42, on which see notes), is here repeated with peculiar propriety after the deed of rejection had been consummated, and the rejected One had by His exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high, become *the head of the corner*. It is to the head of the corner the whole building owes its strength, its union, and its beauty. *Neither is there, &c.* Here is, 1. A positive assertion that there is no salvation but by Christ, or, that besides, or without Him, there is no possibility of salvation, either for Jew or Gentile, both those under the Old Testament had, and we under the New Testament have, one and the same common Saviour. 2. The ground and reason of this confident assertion, that there is no salvation but by Christ, namely, because *there is no other name, &c.*, that is no other person designed or appointed by God, to be the author of redemption to, and procurer of salvation for, a lost and miserable world, but only Christ. Let us take good heed, then, that we do not reject or set Him at naught, for in rejecting Christ, we reject the wisdom, authority, love, yea, the salvation of God.

13. ¶ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16. Saying, <sup>1</sup>What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17. But that it spread no farther among the people, let us strictly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xi. 25; 1 Cor. i. 27. <sup>1</sup>ix. 36. <sup>1</sup>John xi. 47. <sup>1</sup>vy. 40.

*The boldness of Peter and John.* Whence did this noble, self-denying, and heroic spirit originate? They had seen the moral glory of their Saviour's character, and felt the constraining influence of His grace and love. Rather, therefore, would they now willingly undergo disgrace, and torture, and death, than deny the Lord that bought them with His blood, or bring dishonor on the worthy name by which they were called. *Unlearned and ignorant.* This, for three centuries, was the objection against the professors of Christianity, yet it is a great confirmation of the Christian faith, and shows, as *Justin Martyr* well observes, that it was not of human, but Divine origin, and that being with Jesus was sufficient to make the ignorant and unlearned wise. *They took knowledge, &c.* Observe, 1. Some have been with Jesus, in His Word, in His house, at His table, in the closet, in the field. 2. It is expected that they who are with Jesus should resemble Him. 3. Conformity to Christ will not be overlooked. God, angels, Ministers, fellow-Christians, the world will take knowledge of it.

*They could say nothing, &c.* So great was the momentary efficacy of the truth, and, such was the effect of the yet remaining consciousness and susceptibility of conscience of the council, that they were speechless, and were compelled to collect their thoughts ere they could venture to use threats against the truth. *Commanded . . . out.* The Apostles were directed to withdraw while their judges should hold consultation. *What shall we do to these men?* Instead of saying to these men, What must we do to be saved? they say of them, How shall we stop their mouths? *For that indeed a notable miracle, &c.* Why, then, should the rulers wish to deny it, but that they hated the light, and would not come to the light lest their deeds should be re-proved? *That it spread no farther.* It refers not to the *miracle*, nor to its *notoriety*, but to the Christian doctrine, the unexpressed consequence of the miracle. *Let us strictly threaten them, &c.* What a humiliating position for the great council of the nation to be placed in! What a sight! Seventy



at least of a nation's magnates and magistrates confounded by two poor men whom they considered illiterate and ignorant. The restriction imposed only to the act of preaching the name of Jesus. The world can endure preaching and good works, but will not tolerate the name of Jesus, the preaching of the crucified One, or the doctrine that He alone can save the soul.

19. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. 21. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. 22. For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

19. v. 21. Jer. xx. 9. xxxii. 15; 1 John. 1. 3. Matt. xxi. 26; chap. v. 26.

And John. Now John also enters more prominently on the scene, for their open confession has this effect, that *we two* will not keep silence about Jesus. *Whether it be right . . . . to hearken to you more than . . . . God, judge ye, &c.* There is here a wonderful union of sober, respectful appeal to the better reason of their judges, and calm, deep, determination to abide the consequences of a constrained testimony, which betokens a power above their own resting upon them, according to promise. We here perceive the limits of the obedience which we owe to our superiors in Church and State. In those cases which are agreeable to the laws of heaven, made known by the light of nature, and by revelation, or which, at least, are not inconsistent with those laws, we are bound; but in every other case we are free. God has a prior claim to our obedience, which no human interference, no relation which may be formed between us and others, no promise or contract, can invalidate.

*For we cannot but speak, &c.* We cannot in accordance with truth and duty. These "things" we have "seen and heard," and, therefore, are fully assured of ourselves, and things which we only have seen and heard: and, therefore, if *we* do not publish them, who will? who can? *Further threatened, i. e.,* with threats superadded to the inhibition of verse 18. *Because of the people,* who looked upon the miracle with admiration, and glorified God for working it by the Apostles' hands. *Above forty years old.* The length of time during which he had been crippled is not mentioned to en-

hance the miracle itself, as if a case of shorter standing might have been more easily restored, but to show the notoriety, both of his previous condition and of the sudden change which had been wrought, precluding all possibility of error or deception, and accounting for the popular effect described in the preceding verse. It is as easy with God to convert a sinner of *forty or fourscore,* as one of *ten* years old. But he who *now* refuses to obey the call of God, has neither reason nor revelation to support himself in the hope that he shall yet in a future time, accept the salvation which he rejects in the present.

23. † And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.—ii. 44-46.

*Their own company*—the community of believers, the Church in general. Among believers the Apostles felt themselves at home, as contrasted with being among the rulers in the Sanhedrim. To them they related all that the chief priests and rulers had said to them. "Not for their own glory," says *Chrysostom*, "did they tell the tale, but what they displayed were the proofs therein exhibited of the grace of Christ. All that their adversaries had said, this they told: their own part, it is likely, they omitted." This was a most important crisis for the infant Church. The highest civil and religious authority in the nation had decided against it. But, weak and defenseless in itself, it does not despond; on the contrary it betakes itself to God in prayer, and filled with a holy boldness, it defies all the powers of the world combined to overthrow the cause of Christ.

24. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is. 25. Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26. The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. 27. For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together: 28. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. 29. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word. 30. By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

† Kings xix. 15. †Ps. ii. 1, 2. †Luke xxiii. 1-8, &c. †iii. 18. †Prov. xxi. 30; Isa. xlvii. 10, liii. 10. †Verse 13, 31, xiv. 8, xxviii. 31; Eph. vi. 19. †ii. 43, v. 12.

*They lifted up their voice to God with one accord.* Prayer is enjoined on us in our distresses. "Call upon me in the day of

trouble." "Is any afflicted, let him pray." Observe the *substance* of their prayer. It was very reasonable, very suitable, and very short, as all Bible prayers are. It was also very *exemplary*, though they had been so evil entreated, yet they felt no disposition for revenge. (See on verse 30.) Then we see the *success* of the prayer, and God hath never said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain! The sign of the acceptance of the place seems strange—"The place was shaken." (Verse 31.) This seemed much more likely to produce dread than engender hope. But God would so teach us, that He is "greatly to be feared in the assembly of His saints," that He will be sanctified of all them that come nigh to Him, and that there was something awful in the dispensation of His mercy and grace.

*Thou art God, &c.* Thy rule is universal, and Thy power unlimited, for Thou hast made the heaven and its glories, the earth and the sea, and their endlessly varied and numerous inhabitants, and hast them under Thy direction and control. *Who by the mouth, &c.* Here the Apostles declare that God Himself spake by David, and it is confessed by the Jews, that the ancient rabbins interpret this Psalm of the Messiah. *Why, &c.* The sense is, this, Why do they, the peoples, kings and princes of the earth, rebel against the Messiah, why endeavor to shake off His rule? The *for* (verse 27) implies an acknowledgment of the truth of God in the fulfillment of the prophecy: *Thou art the God which hast, &c.* For these events have happened accordingly. *Herod . . . . . Pilate . . . . . Gentiles . . . . . Israel.* All these four forces are pictured as *gathered together* at the crucifixion as the image of the persecuting powers still in operation.

*For to do, or rather, in order to do,* though not with that conscious intention on their part. *Thy hand, or Thy power, Thy counsel, Thy purpose.* The phrase denotes the providential ordering of God. *Determined, &c.* The sentiment is the same as is conveyed in ii. 23 and iii. 18, on which see notes. All the hostility which was shown against Jesus, and the successful efforts to compass His death, were the means by which this arrangement was fulfilled. The

actors in this dreadful tragedy had no design to fulfill prophecy; they only acted out the will of their own hearts, and were unspeakably guilty, as being wholly voluntary in their determinations and their conduct. God permitted them thus to proceed, interposing no insuperable obstacles. Here is a chain thrown across a river; we can see the two opposite ends, but not the union in the midst; but were the chain raised, or the water lowered, we could see the connection as well as the extremities. All our knowledge of the affair begins and ends here—God's foreknowledge and man's free agency harmonize really, but inexplicably.

*Now, Lord, behold their threatenings, &c.* Recognizing in the threatenings of the Sanhedrim a declaration of war by the combined powers of the world against their infant cause, they seek not enthusiastically to hide from themselves its critical position, but calmly ask the Lord of heaven and earth to "look upon their threatenings." *That with all boldness they may speak thy word.* Rising above self, they ask only fearless courage to testify for their Master, and Divine attestation to their testimony by miracles of healing, &c., in His Name.

31. † And when they had prayed, <sup>a</sup>the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and <sup>b</sup>they spake the word of God with boldness.  
<sup>a</sup>ii. 2, 4. xvi. 26. <sup>b</sup>Verse 29.

*The place was shaken*—probably "the house where they were sitting," (see on ii. 2), of which scene this was a partial repetition, on a smaller scale and in a narrower circle, but with precisely the same spiritual and an analogous sensible effect. The sign here given of God's presence was familiar to the saints of the Old Testament. (Ex. xix. 18; Ps. lxxviii. 8, see on verse 24.) *And they were all filled*—with a fresh and renewed outpouring. *Word of God with boldness* (see on ii. 22, 23.) Prayer-strengthened and Spirit-inspired, these men now speak words of faith and firmness which no human power can disturb. They are soon to feel the full trial of their dauntless spirit.

32. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but <sup>a</sup>they had all things common.  
<sup>a</sup>Rom. xv. 6, 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. ii. 2; 1 Peter iii. 8. <sup>b</sup>ii. 14.

The expression of *one heart and of one soul* denotes the most intimate and endearing friendship. There was among them no difference of sentiment, a remarkable fact, considering their number. (Comp. notes on ii. 44-46.) "Where faith reigns, it conciliates men's minds so that all will the same thing. For hence comes discord, because we are not ruled by this Divine spirit of Christ."—*Calvin*. *Neither said any of them, &c.* (See on ii. 44-46.) The language used concerning the liberal communication of all the property of the more affluent, with their poor brethren, who were thus exempted from all want, and of their confidence in the disinterested faithfulness of the Apostles, is suited, as by a specimen, to show what Christianity would effect, in meliorating the condition of mankind, if universally and cordially embraced. (See 1 Cor. xvi. 2, 3.)

33. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold. 35. And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

31. 8. (Luke i. 48, 49; chap. i. 22. John i. 16. Verse 37, v. 2. iii. 45, vi. 1.)

*Gave the apostles witness.* Their testifying to Christ's resurrection, may be understood as comprehending the whole work of preaching Christ and making known the new religion. This they did *with great power*, not merely force of argument or eloquence, but in the exercise of that extraordinary spiritual power, with which they were invested for this very purpose, and by which they were enabled, both to testify of Christ, and to confirm their testimony by the evidence of signs or miracles. *And great grace, &c.* The special favor of God manifested to them, and the powerful effects of His sanctifying grace, in forming them to be such holy, lovely, and happy characters, seem to be specially intended. *Neither . . . any . . . lacked.* No one among them was allowed by his brethren to be in want. *For as many, &c.*

Those who owned property parted with their possessions, to obtain ready money for giving immediate relief to the destitute. *Apostles' feet.* The Apostles probably sat upon a raised seat, on the step of which, at their feet, the money was laid. The whole work of relieving the necessitous, although sustained by private contribution, was considered not a personal affair, but a public or ecclesiastical proceeding, and was therefore, as here appears, implicitly subjected to the Apostolical control and management. This is also evident from the fact that the statement of the placing of the prices at the Apostles' feet, is immediately followed by the act of distribution, as well as from the narrative contained in the sixth chapter, where the whole proceeding presupposes such authority in the Apostles.

36. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37. Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

*And Joses, &c.* This is specified merely as an eminent example of that spirit of generous sacrifice which pervaded all. *Surnamed Barnabas*, after his conversion to Christianity. *Son of consolation*—perhaps more properly *son of prophecy or preaching*. Chap. xiii. 1, he is called a prophet. The epithet was probably a testimony from the Apostles to his sacred eloquence. *A Levite*, and therefore one of those whose temporal interest Christianity seemed now particularly to oppose, as it threatened the destruction of the Jewish economy. *Cyprus*, one of the largest islands of the Mediterranean, distant from the Syrian coast one hundred miles, from Cilicia about sixty. Historians inform us that it was the residence of many Jews. The future notices by Luke of Barnabas remarkably coincide with his character briefly given here. He appears an able minister, full of kindness, and seemingly strongly disposed to labor in Cyprus. (Chap. xiii. 2, xv. 39.)

1. What was the effect of Peter's sermon? 2. What did Peter say to the rulers, elders, scribes, &c., who were gathered at Jerusalem? 3. Explain the phrase—"filled with the Holy Ghost?" 4. What is meant by "they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus?" 5. What command was given to Peter and John? 6. What was their answer? 7. When they were released, where did they go? 8. What was the effect of their report upon "their own company?" 9. What occurred when the Church betook itself to prayer? 10. Explain "great grace was upon them all." 11. What is said of the love and charity of the disciples? 12. What did Barnabas do?

## CHAPTER V.

*I* After that Ananias and Sapphira his wife for their hypocrisy at Peter's rebuke had fallen down dead, 12 and that the rest of the apostles had wrought many miracles, 14 to the increase of the faith: 17 the apostles are again imprisoned, 19 but delivered by an angel bidding them to preach openly to all; 21 when, after their teaching accordingly in the temple, 23 and before the council, 33 they are in danger to be killed, through the advice of Gamaliel, a prudent counsellor among the Jews, they be kept alive, 40 and are but beaten: for which they glorify God, and cease no day from preaching.

**B**UT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

Ananias — “God’s cloud,” or, “God’s grace.” (1 Chron. iii. 21). *Sapphira* (see Job xxviii. 6, 16), “the beautiful.” *A certain man*, &c. Ananias is introduced as a contrast to Barnabas. (iv. 36, 37.) It is probable that he was one of the richer members of the Church, as he had landed property to dispose of. (Verse 3.) It affords a humiliating view of humanity, that in a comparatively small and select society of persons of such pure, benevolent and high-minded principles, there were found two individuals, apparently exhibiting the same traits of character, while they were secretly slaves of the most sordid passions and the most detestable hypocrisy. Where there is light, there will also be a shadow. If Ananias and his wife had not complied with the common practice, and sold their possessions, their character might have been suspected. “No wickedness is more capital,” says *Cicero*, “than that of those who, when most deceiving, thus pass themselves off for good.”

2. And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.—iv. 34 37.

*The apostles’ feet.* (See on iv. 37.) By the sale of their land, and the bringing in of the money, they in fact professed to give the whole price as a gift of brotherly love to the common stock; but their aim was to get for themselves the credit of holy love and zeal by one portion of the price, whereas they had selfishly kept back the other portion for themselves. They wished to serve two masters, but to appear to serve only One. (See 1 Tim. vi. 10.) What a crime was theirs! 1. It was an insult to the Holy Ghost. 2. It was committed deliberately (verse 4). 3. It was preconcerted by a wedded pair. It was a deception practiced on the Church.

Achan, Judas, Demas, are, with this Ananias and Sapphira, among the many examples which history furnishes of the wickedness of avarice.

3. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

<sup>1</sup>Luke xxii. 3. <sup>2</sup>Verse 9. <sup>3</sup>Num. xxx. 2; Deut. xxiii. 21; Eccl. v. 4.

The human heart is itself sufficiently wicked to contrive and perpetrate very aggravated crimes, but some sins are so heinous in their nature, and are marked with such characters of audacity and profligacy, that they seem to have been suggested by a spirit more completely depraved even than man—the “spirit who works in the children of disobedience.” *Why hath Satan*, &c., that is, *Why hast thou permitted Satan?* or *why hast thou not resisted his temptations?* All that Satan can do is to tempt, not to constrain men to sin. (James iv. 7; 1 Peter v. 9.) *Filled thine heart.* The Hebrews thus express a person’s being emboldened (impelled, invited) to a thing. (Esth. vii. 5; Eccl. viii. 11.) *To lie to the Holy Ghost.* It is mentioned as an aggravating circumstance, that they lied to the Holy Ghost, whose eye could see clearly through every disguise.

4. Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.—Ps. cxxxix. 4.

*Whiles*, an antiquated form of *while* or *whilst*. *It remained*, &c. From this it appears that there was no law in the Church, no Apostolic injunction, which bound believers to sell their lands, and to place their money in a common fund. It was not a matter of law, but of love. (See on ii. 44, 45, 46.) *Why hast thou conceived*, &c. Though Satan is said to have filled his heart to do it (verse 3), yet he is said to have conceived it in his own heart, which shows that we cannot extenuate our sins, by laying the fault of them on the devil, the evil thing, whatever it is, that is said or done, the sinner has conceived in his own heart. *But unto God.* This verse is of weighty doctrinal import, as proving the Deity and personality of the Holy Spirit. The “Holy Ghost” (verse 3), is here called “God.” It is impossible to lie

to a mere quality. *Bengel* says, "This is the meaning: Ananias lied to God and His Spirit, not to men and Peter. Dare if thou canst, O Socinian, to say, he lied not to the Holy Ghost and to Peter, but to God."

5. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.  
5Verses 10, 11. 1Ps. lxxiv. 9.

The suddenness of his death is not to be attributed to the violent agitation of his mind, as instant dissolution has been known to be the effect of paroxysms of joy and peace. The stroke was inflicted by the hand of God, who was pleased to give this example of His holiness and severity. *Them that heard*—not merely upon those who saw. So in verse 11.

6. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.—1John xix. 40.

*The young men.* They were probably the younger men in the assembly, in distinction from the older. *Buried him.* This was done three hours after he died. (See verse 7.) To us, who live in a country where humanity has established the custom of waiting several days, in order both to ascertain the reality of dissolution, and prepare the minds of surviving relatives for the painful task of committing their friend to kindred dust, this transaction in the primitive Church seems to have been despatched with unnatural and almost indecent rapidity. But in warmer climates, in consequence of decomposition beginning much sooner than here, the practice of early interments is quite common. Seldom more than a day elapses, till a dead person is deposited in the grave; and in the hottest season of the year, or during the prevalence of an epidemic disorder, it is by no means an unusual sight to see the funeral procession of people who were in life and walking abroad a few hours before. The simple preparations for a funeral in the East render this easy; for there no coffins are required, no suit of mourning, no elaborate dressing of the corpse; the usual way is to inter it in the dress which the person wore at death, and to carry it on a bier or plain wooden board, to the place of burial. So that mean and humble as was the manner in which Ananias and Sapphira were taken to the grave,

it scarcely, if at all, differs from the common style of funeral processions in the East at the present day.

7. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.  
 8. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.  
 9. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.  
 10. Then she fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.  
 11. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.  
1Ps. l. 13; verse 3. 2Verse 5. 3Chap. li. 43.

Sapphira was privy to the fraud, but was ignorant of her husband's doom. Still she was steady to her purpose. How she could have remained ignorant of such a striking event for three hours after its occurrence, appears indeed strange, but circumstances we know not might have been the occasion of it. Perhaps no one had the courage to inform her of the dreadful fate of her husband. *Tell me whether, &c.* Happy would it have been for this woman if this question had staggered her ill-founded courage, and had led her, with unfeigned repentance, to acknowledge her wickedness. *Yea, for so much.* Here is an acknowledgment of her husband's criminal act, and of her own guilty participation in the deed.

*How is it, &c.* It is plain that this preconcert or conspiracy was viewed by the Apostle as a serious aggravation of the sin committed, not only because each was bound to hinder or dissuade, instead of helping and encouraging the other, but because this previous agreement showed the sin to be deliberate and presumptuous. *Tempt.* So to act, as to seem to doubt of the omnipotence, omniscience, veracity, or any other of the attributes of God. It has well been said, that there is an iniquitous perversion of the marriage ties: 1. When the marriage is simply a community of goods, a business transaction designed to consolidate wealth, instead of being a union of hearts in the Lord. 2. When the union is effected for the purpose of serving the flesh, the world and the devil, instead of being influenced by the holy principle: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (*Josh. xxiv. 15.*) 3. When married life is thus converted into a downward path, conduct-

ing both parties to hell, whether it be a hell on earth (domestic strife) or eternal perdition, whereas they should have been partners in every holy joy, and should have aided each other in their common efforts to obtain everlasting blessedness in heaven."

*Behold, the feet of them which have buried,* &c. Melancholy union in death, as there was guilty partnership in life! Others of the early Church fell martyrs to the cause of truth, and their names were honored, but Ananias and Sapphira died victims to their own base passions and hypocrisy, and are enrolled forever with the company of Judas, the traitor. *Shall carry thee out.* This, spoken before her death, decisively proves that death to have been not a *result* merely of her detection, but a judicial infliction. *Great fear,* &c. This effect on the Christian community itself was the chief design of so startling a judgment, which had its counterpart, as the sin itself had, in Achan (Josh. vii.), while the *time*—at the commencement of a new career—was similar.

12. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch: 13. And not of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15. Inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one. iv. 21. Rom. xv. 19; Heb. ii. 4. John xii. 42. iv. 21. vi. 47. 90r. in every street. Mark. xvi. 17, 18; John xiv. 12. James v. 16.

*And by the hands of the apostles,* &c. This verse should be read with the 15th, to which it properly belongs. *Many signs,* &c. Miracles of mercy, many in number, of different kinds, and often repeated, succeeded the judgment which had fallen upon Ananias and Sapphira. *And they were all,* &c.—the whole body of disciples. *Solomon's porch.* (See on iii. 11; John x. 23.) *And of the rest, i. e.,* those, perhaps, who were not converts, but thought and spoke well of them. *Durst no man,* &c. Such an awe had the miracles of the Apostles, and, perhaps, particularly, the fate of Ananias and Sapphira produced in them, that they did not care to mingle with the Christian company, at least in public. *The people magnified them.* The rulers, doubtless, affected to hold the

Apostles and other Christians in contempt, but the people in general regarded them with veneration, and spoke highly of them. *And believers,* &c. Whilst those (verse 13) who merely admired the disciples, ventured not to unite with them, many who were truly converted, were added to their number. The salutary fear of hypocrisy did not cause any temporary pause in the diffusion of the Gospel; on the contrary, multitudes impressed with its truth, were converted. It was a season of sifting: the Gospel repelled some and attracted others.

*Inasmuch that.* What is now stated, the bringing vast numbers to be healed, was the consequence of all that is narrated in the last three verses, namely, the miraculous deeds, the awe and love of the people, and the increased number of believers. The words *beds* and *couches* denote the softer couches of the rich, and the meaner cribs of the poor. *That at least the shadow of Peter,* &c. The crowd was so great and so incessant, that many could do nothing more than place themselves, or their afflicted friends, under the shadow of the Apostles, and especially of Peter, as the most conspicuous and active, as he came by or along. We need find no stumbling-block in the fact of the shadow of the Apostles having been the medium of working miracles. Cannot the Almighty work with any instruments, or with none, as pleases Him? And what is a hand or a voice, more than a shadow, except that the analogy of the ordinary instrument is a greater help to faith in the recipient? Where faith, as apparently here, did not need this help, the less likely medium was adopted. But what a fertile harvest of superstition and imposture has been made to spring out of this example! *There came also a multitude,* &c. The cause advances continually farther and wider. *Unclean spirits.* (Comp. xix. 12; see also Appendix.)

17. ¶ Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation. 18. And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. 19. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 20. Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. 21. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22. But when the officers came,

and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, 23. Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors; but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24. Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 25. Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. 26. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. 27. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, 28. Saying, Did not we strictly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

4v. 1, 2. \*or. *envy*. xvii. 5-7, xvi. 23-27. \*Ex. xxiv. 3. \*John vi. 63, 68, xvii. 8. iv. 5, 6. iv. 1. \*Matt. xxi. 28. iv. 18. \*Matt. xxvii. 25; chap. ii. 23, 36, iii. 15, vii. 52.

*The high priest*—Caiaphas, the chief agent in the crucifixion of their blessed Master. The Sadducees zealously joined him in this persecution. *Filled with indignation*. This new attack upon the Church, the language teaches, was not only preceded, but occasioned, by the things described in verses 12-16. Our success always makes the fire of envy burn hotter in the breast of our enemies. *The common* (or public) *prison*. It being too late in the evening to bring them to a hearing. The bonds and chains by which men are confined for Christ's sake, are truly honorable badges. *The angel*—an angel, rather. *By night*—the same night. *Opened the prison doors*. Did they think to imprison celestial light? to bury immortal life? Heaven derides their attempts. The deliverance of the Apostles at this time was similar to the deliverance of Peter on a subsequent occasion. (xii. 7.) It evidently filled their enemies with perplexity, and themselves with boldness and confidence in Christ. Since the establishment of the Gospel, God will have us live more by faith, and walk less by sense, and therefore we must not now (ordinarily) see these ministering and beneficent spirits, but although their visible appearances be ceased, yet their invisible operations for the heirs of salvation shall never cease. (Ileb. i. 14.)

*Go, stand and speak*, &c. The order of the angel was that they should stand free and undismayed, and preach openly to the people. *The words of this life*—"this same life," that was so highly predicated and extolled at that time, that no one could be in doubt what kind of life it was. The phrase must necessarily mean the Gospel of Christ. 1. This is a supernatu-

ral and spiritual life, God must give it. 2. A most elevated life—it brings us into an alliance with the Father and the Spirit by Jesus Christ. 3. A holy life—it is given for the very purpose of recovering man from sin to holiness. 4. A progressive life. Grace is represented as at first a blade, then an ear, then the full corn; as a little leaven leavening the lump. 5. An eternal life. Through all the periods of an endless duration, they that have this life shall never die. The words of the Gospel are called the words of life, 1. Because this word is the means of begetting this life. (James i. 18; John xvii. 17.) 2. Because it improves this life. (1 Peter ii. 2.) 3. Because it carries in it the promise of this life. (1 John ii. 25; chap. v. 11, 12.) 4. Because it is the rule of that judgment by which all that partake therein are finally adjudged to eternal life. (Matt. xxv. 46.) Ministers of the Gospel, as they can have opportunity, should preach the words of this life. It ought to be their end, to help souls into this state of life. (2 Cor. iii. 6; 1 Cor. iv. 15; Phil. 10; Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13; Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 Tim. iv. 13; Ezek. xxxiii. 11; Dan. xii. 3; Isa. xlix. 5; 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.)

*They entered into the temple*, &c. How self-possessed! the indwelling Spirit raising them above fear. *Called . . . all the senate*, &c.—an unusually general convention, though hastily summoned. It was called together, not solely because a most solemn question under the old Mosaic law was to be tried, namely, whether the workers of certain miracles were prophets of God, or agents of Beelzebub, but also because the contest was now with the people, who were largely on the side of the Apostles, endangering the predominance, as was feared, of the ruling Sadducean powers. *And found them not in the prison*. How terribly must these officers have been surprised! All things indicated that the prisoners were safe within, but when they entered the dreary precincts there was not a man to be found. The angel had done no injury to the building, no violence to the jailers. The whole appeared just as it had on the previous night.

*The captain of the temple*. (See on iv. 1.)

*They doubted, &c.* They were filled with apprehension—thrown into the utmost perplexity. The words do not so much express their wonder at what had happened, as their fear at what would be the issue of the whole—the terrible bearing upon themselves. *Brought them without violence.* The officers on reaching the temple, found the multitude gladly receiving the doctrine of the Apostles, and they were afraid to show any hostility to the Apostles, lest the people should stone them; we may therefore conclude that the officers entreated them to accompany them to the council, and that they yielded to the solicitation, and so cheerfully went with them, trusting in the Lord their God. *Did not we straitly command you, &c.* (See iv. 17–21.) They ought to have inquired first, How did ye escape? But as if nothing had happened, they asked them, “saying,” &c. The same shyness of open allusion to the names of facts connected with Jesus and the spread of His doctrine may be traced in the words “*this name,*” and “*this man’s blood,*” and is a strong mark of truth and circumstantiality. The high priest will not name Jesus; Peter names and celebrates Him. *Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.* A stronger testimony than this to the zeal of the Apostles and to the growth of their cause could scarcely have been given. It was given by the most intelligent men in Jerusalem—men who knew the prevailing feeling and the general character of the population well—men, too, who would have ignored and denied the fact if they could. Circumstances wrested it from their reluctant lips. *And intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.* To “bring blood upon the head” is a peculiar Hebrew idiom, meaning to make one answer for the murder or the death of another. There was conscience in this. They felt that they were implicated in the horrid crime of the crucifixion of Christ, and that which they once dared in the fury of their rage, when they cried (Matt. xxvii. 25), “Let His blood be upon us,” they now deprecated as the direst of judgments.

23. † Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. † div. 19.

We ought should rather be *we must*, ex-

\*16

pressing not mere obligation but necessity. The same principle, only in a more positive and pointed form, as in iv. 19, 20, on which see notes. Besides the essential idea of obedience, which the word here translated *obey* involves, it suggests that God is superior to man, not only in power, but in rightful authority. On the Athenians condemning Socrates, he exclaimed, “I embrace and love you, but I will obey God rather than you, and if you would spare my life on condition of giving up teaching you, I would rather die a thousand times than acquiesce.” The Apostles and early Christians acted on the principle that human governments forfeit their claims to obedience when they require what God has plainly forbidden, or forbid what He has required. They claimed the right of judging for themselves what was right and what was wrong, in reference to their religious and their political duties, and they regulated their conduct by that decision. In applying this principle, it will be found that the Apostles in every instance abstained from all forcible resistance to the public authorities. They refused utterly to obey the mandates which required them to violate their consciences, but they endured quietly the penalties which the executors of the law enforced against them. They evaded the pursuit of their oppressors if they could (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33), secreted themselves from arrest (xii. 19), left their prisons at the command of God, yet when violent hands were laid upon them, and they were dragged before magistrates, to the dungeon, or to death, they resisted not the wrong, but “followed His steps, who, when He suffered, threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. (1 Peter ii. 22, 23.)

30. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

† Gal. iii. 13; 1 Peter ii. 24. † Phil. ii. 9. † Isa. ix. 6. † Matt. i. 21. † Luke xxiv. 47–8. † Jil. 4.

*God of our fathers.* By this solemn expression the Apostles assume that Jesus and themselves are in true line of descent from the *fathers* and under sanction of their *God*. *Raised up*—exalted as the *Sent*



of God. The idea of the resurrection is also involved in that of the exaltation. *Hanged on a tree.* The cross is here designedly so called, because, according to the Jewish law, being hanged on a tree was esteemed an accursed death. (Gal. iii. 13.) What superiority to the fear of man, what inflexible fidelity to truth, what more than human heroism, are exhibited by the Apostles as they stand before the most august assembly of the land, and charge them with the greatest crime ever perpetrated under heaven!

*Him hath God exalted*—raised up to heaven. *With his right hand*, by the exertion of His power, and *to His right hand*, *i. e.*, to a share in that power, and in the dignity connected with it. *A Prince and a Saviour*, not “to be a Prince and a Saviour,” but the words are the predicate of Him as a Prince and a Saviour. The one word expresses that *Royalty* which all Israel looked for in Messiah, the other His *Saving* character which they had utterly lost sight of. Each of these features in our Lord’s work enters into the other, and both make one glorious whole. (iii. 15; Heb. ii. 10.) That it was spiritual salvation that was here spoken of, is evident from the remainder of the verse. *To give repentance*—the grace of repentance, *i. e.*, power and disposition to repent. *Forgiveness*—removal of all obligation to punishment. There is not a meritorious connection between repentance and forgiveness, but there is, 1, a connection of propriety, for it would not accord with the wisdom of God to forgive one incapable of enjoying or serving Him, and, 2, a connection of certainty—they are indissolubly united—no one ever really enjoyed forgiveness without repentance, and no one ever truly exercised repentance without forgiveness. *To Israel.* The express mention of Israel, as the object of this favor, is not intended to restrict it to the Jews, but either to intimate the priority of the offer made to them, or, which is more probable, to assure the contemporary Jews, who had been implicated in the murder of their own Messiah, that even this most aggravated sin was not beyond the reach of the Divine forgiveness, if repented of, to bestow both which gifts, *i. e.*, repentance as the means, and

forgiveness as the end, was the very purpose for which Christ had been exalted as a Prince and Saviour.

*Witnesses of these things*—the death and exaltation of Christ. *Also the Holy Ghost*—the Apostles as competent human witnesses to facts, and the Holy Ghost as attesting them by undeniable miracles. (See on ii. 4.) *Whom God hath given to them that obey him.* There is no true obedience without faith, or true faith without obedience. “How rich in doctrine,” says the *Rev. Dr. Chalmers*, “are the two contiguous verses, 31 and 32, both as respects the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity! Let me not divide Christ, nor put asunder the things which God hath joined. It is the office of the Prince and the Saviour exalted at His right hand to give both repentance and the remission of sins. Let me equally desire both, let me pray for both, and O may I work mightily by strength conferred upon me from on high, so as to perfect my repentance and perfect my holiness. And how relevant to this process is this weighty sentence—that the Holy Ghost is given to those who obey Him. By the blessed alternation of performance and prayer, give me, O Lord, to experience that in serving faithfully, I am supplied plentifully and fruitfully with grace from Thine upper sanctuary. Let our righteousness spring up from earth, and Thy grace look down upon us from heaven.”

33. ¶ When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.—*vii. 54.*

They were sufficiently enraged to conceive the thought of putting these men to death. When the truth is not voluntarily received, let it cut to the heart; that, too, is a victory. It is an evidence of the powerlessness of the enemies of truth, that they silence those who confess it, not by adducing arguments, but by applying a gag, and by attempts to slay them.

34. Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space.—*lxvii. 3.*

As they were about to vote the death of the Apostles, they were checked by Gamaliel, who counseled that the Apostles retire a short time, so that he might with the more propriety give his advice to the

rulers. Gamaliel was renowned as one of the great doctors of the law, and still more as the preceptor of Paul. (xxii. 3.) He is identified with the celebrated Jewish doctor Gamaliel, who is known by the title of "the glory of the law," and was the first to whom the title "Rabban," "our master," was given. This Gamaliel was son of Rabbi Simeon, and grandson of the celebrated Hillel. He was president of the Sanhedrim under Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius, and is reported to have died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem. He was succeeded in the presidency of the Sanhedrim by his son Simeon, who perished in the siege.

35. And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. 36. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. 37. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him; he also perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. 38. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel of this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

<sup>35</sup>Or, believed. <sup>36</sup>Luke xiii. 1, 2. <sup>37</sup>Prov. xxi. 30; Isa. xlii. 10; Matt. xv. 13. <sup>38</sup>Job xxxiv. 29; 1 Cor. i. 25. <sup>39</sup>Ix. 5, xxiii. 9.

Observe the sage counsel given, in the several parts of it. 1. *Take heed to yourselves what ye intend, &c.*—implying that men had need to take heed, how they engage themselves in suppressing or destroying any sort of men, whatsoever, until they have a clear and expressive warrant from heaven for their execution. 2. He assured them that it was an age of pretenders, specifying *Theudas* and *Judas of Galilee*, who had risen up not long before—in the memory of some of them, and who had ended by breaking out into open revolt and being destroyed by the power of Rome. He wished the Sanhedrim to understand, that if the cause of the Apostles was undivine and merely human, it would perish just like this *Theudas* and *Judas*. 3. He suggested that the thing might be indeed from God, and if so, to overthrow it would be impossible, to resist it would incur the guilt of fighting against God. The argument is designed to show that his hearers on their own principles, were bound to take the course he recommended. They professed to regard the new religion as an undivine thing. They need not, therefore, go to the trouble of

opposing it, on their own view of it, it would soon die. *But if it be of God, &c.* Here is another part of the argument—if the movement was of God, opposition would be futile and impious. The *if* imports a suspicion, some doubt and apprehension of the thing as not improbable. *Ye cannot, &c.* Here is a recognition of the solemnity and fixedness of the Divine purpose. Attempts to crush the cause of God are as futile as attempts to roll back the tides of ocean, or reverse the course of planets—worse than futile, it is fighting against God—a mad and impious battling against the Infinite.

40. And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41. ¶ And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. <sup>40</sup>Matt. x. 17. <sup>41</sup>v. 18. <sup>42</sup>Matt. v. 12; 2 Cor. xii. 10; Phil. i. 29; James i. 2; 1 Peter iv. 13-16.

The advice of Gamaliel was so wise and reasonable, that it prevailed with the rulers to desist from their former intention of putting the Apostles to death. They came not off without blows, however, though without bloodshed. They were scourged, as their Master was before them, which was both a painful and reproachful punishment. (See on next verse.) *Not speak in the name of Jesus.* (See on iv. 18.) *Worthy to suffer shame.* By a beautiful paradox they feel the glory of the disgrace. The scourge or whip usually had two lashes knotted with bone or brazen circles or terminated with hooks, and was significantly called the *scorpion*. It was inflicted upon the bare back, apparently of the entire twelve. Paul suffered this five times, Jesus once. *For his name, rather, the name, i. e.,* for the glorification of the name whose confession and announcement was always their highest and holiest solicitude. *Daily in the temple, &c.*—every day, both in the temple and in private. *Ceased not to teach, &c.*—in defiance of the prohibition which blows as well as words had just now enforced on them. *And preach Jesus Christ.* When they addressed the people, they did not complain of their enemies, did not boast of their own firmness, did not defend their character, which had been sullied by the scourge, but simply preached the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ. They preached

in promiscuous assemblies, to which all resorted, and in the select assemblies of Christians for special ordinances. They visited the families, and gave particular instructions to them, according as their case required, even to the children and servants. And the subject matter of their

preaching was *Jesus Christ, not themselves*, making it their business to advance His interest. It ought to be the constant business of Gospel ministers to *preach Christ, Christ, and Him crucified, Christ, and Him glorified*, nothing beside this, but what is reducible to it.

1. What is said of Ananias and Sapphira? 2. Explain "laid it at the Apostles' feet." 3. What did Peter say to Ananias? 4. What occurred to himself and his wife? 5. What was the effect of these startling judgments? 6. What is said of the Apostles? 7. What did the high priest and Sadducees do to the Apostles? 8. How were they released from prison? 9. What did Peter and the other Apostle answer before the council? 10. What effect was produced by their reply? 11. What did Gamaliel say? 12. Who was Gamaliel? 13. What was the nature of his argument on this occasion? 14. In what spirit did the Apostles depart from the council? 15. What are they said to have done daily?

## CHAPTER VI.

1 *The apostles, desirous to have the poor regarded for their bodily sustenance, as also careful themselves to dispense the word of God, the food of the soul, appoint the office of deaconship to seven chosen men. 3 Of whom Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, is one. 12 Who is taken of those, whom he conjured in disputing, 13 and after falsely accused of blasphemy against the law and the temple.*

AND in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

The expression *those days* probably refers to the preceding verse, while the Apostles were daily engaged in the temple and in private houses teaching and preaching the Gospel, and when the disciples, as stated in this verse, were as a consequence multiplied. A murmuring. In a multitude a cause of murmuring easily arises. *Grecians*—foreign Jews, such as spoke the language of Greece. *The Hebrews*—those Jews born in Palestine, who used their native tongue, and were wont to look down on the "Grecians" as an inferior class. The ground of the murmuring was the neglect of widows in the daily ministration. It was said, perhaps, by some, that there was something like favoritism in the distribution of the charities of the Church, and that the widows of the Hellenist Christians were overlooked. There were many poor in that new and large community, many who were dependent, perhaps, almost entirely, for their support on the

public funds. Widows are especially mentioned here, and they, as a rule, in all communities are the most abject, and the most deserving of aid. The Bible especially commends them to the compassion of the benevolent. (James i. 27.)

2. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

<sup>c</sup>Ex. xviii. 17-26.

The expression *serve tables* is of the same import with ministering to the necessities of the poor. Their tables were to be supplied with food convenient for them, such things as they wanted, were to be provided, and it would be neither right nor becoming, that the Apostles, whose spiritual work was now becoming too absorbing, should be so much engaged in this service, as to omit the more important duties of their office. Jesus Christ had sent them to preach the Gospel, and no inferior design, however useful and urgent, should longer interfere with the great object of their commission.

3. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

<sup>d</sup>Deut. i. 13. <sup>e</sup>xvi. 2; 1 Tim. iii. 7, 8, 10.

*Brethren, not brethren* in the ministry but in the faith. *Look ye out, &c.* The selection, therefore, was made by the body of the Church. It was the more necessary that they should be consulted in the election, because there had been

dissatisfaction in consequence of the former management of the poor. The Apostles, however, invested the persons with the office, and gave them authority to discharge its duties, as we see from the words, *whom we may appoint over this business.* Seven. Various reasons have been assigned why seven should be the number selected. Some suppose that this number was arbitrarily selected, others because seven nations are supposed to have been represented, others because this was the sacred number among the Jews, others that there were now seven thousand believers, and that one almoner was chosen for each thousand, others that the Church of Jerusalem was divided into seven congregations, &c., &c. But all these are arbitrary suppositions. The qualifications of these men as here stated, are, 1. *Men of honest report, testified to, of good repute.* 2. *Full of the Holy Ghost*—thorough religious men. 3. *Full of wisdom*, that is, of prudence. It is no unimportant matter to dispense the property of the Church. Even in a public steward, and in a deacon as such, there should be administrative and sanctifying gifts.

4. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.  
1 Tim. iv. 15.

But, *we*, on our part, as distinguished from the persons thus selected. *Prayer*, not personal devotion merely, but the business of conducting public worship, as the *ministry* (or *dispensation*) of the word, evidently means the work of preaching or public and official teaching. *Continually*—we will have no leisure but for these. Note, 1. That such as are called by God to the work of the ministry, ought to give themselves wholly to it. 2. That a minister's giving himself to prayer, is as great a duty, as giving himself to the preaching of the word. He should give himself to the one as the end, to the other as the mean: it is God that sets the Word on work, but it is prayer that sets God on work.

5. ¶ And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:  
exi. 24. b viii. 5, 26, xxi. 8. 1 Rev. ii. 6, 15.

The whole multitude, apparently without exception, or dissent, which seems to show the absence of malignant jealousy

and party-spirit. *Stephen*. As this and the following names are all Greek, it is likely they were all of the "Grecian" class, which would effectually restore mutual confidence. *Full of faith*, which is the root of all Christian virtues. (See on verse 8.) *And of the Holy Ghost*. All that is recorded of Stephen shows that he was a man of distinguished excellence, and a chosen organ of Divine thought and power. Of *Philip* (not the Apostle, but another person of the same name,) we read again in viii. 5, 40, xxi. 8. Of the other five here mentioned, none are elsewhere alluded to in Scripture, one, Nicolas, is mentioned in ecclesiastical tradition, the other four are totally unknown. *A proselyte, &c.*, that is, a Gentile by birth who had embraced the Jewish religion, and submitted to the rite of circumcision before he became a Christian.

6. Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.  
ii. 24. ix. 17, xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14, v. 22; 2 Tim. i. 6.

*Set*, placed, caused to stand, the verb translated *appointed* in i. 23. In both cases it denotes the presentation of the persons found to possess the prescribed qualifications. Election, in the proper sense, is not suggested by this word, but explicitly recorded in the context. (verse 5.) *Prayed* . . . . *laid their hands*—the one proclaiming that all official gifts flowed from the Church's glorified Head, the other symbolizing the communication of these to the chosen office-bearers through the recognized channels.

7. ¶ And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.  
1 Isa. lv. 11; chap. xii. 24, xix. 20. Ps. cxxxii. 9, 16.

"A happy event of a time of trial." Indeed, the triumph of the Gospel, without this, would in some respects have been incomplete. Four thousand two hundred and eighty priests returned from captivity (Ezra ii. 36-39), and probably their number was now greatly increased. The number of priests was very great at Jerusalem. The conversion of so many strikingly displayed the power of the Gospel, when we recollect their prejudices against it, and the disgrace, losses, and dangers attending their confession of the name of Jesus as the Messiah.

8. <sup>9</sup> And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

*Full of faith and power*, cherishing an unwavering confidence in the Lord Jesus, and signally aided by Divine power. This is the first instance of any, *not an Apostle*, working signs and wonders. He who is faithful in that which is least (the office of a guardian of the poor) is intrusted by the Lord with much faith, power, miracles.

9. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the *synagogue of the Libertines*, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. 10. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

*The synagogue of the Libertines*, i. e., *libertini*, *freed-men*, viz.: Jews, or the sons of Jews, who having been slaves at Rome, had acquired their freedom, and, living now at Jerusalem, maintained a separate synagogue of their own. The *Cyrenians* take their name from the place they lived in, mentioned in ii. 10. The *Alexandrians* were the inhabitants of Alexandria, a city of Egypt, situated on the Nile, built by Alexander the Great in the fourth century B. C., and originally peopled by colonies of Greeks and Jews. *Cilicia*, a province of Asia Minor, bounded on the south by the Mediterranean Sea, east of Syria, north and west by Cappadocia, Lycaonia, Itauria, and Pamphylia. The opponents of Stephen seem to have belonged to the congregations of five different synagogues. *Disputing* may imply that the discussion which they sought, and which at first was private, became generally known and public. "The most zealous controversialists and most skillful disputants, who select religious truth as their topic, usually," says one, "have the least religion and faith of all." *They were not able to resist*, &c. He was *wise*, well exercised and experienced in Divine things, and, as appears by his defense, in, the following chapter, well versed in the Jewish history. *And the Spirit*, &c., that is, not merely ardor of mind, but the Holy Spirit, with whom Stephen was filled. (Verse 5.) They were obliged either to yield to the teachings, or were confounded by the truth. Here was a striking fulfillment of Christ's promise—"I will give you a mouth and wisdom," &c. (Luke xxi. 15, on which see notes.)

11. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. 12. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, 13. And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: 14. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. 15. And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

<sup>12</sup> Kings xxi. 10, 13; Matt. xxvi. 59, 60. <sup>13</sup> xxv. 8. <sup>14</sup> Dan. ix. 25. <sup>15</sup> *for, rites.* <sup>16</sup> Ex. xxxiv. 30, 35.

*Suborned*—instigated, *put forward by collusion*, to do so. They got men to swear falsehood—to perjure themselves. *Blasphemous words*—impious, abusive, and contumelious words. *Against Moses*—"our great legislator," and *against God*, whose representative he was, and from whom all his legislative power was derived. *Neander* well remarks that this false charge, coupled with the character of Stephen's apologetic speech, shows the *real character of his arguments with his opponents*—that he seems to have been the first who plainly set forth the transitory nature of the law and temple, as compared with the permanence of the latter and better covenant, thus being in a remarkable manner the forerunner of Paul. *The people, and the elders, and the scribes*, were alarmed, and hastening, with common consent, they apprehended and arraigned him before the Sanhedrim, which had authority to take cognizance of cases of blasphemy. *False witnesses, which said*, &c. The *falsehood* of their witness consisted, as in the similar case of our Lord, in taking Stephen's words out of their context, and *misrepresenting* what perhaps in so many words he had actually said.

All . . . . looking steadfastly, wishing and hoping, perhaps, to gaze him into confusion and tremor. *Face . . . angel*. Was the aspect of Stephen's face at this time, natural or supernatural? He might have had a corporeal loveliness. We know he was at this time full of wisdom and faith. His countenance was not pallid with guilt, nor distracted by care, nor troubled with fear, but full of confidence, serenity, mildness and joy. Yet there was something supernatural here, nor is it strange that there should have been, for the occasion was worthy a Divine interposition, and that was an age of miracles. He who was accused of blaspheming Moses bears the

radiance that authenticated Moses in his own face. (Ex. xxxv. 29-35.) It was a faint beam from that *glory* of which he spoke in vii. 2, and which his own eyes beheld in vii. 55.

Jesus honors those who are not ashamed, or afraid to own, serve, and suffer for Him. He frequently brings their enemies to their feet, in awe and reverence. Often,

in their last hours, has He thrown a radiance around them that has rendered the dying chamber the house of God and the gate of heaven, and induced the exclamation from all beholders: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

"Sure the last end  
Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit!  
Night dews fall not more calmly on the ground,  
Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft."

1. What are we to understand by "those days"? 2. What "murmuring" is referred to? 3. What did the Twelve then do? 4. Why did they call the disciples? 5. What did they say to them? 6. Describe the character of men that were to be selected? 7. What did the Apostles say they would do? 8. Who were chosen? 9. State who they were. 10. What did the Apostles do to them? 11. What is said to have occurred in Jerusalem? 12. What is said of Stephen? 13. Who disputed with Stephen? 14. When not able to resist his address, what did he do? 15. What is said of the face of Stephen?

## CHAPTER VII.

1 Stephen, permitted to answer to the accusation of blasphemy, 2 sheweth that Abraham worshipped God rightly, and how God chose the fathers 20 before Moses was born, and before the tabernacle and temple were built: 37 that Moses himself witnessed of Christ: 44 and that all outward ceremonies were ordained according to the heavenly pattern, to last but for a time: 51 reprehending their rebellion, and murdering of Christ, the Just One, whom the prophets foretold should come into the world. 54 Whereupon they stone him to death, who commendeth his soul to Jesus, and humbly prayeth for them.

**T**HEN said the high priest, Are these things so?

The glorified countenance of Stephen caused a pause of surprise and admiration which the high priest, Theophilus, interrupts by calling on the accused for his defense.

[As to the nature of the speech (which extends to verse 53)—its relation to the charges brought against Stephen, and the objects which the protomartyr had in view—see the paraphrase and remarks at the close of the defense.]

2. And he said, <sup>a</sup>Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran. 3. And <sup>b</sup>said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. 4. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. 5. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised <sup>c</sup>that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. 6. And God spake on this wise, That this seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil <sup>d</sup>four hundred years. 7. And the nation to

whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. 8. And <sup>e</sup>he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so <sup>f</sup>Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day: and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob <sup>g</sup>begat the twelve patriarchs. <sup>h</sup>xxii. 1. <sup>i</sup>Gen. xii. 1. <sup>j</sup>Gen. xii. 5. <sup>k</sup>Gen. xiii. 15. <sup>l</sup>Gen. xiii. 16. <sup>m</sup>Ex. xii. 40, 41. <sup>n</sup>Ex. iii. 12. <sup>o</sup>Gen. xvii. 9-11. <sup>p</sup>Gen. xxi. 4. <sup>q</sup>Gen. xxv. 6. <sup>r</sup>Gen. xxix. 32, &c.

*The God of glory.* This is not to be considered as a Hebraism equivalent to "glorious God," but it refers to the "glory" of the Jews—the glory of God, which, as a pillar of fire, guided them in the wilderness, and rested upon the mercy-seat in the tabernacle and in the temple—called by them the Shechinah. Hence Paul mentions "the glory" as one of the peculiar privileges of the Jewish nation. (Rom. ix. 4.) *Mesopotamia.* Abraham resided first in Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. xi. 28), which lay probably in the extreme north of Mesopotamia, near the sources of the Tigris. *Charran* (Gen. xi. 31), was also in the north of Mesopotamia, but south of Ur. It was the later *Carræ* of the Greeks and Romans, where Crassus was defeated and slain by the Parthians. Its position tallies remarkably with the sacred narrative. The ruins have been identified a few miles south of Urfa, on a road from the north to the southern ford of the Euphrates. Stephen's meaning evidently is that Abraham's call in Charran was not

the first which he received during his residence in Mesopotamia. We have no account of this first communication to the patriarch in the Old Testament, but it is implied distinctly in Gen. xv. 7 and Neh. ix. 7. Philo and Josephus relate the history of Abraham in accordance with the statement here, that he was called twice. *Of the Chaldeans.* Whose land belonged to Mesopotamia. *When his father was dead, he removed, &c.* Though Abraham was in Canaan before Terah's death, his settlement in it as the land of promise is here said to be after it, as being in no way dependent on the family movements, but a transaction purely between Jehovah and Abraham himself.

*And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much, &c.* But how does this consist with Abraham's purchase of a hereditary burial place (Gen. xxiii. 20; 1. 13)? We may understand the words to mean that He had not yet given him, or still more exactly, did not give him, i. e., in the first years of his residence, the smallest portion of the land of Canaan. This is all that was necessary for Stephen's purpose; which was simply to show what changes had already taken place in the condition of the chosen people since the calling of Abraham. *Yet he promised, &c.*—it was promised to him only as a future possession. Stephen now mentions Abraham's *seed*, and, presupposing the special circumstance that his and Sarah's bodies were as if dead, gives prominence to his faith in the future. *Sojourn in a strange land.* (Comp. Gen. xv. 13, 14.) The residence of the Hebrews in Egypt is here referred to *four hundred years*. The exact number of years, as we elsewhere learn, was four hundred and thirty. (Ex. xii. 40; see also Gal. iii. 17.) Stephen avails himself of a privilege which cannot be reasonably denied to him, and merely mentions a round number, without taking into account the broken number. But the question is, From what period are these years to be reckoned? Do they refer exclusively to the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, commencing at the removal of Jacob into that country? Or do they commence from the call of Abraham, and include also the sojourn in Canaan? Certainly, at first sight, the words in the

Mosaic narrative would seem to intimate that this was the period of Egyptian bondage, but Paul understands it differently. He reckons four hundred and thirty years as extending from the call of Abraham to the giving of the law. (Gal. iii. 17.) And there are interval marks in the Mosaic narrative which show that this reckoning is correct, for the mother of Moses was the daughter of Levi (Ex. vi. 20), which would be impossible were the whole period of Egyptian bondage four hundred and thirty years. The period of four hundred and thirty years appears to be divided into two equal parts, the one being the sojourn in Canaan, and the other being the sojourn in Egypt.

*A covenant of circumcision* may be either circumcision itself, as a covenant stipulated rite, or a covenant of which circumcision was the sign and seal. (See Gen. xvii. 10, 11, where both these ideas seem to be expressed, and compare Gen. ix. 12.) *The eighth day.* Circumcision was fixed to take place on the eighth day. (Lev. xii. 3. "The fact that Moses fixed the eighth day, which might come on the Sabbath," says *Stier*, "notwithstanding the adoption of the seventh day of rest even among the ten commandments, may point out to us that God, in appointing the eighth day, prefigured the abolition, or rather the alteration, of the Old Testament Sabbath.")

9. And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him. 10. And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. 11. Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. 12. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent our fathers first. 13. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren: and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. 14. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. 15. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers. 16. And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.

<sup>a</sup>Gen. xxxvii. 28; Ps. cv. 17. <sup>b</sup>Gen. xxxix. 2, 21. <sup>c</sup>Gen. xli. 40. <sup>d</sup>Gen. xli. 54. <sup>e</sup>Gen. xlii. 1, 2. <sup>f</sup>Gen. xlv. 1, 16. <sup>g</sup>Gen. xlvi. 27; Deut. x. 22. <sup>h</sup>Josh. xxiv. 32.

*Moved with envy.* Stephen shows that the Jews' ancestors were already stiff-necked. *Sold into Egypt.* Removed from them him who was soon after carried into Egypt. But although they cast him off, *God was with him*, and "gave him favor in the sight of Pharaoh by his wisdom." (See Gen. xl. 8, xli. 16.) *Came a dearth, &c.* Egypt and Canaan are alike, though through the bless-

ing of Joseph's God there was bread in Egypt, whilst in the universal great affliction the children of Abraham found no sustenance. *Joseph was made known, &c.* (See Gen. xlv. 1-3, 16.) *Then sent Joseph, &c.* (See Gen. xlv. 17-21.) *Threescore and fifteen souls.* The Hebrew text reckons only seventy (Gen. xlvi. 27; Deut. x. 22), but the Septuagint adds five sons of Ephraim and Manasseh, born in Egypt, from 1 Chron. vii., which make seventy-five. But as Stephen speaks only of those that went down with Jacob, without perhaps including the patriarch himself, or any who were in Egypt, the number may be thus reckoned. The eleven brethren, with Dinah their sister, and fifty-two who had descended from them, amount to sixty-four, to which add the eleven wives of Jacob's sons, and the whole will be precisely seventy-five. From so feeble a beginning the Hebrews soon grew to a mighty nation. (See verse 17.) Stephen would suggest to the mind that contrast.

*And were carried over into Sychem. Sychem* is the same as *Sichem* (Gen. xii. 6), and *Shechem* (Gen. xxxvii. 12), in the Old Testament. It was a city among the mountains of Ephraim, in the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. The remark of Stephen does not relate to the burial of Jacob, but to that of the *fathers*, as distinguished from him; for, as we learn from Gen. xlix. 29, 30, l. 13, xxiii. 19, Jacob was buried in Hebron, not in Shechem. In regard to the patriarchs, the sons of Jacob, there was a current tradition among the Jews that their bodies were conveyed to Shechem, and there buried, with the exception of Joseph's body, which was preserved in Egypt, and was carried away by the children of Israel when they left Egypt for Canaan. (See Gen. l. 25, 26; Ex. xiii. 19.) The Old Testament gives us no account of the matter. *The sepulchre that Abraham bought, &c.* "Two accounts," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "seem here to be confounded: 1. The purchase made by Abraham of the cave and field of Ephron, which was in the field of Machpelah; this purchase was made from the children of *Heth*. (Gen. xxiii. 3, 10, 17.) 2. The purchase made by Jacob from the sons of *Hamor* or *Emmor*, of a sepulchre in which

the bones of Joseph were laid; this was in Sychem or Shechem. (Gen. xxxiii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 32.) The word *Abraham* therefore, in this place, is certainly a mistake; and the word *Jacob*, which some have supplied is doubtless more proper. *Bishop Pearce* supposes that Luke originally wrote *which he bought for a sum of money, i. e.,* which *Jacob* bought, who is the last person of the *singular* number, spoken of in the preceding verse. Those who saw that the word *bought* had no *nominative* case joined to it, and did not know where to find the proper one, seem to have inserted *Abraham* in the text for that purpose, without sufficiently attending to the different circumstances of *his* purchase, from that of *Jacob*. Some ancient manuscripts of the Acts have here, instead of the word *Abraham*, the words *our father*, which may refer to Jacob.

17. ¶ But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, 18. Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph, 19. The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live, 20. In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: 21. And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son, 22. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds, 23. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel, 24. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: 25. ¶ For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not, 26. And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? 27. But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? 28. Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday? 29. Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons, 30. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush, 31. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, 32. *Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* Then Moses trembled and durst not behold, 33. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground, 34. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt, 35. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush, 36. He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, forty years.

¶ Ex. i. 7-9. ¶ Ex. ii. 22. ¶ Ex. ii. 2, &c. ¶ Ex. ii. 10. ¶ Luke xxiv. 19. ¶ Ex. ii. 11, &c. ¶ Or, now. ¶ Ex. iii. 2, &c. ¶ Matt. xxii. 32; Heb. xi. 16. ¶ Josh. v. 15; Eccl. v. 1. ¶ Ex. xiv. 1. ¶ Num. xx. 16. ¶ Ex. vii. viii., ix., x., xii., xiv. ¶ Ex. xvi. 35.

*Exceeding fair, or divinely beautiful*, which rendered his preservation more desirable to his parents, and, most probably, was the



chief motive which influenced Pharaoh's daughter in securing his safety and future comfort. *Moses was learned*, &c. The Egyptians were anciently of distinguished knowledge, grandeur and wealth. It was a remarkable instance of self-denial for a man of literature, with every flattering prospect before him, to retire in the prime of life from the court of Egypt, and to live comfortably as a shepherd in the Arabian desert. *Mighty in words*—judicious and persuasive in his discourse, *and in deeds*—prudent and bold, consequently he would make a conspicuous figure, both in the counsels which he gave, and in the commands which he executed in that polite and justly-renowned nation. (Verses 23, 24; see Ex. ii. 11, 12.) *Put off thy shoes*, &c. A command intimating the reverence due to the place where Jehovah deigns to appear; the desert is, then, as holy as the temple at Jerusalem. Some nations to this day express their respect for a superior by putting off their shoes ere they enter his presence.

37. ¶ This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. 38. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us: 39. To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt: 40. Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 41. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. 42. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven: as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts, and sacrifices, by the space of forty years in the wilderness? 43. Yea, ye took up the tabernacles of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

¶ Deut. xviii. 15, 18; chap. iii. 22. ¶ Or, *as myself*. ¶ Matt. xvii. 5; Heb. ii. 2. ¶ Isa. lxiii. 9; Gal. iii. 19. ¶ Ex. xix. 3, 17. ¶ Deut. v. 27, 31; John i. 17. ¶ Rom. iii. 2. ¶ Ex. xxxii. 1. ¶ Deut. ix. 16; Ps. cvl. 9, 20. ¶ Ps. lxxxvi. 12. ¶ Deut. iv. 19; 2 Kings xvii. 16; Jer. xix. 13. ¶ Amos v. 25, 26.

Verse 37. See on chap. iii. 22. *In the church*—the collective body of God's chosen people, hence used to denote the whole body of the faithful under the Gospel, or particular sections of them. *In the wilderness with the angel . . . . and with our fathers*—alike near to the angel of the Covenant, from whom he received all the institutions of the ancient economy, and to the people, to whom he faithfully reported the living oracles, and among whom he set up the prescribed institutions. (See Ezek. xx. 5-8, 24.) *To go before us*. It

seems to have been the custom of the Oriental nations of antiquity, to bear the images of the gods before the people in journeys or military expeditions, or in going out to battle, since thus, they imagined, they should the more effectually enjoy their guidance, protection and support. (Num. x. 33; Deut. xxxi. 8, 15, iv. 3, 25, iii. 21.)

*Made a calf*. Thinking they were left to make their own laws (Ex. xxxiii. 1), the Israelites, after an Egyptian fashion, of symbolizing their divinities, made this symbol of the true God. Under the figure of *Apis*, who was a bullock, the Egyptians worshiped *Osiris*, who formerly was an Egyptian king, and was supposed to have invented or introduced agriculture, horticulture, &c. That the *ox*, which among the ancients was a symbol of agricultural labor, was to the Egyptians a symbol of *Osiris*, we learn from Plutarch.

*Turned*. Because "our fathers" (verse 39) *turned back*. *Gave them up*. Often, from the time of their making the calf, to the time of Amos, and afterward, as the people's perversity continually increased. (Rom. i. 24.) *The host of heaven, i. e.*, the sun, moon and stars. The oldest form of idolatry, more plausible than the others. *Took up the tabernacle of Moloch, i. e.*, to carry it with them in their marches, or in religious processions. Moloch was an idol of the Ammonites. This tabernacle was intended, no doubt, to resemble the one consecrated to Jehovah. *The star of your God Remphan*, rather, *Rephan*. *Rephan* is the translation in the Septuagint of the Hebrew *Chiun*. He is generally supposed to be the same as Saturn. According to *Kircher*, *Rephan* is a Coptic word, and answers to the planet Saturn, and *Chiun* is the Arabic term for the same planet, and as the translators were Egyptian Jews, they gave to the Hebrew word its Coptic equivalent. *Beyond Babylon*—into countries more distant than those inhabited by the captives who were carried from Damascus. This is the most natural reconciliation of the difference between Stephen's words and the original in Amos, where we have *beyond Damascus*, unless the reading here has been accidentally changed.

44. † Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. 45. Which raise our fathers that came after, brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David: 46. Who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. 47. But Solomon built him an house. 48. Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as saith the prophet, 49. Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? 50. Hath not my hand made all these things? 51. Ye still-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers. 53. Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

\*Or, who spake. †Ex. xxv. 40, xxxv. 30; Heb. viii. 5, \*Josh. iii. 14. †Or, having received. ‡Neh. ix. 24; Ps. xlv. 2, lxxviii. 55. §1 Sam. xvi. 1. ¶1 Chron. xxii. 7. †1 Kings vi. 1, &c., viii. 20. †1 Kings viii. 27; chap. xvii. 24. †Isa. lxxi. 1, 2. \*Ex. xxxii. 9; Isa. xlviii. 4. †Lev. xxvi. 4; Jer. ix. 26; Rom. ii. 28, 29. †2 Chron. xxxvi. 16; 1 Thes. ii. 15. †Chap. iii. 14. †Gal. iii. 19.

*Tabernacle of witness.* So called because it was the tent where God gave witness of Himself, on which the glory of God the Shechinah, rested. *But Solomon built him an house.* David was not permitted to build the temple, because he was a man of war, and the temple was to be the abode of peace. *Howbeit.* This building a house must not be misinterpreted, as though the presence of the highest were limited to the temple! The passage quoted in verses 49, 50, is taken almost verbatim from the Septuagint. *Ye stiff-necked,* unwilling to submit to God, self-willed, perverse. *Uncircumcised in heart and ears*—a Jewish form of expression, meaning utterly indisposed to obey, and even to hear, the commands of God. Circumcision was regarded as a sign of moral purity and consecration to God. *Resist,* literally, *fall against,* implying active as well as passive opposition to the Holy Ghost, as the Divine author of all revelation, whether history or prophecy, doctrine or precept, law or Gospel. *Ye do always* is addressed to the whole race of Israel, past and present, as a collective or ideal person, as explained in the remainder of the sentence. *Which of the prophets,* &c. Deadly hostility to the messengers of God, whose high office it was to tell of “the Righteous One”—that well-known prophetic title of Messiah (Isa. liii. 11; Jer. xxiii. 6, &c.), and this consummated by the betrayal and murder of the Messiah Himself, on the part of those now sitting in judgment on the speaker, are the still darker features of the national

character depicted in these withering words. *Who have received the law,* &c. This may refer to the law being communicated by the ministration of angels. In the Psalms we are informed that the angels were present at Sinai (Ps. lxxviii. 17.) Paul expressly says that the law was ordained of angels (Gal. iii. 19.) And it is mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews as “the word spoken by angels.” (Heb. ii. 2.) The same opinion was among the traditions of the Jews.

The following brief paraphrase of Stephen’s defense, prepared by a competent hand, obviates the necessity of any extended exegetical remarks, and represents, we think, with much accuracy, the spirit, scope and point of Stephen’s argument.

“You charge me with disparaging the local character of our religion. You say that I speak of this temple as destined to an overthrow predicted by my Master. Let me remind you, then, how far, and how far only, the faith of our fathers is bound up with local conditions. The original home and cradle of our race was not Palestine, but Mesopotamia, in the far East, on the other side of the great river, the river Euphrates. It was there that the voice of God was first heard calling to fallen man. The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he even dwelt in Haran; before even that first migration which landed him not in Canaan but in a temporary resting-place. Hence in due season He removed him by the same Divine call, into this land in which ye now dwell. But how did he enter it? As an owner? As a conqueror? As a sovereign? Nay, he possessed not in it land enough to set his foot on, and yet the promises were all his even then; and the Divine favor and protection; and the Divine communion and friendship. Judge ye, therefore, how far God’s blessing is local! Judge ye, even in this first and greatest example, how far God is a respecter either of place or forms! And that independence of place which was first exemplified in Abraham, was indicated no less in the prediction of his children’s fortunes. In a strange land should they sojourn for centuries, and yet be

God's people and God's chosen still. See how that prophecy was fulfilled; by what sins, through what sufferings of man: by what providences and what interpositions on the part of God. Behold the young brother sold as a slave by foes of his own household; see him carried into a remote and unfriendly land; him the best and noblest of the sons of Israel; see him cast out of his father's home as one despised and forsaken, and yet, through vicissitudes as strange as they were sudden, raised to the pinnacle of greatness, while his father's sons bowed down to him. Does the thought occur to you, that in the varying fortunes of Joseph may have been prefigured the suffering and glory of a later and a mightier One? May not your own hands be red with the blood of a brother after the flesh, who is also after the spirit of your Lord and your Judge?

"Trace then yet onward the course of the national history and see the whole family of Israel seeking refuge out of Canaan; see generation after generation toiling on in Egyptian bondage, excluded from the land of promise, yet losing thereby no one mark of their ancestral privilege; still recognized, in heaven if not upon earth, as God's people, beloved for the father's sake. And yet, all this time, nothing was theirs in Canaan but a burying-place, and century after century was wheeling its slow course over their exile. Mark, then, how the national fortunes were sunk to their lowest level; the very permission to live sought in vain for their sons from their oppressors; when at last he arose, guarded by God's special providence from a threatened similar fate, who was to be first the deliverer from bondage, and then (under God) the founder of a new dispensation.

"And observe when he came, late in time and mature in age; came with thoughts and words of kindness, seeking to reconcile or avenge his brethren; how he was received and dealt with. Who made thee (it was said to him) a ruler and a judge over us? If he whom ye so much reverence was once thus despised and rejected of his countrymen, may it not perhaps have been so with One whom God sent to supersede him? Can you urge as

an argument against the mission of Jesus, that general reproach and rejection, which would have been equally fatal to the authority of Moses? For forty years he was in exile—a double exile; not from Canaan only, but from Egypt also. At last his call came, came once more, not in the land of promise, but in the wilderness; came, too, on the ground, not of a new, but an old relationship; not as to the founder of a new religion, but as to the inheritor of a patriarchal covenant. Forget not Abraham in Moses! Never allow yourselves to date from Sinai a possession which was yours from Mesopotamia and from Haran! In your zeal for a Levitical law, lose not sight of a patriarchal promise! The God who appeared to Moses in the burning bush of Horeb, was already the God of his fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob!

"This Moses, whom your ancestors refused, the same did God send to be their ruler and their deliverer. He brought them out. And do I disparage his high mission by declaring that he was neither the first nor the last of God's messengers; that his dispensation came in but by the way, between the patriarchal and the Messianic? Listen to his own words: A prophet (he said) shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear. He Himself pointed the eye of faith onward to One who should come; like himself, as to the human nature; yet greater than himself, in proportion as the forerunner is less than the foreannounced, the servant of one nation than the Lord of all. I then am but echoing the voice of Moses, when I declare that the customs which he delivered were not designed to be indestructible or final.

"This is that Moses; and how did you receive him? He was with the Church in the wilderness; with him was the angel of the Divine Presence; to him were delivered those living oracles by which God communicated with His people; how did you treat him? Again and again you thrust him from you, and in your hearts turned back again into Egypt. Little did you think then of that pleasant land which

you would now make the whole of your inheritance and of your hope; yea, in the very wilderness you committed idolatry, and drew down upon you, before you entered Canaan, the threat of a second exile, of a national dispersion.

"You charge me with blasphemy against the temple. What have I said of it? I have said, it may be that the temple was no more God's first or God's last dwelling-place below, than the dispensation of Moses was either God's earliest or God's latest revelation. I have said that before the temple was a tabernacle—a tabernacle fashioned under Divine direction, and exhibiting in solemn type realities which have their place in heaven. That was the center of the Divine Presence with Israel at the time when Joshua conquered, and through all the generations from Joshua to David. Does that consist with the idolatry of this temple, as though without it God's presence would be impossible? Nay; have not your own prophets declared that no temple made with hands can contain or enclose God? that heaven is His throne, and earth is His footstool, and the very house which you build for Him already His handiwork? But with what hope can I urge upon you suggestions of reason or arguments of revelation? There is in you a tradition of resistance to the Divine and the Spiritual. Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. As they did to the servants, so ye have done to the Master; they slew the heralds of the Just One, and ye have been now His betrayers and murderers. O blessed and privileged—knew ye but your happiness—above all nations! possessors of a law, in the promulgation of which, on Mount Sinai, the very principalities and powers in heavenly places exercised a solemn and terrific office! and yet not keeping it—trifling ever with God's day of visitation, until at last your house is left unto you desolate!"

It is, as will be observed, the main design of Stephen's discourse, as far as it proceeds, to combine both a vindication of himself, and also a sharp rebuke of his hearers, with explanatory statements of the history of the people of Israel. His speech, however, is evidently an unfinish-

ed production. He was interrupted before He came to the conclusion. He had, we may well suppose, much more to say in relation to Jesus as the Messiah, and would have said it, if he had been permitted, but as *Henry* remarks, "they were wicked and unreasonable men with whom he had to do, that could no more *hear* than *speak* reason."

51. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.  
†Chap. v. 33.

*Out to the heart*, literally, *sawn asunder*, in allusion to the cruel mode of cutting criminals to death. This expresses, in the strongest manner, the effect of Stephen's speech on his accusers and judges. His accusations inflicted a wound on their pride, the pain of which goaded them on to madness. (See on chap. v. 23.) Such was the violence of their resentment, that they could not preserve even an external decorum toward him by whom the truth had been proclaimed, but *gnashed on him with their teeth*, like beasts of prey, ready to tear and devour him.

55. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,  
†Chap. vi. 5.

*Full of the Holy Ghost*. The fact that this is again mentioned (see chap. vi. 5), intimates that Stephen had in that trying moment a special visitation of Divine strength and comfort. *Looked up steadfastly into heaven*, not attracted by the vision, which appears to have been vouchsafed afterward, while he was looking up. The action carries its own comment. It was an appeal from the injustice of earth to the eternal justice of heaven, from merciless men to a compassionate God. In Christian heroism man goes out of himself to a higher power; but strength is in his weakness, he trusts in another, an almighty power, and thus confesses that he can do nothing. Stephen looks steadfastly up into heaven, commits his case there, and becomes mighty through God. O let us learn, that when we sink we rise, when we are thus nothing, we possess all in God. *Saw the glory of God*. God Himself is invisible. "No man hath seen Him," and it is physically impossible that any man should see Him, because eyes of flesh are capable of perceiving only material objects. The

glory of God must therefore signify some symbol of His presence, perhaps a brightness surpassing that of the sun, which pointed out the place where He reveals Himself to angels and saints, who contemplate with admiration His infinite perfections, and, at the uncreated source itself, imbibe the delicious draught of immortality and joy. Such a view of heaven revives the spirits of a dying saint, and he would willingly pass through a sea of blood to participate of its bliss. *And Jesus standing, &c.* Mark says (xvi. 19) that our Lord, after His ascension, "sat on the right hand of God." If we bear in mind that it is not the posture, but the state, which, in both cases, should be considered, we will perceive that the different representations are not contradictory. Sitting is the posture of a sovereign, or a judge, or a person who has finished his labors, and is enjoying ease; standing is the posture of a man who waits to receive a friend, or is prepared to defend him. On the present occasion, when a holy man was undergoing a dreadful trial of his faith, Jesus rose, if we may speak so, from His throne, to send to him the necessary succors of His grace, to meet and welcome his spirit as soon as it should escape from its persecutors, and to introduce him into the presence of His Father, that he might receive from His hand the recompense of an unfading crown. To Stephen the sight was consoling. It sustained his courage amidst the terrors of a violent death, and enabled him to resign his mortal life in the joyful hope of a better.

56. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.  
<sup>a</sup>Ezek. i. 1. <sup>b</sup>Dan. vii. 13.

*Heavens opened*, not merely *open*, but just opened, *i. e.*, to the view of Stephen. *The Son of man*. This is the only time that our Lord is by human lips called "the Son of man" after His ascension. (Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14, are not instances.) And why here? Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, speaking now not of himself at all (verse 55), but entirely by the Spirit, is led to repeat the very words in which Jesus Himself, *before this same council*, had foretold His glorification (Matt. xxvi. 64), assuring them that that exaltation of the *Son of man* which they should hereafter

witness to their dismay, was already begun and actual. It is only *through* Christ and *in* Him, that the heavens are opened, whether we live or whether we die.

57. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord;

*Cried out*. They interrupted him with loud shouts, perhaps that the charge of blasphemy brought against Him was proved by his own words (verse 56), and that he should be stoned to death (Acts xxii. 22). They *stopped their ears*, to prevent them hearing any more such blasphemy. *And ran upon him, &c.* They rushed upon him with one accord: the audience was worked up into a frenzy: the Jewish fanatics then present seized upon Stephen; and some of the members of the Sanhedrim perhaps joined in the outrage; for when passion is excited, reason and justice are gone.

58. And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.  
<sup>a</sup>Luke iv. 29: Heb. xiii. 12, 13. <sup>b</sup>Chap. vi. 13. <sup>c</sup>Chap. viii. 1, 3, xxii. 20.

Not only did they stop their truth-refusing ears, as if to shut out a blasphemy, and in their hatred of God, rush upon Stephen, but they *cast him out*, just as they had thrust out from them the Lord, the prophets, and the first typical deliverer. They cast him, indeed, like a criminal, outside of the city, the holy places of which they professed to reverence, and *stoned* him. And when the false witnesses were about to cast the first stones, and were making themselves ready to execute their dreadful task, a young man took care of their clothes, with cordial acquiescence in their deed (chap. viii. 1, xxvi. 10), who himself soon after stood forth as an active persecutor of Christ's Church (chap. viii. 3), but only that he might ere long be changed into the greatest of the Apostles of the Son of man. Thus does the world show its impotence when it stones the witnesses for the truth! "The faithful witnesses of Jesus still hear the cry repeated: "Out of the city!" We cannot long preach Christ in any city without molestation; even if stones are not always thrown at us, the filth of slander is heaped upon us. The case of *Saul* teaches us, 1. How much evil may remain in the heart under a show of virtue. He kept the law,

as he thought, and yet he neither loved God nor his neighbor. 2. How capable the conscience is of being perverted. See a man so scrupulous as to pay tithes, no doubt beyond the letter of the law, of anise, mint and cummin, but as to "the weightier matters of the law," a cruel implacable murderer. 3. How truly salvation is of grace. The wonder of Paul shows this. "I obtained mercy!" he exclaims. We may bring less of guilt of some kinds than Paul, when we come to the mercy-seat for pardon and holiness, but none of us can bring more of merit. It is the "ungodly" whom the Lord justifies, and saved as ungodly we must be, or we shall not be saved at all.

59. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!  
4Ps. xxxi. 5; Luke xxiii. 46.

The word "God" is printed in the italic character, which shows that it is a supplement, and in this case it is an improper supplement; The context requires that it should be read, "calling upon the Lord Jesus," or invoking, and saying, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." Thus he acknowledged Christ as the Saviour, the only Saviour of souls, in death. He paid, indeed, the same adoration to the Redeemer which the Redeemer Himself offered to the Father, when He said, "into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Shall any, then, presume to insinuate that this eminent saint, "being full of the Holy Ghost," could die in the commission of idolatry? But this horrible position must be maintained, if it be not allowed that Jesus Christ is God, equal with the Father. The prayer of Stephen was one of *confidence*. How little can the unassisted reason of man do toward solving the problem of our immortality! Cicero says, "I know not how it happens, that when I read, I assent, but when I have laid down the book, all that assent vanishes. "It is time," says *Socrates* to his judges, "for us to depart, that I may die, and you may live; to which of us it shall be better, is unknown to all but God." "I am going to take a leap in the dark," exclaimed an infidel in the prospect of dissolution. In contrast with this hesitancy, and uncertainty, and gloom, look at the assured confidence of the dying Stephen. There open up before him

the bright visions of immortality. No gloom of annihilation shades the heavenly luster which beams from his countenance. His eye, though melting under the tortures which he is enduring, is yet radiant with the rays of glory which fall upon him from the Eternal Throne, and knowing in whom he had believed, and being persuaded that He was possessed of power to preserve the sacred deposit about to be entrusted to Him, he exclaims with a confidence for which the despairing sinner, in his last hour, would give worlds, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

60. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! And when he had said this, he fell asleep.  
1Matt. v. 41; Luke xxiii. 34.

*Kneeled down.* When the punishment of lapidation, or stoning was inflicted, it was common for the object of vengeance to be thrown down, and then buried with stones. Stephen had contrived to rise so far as to reach his knees, and in this attitude he *cried with a loud voice*, &c. In the council, amidst the gnashing of teeth, there was in his shining face the triumph of *calmness*. In committing his soul to the Saviour, there was the triumph of *faith*. *Here* was the triumph of *charity*. In the spirit, and much in the manner of his dying Lord, he entreated that the fierce and bloody men who were inflicting upon him the greatest injury in their power, might be forgiven. What an example this for the Church in after ages! How illustrious a display of Divine grace! And what a striking display of the grandeur of soul which our holy religion can inspire! The records of Roman greatness of mind, and of Grecian magnanimity are ransacked in vain for another such example as this. Theirs is tumor, this is grandeur; theirs is heroism, this is Christianity; they died for their country; Jesus for his enemies, they implored the gods for themselves, Stephen prayed to Him who is "God over all and blessed forever," in behalf of his murderers! *He fell asleep*. He met his dissolution with as much composure as if he were retiring from the fatigues of the day, and seeking rest and refreshment in repose for his weary body. Notwithstanding the outward violence, all was peace within. He closed his eyes, not in the

darkness of non-existence, but to awake, and to rise again, at the resurrection of the just, with new vigor of nature, and capacities more enlarged and improved, to be happy with his glorified body, and perfected soul, in the enjoyment of God forever, far above the raging of every storm, and secure from the scathing of every tempest—"where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

1. How did Stephen answer the accusation of blasphemy? 2. Explain the words "God of glory." 3. What impression was made by Stephen's address? 4. How was he "full of the Holy Ghost?" 5. Where did he look? 6. What did he see? 7. What do we learn from "Jesus standing on the right hand of God?" 8. What did Stephen say? 9. What did his enemies then do? 10. At whose feet were their clothes laid? 11. What was Stephen doing when they stoned him? 12. What was his prayer? 13. What do we learn from his prayer? 14. Was Stephen the first martyr of the Christian Church? 15. Why is he said to have fallen asleep?

### CHAPTER VIII.

1 *By occasion of the persecution in Jerusalem, the church being planted in Samaria, 5 by Philip the deacon, who preached, did miracles, and baptized many, among the rest Simon the sorcerer, a great seducer of the people: 14 Peter and John come to confirm and enlarge the church; where, by prayer and imposition of hands giving the Holy Ghost, 18 when Simon would have bought the like power of them, 20 Peter sharply reproofing his hypocrisy, and covetousness, and exhorting him to repentance, together with John preaching the word of the Lord, return to Jerusalem. 26 But the king sendeth Philip to teach, and baptize the Ethiopian eunuch.*

AND Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

\*vii. 55. bxi. 19. exxvi. 10, 11; Gal. i. 13.

Among the many standing there whose hearts rejoiced in what had been done, was Saul. The word rendered *consenting*, is of stronger import than our translation bears. The amount of the expression is, that Saul even approved of the deed. *A great persecution against the church, &c.* It was not to be expected that they should spare the flock, who had already in many cases attacked the shepherds. The first object of the chief priests and rulers must be to restrain the Apostles. This had been tried. But now the persecution extended to those who followed them. Looking onward to these difficulties, the Lord had given a general direction, "When they persecute you in this city, flee into another." (Matt. x. 23.) The Apostles themselves could not at present do so; it was

needful for them, at all hazards, to remain at Jerusalem; the affairs of the Church required this. But others were at liberty to seek safety in flight, and were scattered abroad throughout all the regions of Judea and Samaria. But the persecution, instead of crushing the infant Church, tended to strengthen and enlarge it, and added another to the numerous instances in which "the wrath of man" is made, under providential direction, to minister to the grace of God. (See on verse 4.)

*And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, &c.* These were perhaps, or probably, men that had not yet avowed their attachment to Christ and His cause, but now came forward to make their first profession. *Great lamentation.* This was one testimony of their love to him, and of their sense of his value. The reason why devout men performed this service is, that it was a dangerous service, a service which none but devout men would have ventured to perform. Natural affection would have been intimidated.

*As for Saul, &c.* The kindly feeling shown toward Stephen no doubt exasperated the persecutors more and more, and Saul violently devastated and spoiled God's Church. *Haling*, rather, *dragging*, bearing off with violence. "Haling" is an old word for *hauling* or *hawling*. *And women.* Women in all ages have been exempted from the insults of tyranny, but not always freed from the persecutor's fury. And

blessed be God for that masculine courage and constancy which the feebler sex have shown, when they have been called forth to bear their testimony for Christ. Out of weakness they have been made strong. With what wisdom and courage have they answered their examiners, convicted their accusers, confuted their opposers, kissing the stake, hugging the faggots, embracing the flame! Thus can God help the weak things of the world to confound the strong, and teach the foolish to confute the wise.

*Therefore they that were scattered abroad,* &c. How evident it is that the "government" is upon the shoulder of Christ, who rules also in the midst of His enemies! (Ps. cx. 2.) He can confound the rage and malice of man, bring strength out of weakness, and good out of evil. This very persecution of the Christians, which appeared to the eye of man to threaten inevitable destruction of the Church, was converted into the means of invigorating and extending it. The dispersed Christians preached the Gospel; thus the storm which burst forth carried the seed which had hitherto been gathered together in a single spot, to many different regions, and, in some cases, to a considerable distance. And that seed germinated and produced fruit. "The enemy," says one, "have destroyed God's witnesses in the flames, and the sparks have been scattered forth in all lands, ay, and on they spread, now as ever! As Luther sang of the two martyrs at Brussels:

"Their ashes never can be washed away;  
In every land their dust shall freely play.  
Brook, pit, ditch, grave, they all in vain employ  
To hide that dust the foe would fain destroy.  
Those martyrs! saints, whose testifying breath  
The foe hath silenced in the calm of death,  
Though dead, yet speak; and now in every tongue  
The foe must hear the joyful triumph sung,  
On every shore and every race among!"

5. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. 8. And there was great joy in that city. 9. ¶ But there was a certain man called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: 10. To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. 11. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. 12. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

*Philip*—one of the seven chosen in the daily distribution. (vi. 5, on which see notes; xxi. 8.) *The city*, &c.—a city in Samaria. There is no article in the Greek. (See on verse 1.) The work assigned to Philip in Jerusalem was finished, as the dispersion put an end to the primitive

community of goods, and daily distribution. We may mark the providence of God in sending a Hellenistic Jew to a people who from national antipathy would have been unlikely to attend to a native of Judea. (See on verse 1.) *Preached Christ*. The Christ who, less than nine years ago, had preached *Himself* to Shechem, in Samaria. There may have been hearers of Philip who remembered the person of Jesus Himself. And Philip himself had doubtless, heard from the Apostles the parable of the good Samaritan. The true servants of Christ may be compelled to change their place of abode, but they do not change their minds, and they are always engaged in fulfilling the duties of their vocation, wherever they may be.

*The people with one accord gave heed*, &c. The preaching of Philip was accompanied and followed by no small measure of signs and wonders, by which the Lord confirmed His word, and opened the hearts of the hearers, so that first by hearing, and then by *rightly* seeing these miracles, they were constrained to give heed to that which was spoken. *Unclean spirits*. (See Appendix.) *Bengel* observes that Luke in the Acts never employs the term *daimonia* in speaking of those possessed, although in his Gospel he employs it oftener than any other Evangelist, and from this he infers that the power of possession was feebler after the death of Christ. *Taken with palsies*, literally, *paralyzed*. Here, too, it will be observed, ordinary diseases, are distinguished from demoniacal possession. *Great joy in that city*—over the change wrought on it by the Gospel, as well as the cures which attested its Divine character. Joy is the proper fruit and characteristic of Christian truth (verse 39; chap. xi. 23, xvi. 34; Rom. xiv. 17; 2 Cor. i. 24). "There was never," says *Bacon*, "found in any age of the world, either philosophy, or sect, or law, or discipline, which did so highly exalt the public good, as the Christian faith."

9. ¶ But there was a certain man called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: 10. To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. 11. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. 12. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.



<sup>j</sup>Chap. xiii. 6; Rev. xvii. 15. <sup>k</sup>Chap. v. 36; 2 Tim. iii. 2, 5. <sup>l</sup>2 Cor. xi. 19. <sup>m</sup>Gal. iii. 1. <sup>n</sup>Verse 37; chap. ii. 41. <sup>o</sup>i. 3.

A certain man called—the precise form of expression used in verse 1. *Simon*—celebrated among the early Christian writers as *Simon Magus*, or Magician. The term *Magos* is not applied to Simon by Luke, but the word rendered *used sorcery*, and which Luke here uses in the bad meaning (*magizing*), is the same word in a verb form. This man, for some time resident in the city, by his lying and infernal juggleries (in which he assuredly did not cast out many devils, or heal many sick persons), had brought into a state of stupid astonishment, not only this particular city, but the whole people of the Samaritans. He had made himself out to be an extraordinary and important man—*some great one*, but the exact nature of his assumption is purposely not told. Old people and children, the rabble as well as persons of higher standing, had paid regard to him, and this man had become to them the same thing which Philip now was, but yet in a different way; for *they themselves*, with a vague conception characteristic of the fanaticism of that period, had styled him the *power of God*—the so-called great personified authority of the Deity; but Philip preached to them Christ, and not himself, in his words and works, said and done in the power of God. This wretched man, by his long-continued course of fascinations had drawn to him this large body of adherents, only to see all his honors taken from him at once by the Evangelist's word! Philip's frequent, important and beneficial miracles had diverted the attention of the people from the silly babbler and cheat, and induced them to give heed to the messenger of mercy. And now the word that preached of the right nature of the true kingdom of God, and its foundation on the one only adorable name of Jesus Christ, met with such a response of faith, that the greater number of inhabitants, both men and women, were actually baptized.

13. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.  
<sup>v</sup>Signs and great miracles.

Simon's belief, of course, was a feigned faith. Philip's miracles had thrown his

wonders into the shade, and the credulous, superstitious multitude had left him for Philip. His popularity, like all popularity, urged him to go with the populace. Hence he professed to believe, and was baptized. Philip had no power to read the heart, otherwise he would have checked the cheat of this impostor. Why did this man join the followers of Philip? Was it to hide the shame of his own desertion and defeat? or was it from a wish to know the power of Philip's miraculous performances? or was it, as we have already hinted, to retain his popularity? Perhaps all these considerations had their influence upon him. (See on verse 21.)

14. ¶ Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15. Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus:.) 17. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.  
<sup>q</sup>Chap. xix. 2. <sup>r</sup>Chap. ii. 38, x. 48, xix. 5, 6; 1 Cor. i. 13. <sup>s</sup>Chap. vi. 6; Heb. vi. 2.

"If," says *Henry*, "Peter had been, as some say he was, the prince of the Apostles, he would have sent some of them, or, if he had seen cause, would have gone himself, of his own accord, but, so far from that, he submitted to go as a servant to the body, whither they sent him. Two Apostles were sent to encourage Philip, and carry on the good work that was begun." *Who when they were come down*, &c. The design of their mission was to assist Philip in his labors, to confirm those who believed, and, in particular, to impart spiritual gifts. Philip, it would seem, did not possess the power of communicating them, which appears to have been exclusively granted to the Apostles, to distinguish them as the immediate ambassadors of Christ, and the first ministers in His kingdom. *As yet he* (the Holy Ghost) *was fallen upon none of them*, &c., that is, His extraordinary gifts had not yet been conferred upon the Samaritans. They had already received His regenerating influences, for they already believed, and faith is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Peter and John therefore prayed, that God would bestow upon them the same supernatural endowments, which had been so liberally distributed to the Jewish converts, and then "laid their hands on them." This solemn rite was used in the primitive

Church, both in setting apart a person to a spiritual office, and in conveying miraculous powers. In the present case, and in all others of the same nature, it was merely a sign, with which the thing signified was connected, not by the authority of the Apostles, but by the will of the Spirit.

18. † And when Simon saw, that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money. 19. Saying, give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.—1 Tim. vi. 3.

*Simon saw.* Simon now takes no share in the laying on of hands. He stood by, a spectator, and *saw*. Simon the Magus is intently gazing on Simon the Apostle; the very emblem of error and sin malignly eyeing the power of Christian truth and holiness, incapable of understanding its nature. He sees a work performed on the young Samaritan converts that raises them above themselves. He notes how beautiful and miraculous the results. These Apostles he sees are higher than the deacon; they are the topmost masters of the new system, the possessors of the original wonder-working power, alone able to impart that power to others. From them, and not from their subordinate, Philip, must the true primal secret be obtained. *He offered them money, &c.* He regarded the capability of imparting the Holy Spirit *rightly, as something conferred, as a derived power* (see Matt. x. 1), but, *wrongly*, as one to be obtained by an *external method* without an *inward disposition*; and, since in external commerce everything may be had for gold, *he wanted to buy it*. The spirit of mercenariness was his inspiration. How terrible is covetousness! It is declared to be "idolatry," against which, as one of the most revolting forms of depravity, the most awful curses and heaviest judgments are denounced. From Simon's infamous attempt to bargain for the power of conferring the Holy Spirit, all the methods of turning the concerns of religion into a lucrative trade, are called *Simony*, of which there have been, and are, a great variety of species, and will be, so long as men continue covetous and ambitious, and verily suppose that "gain is godliness." It is much easier to expose and declaim against such impious practices, than to find an effectual remedy for them. Alas, Simon Magus has left far more indisputable suc-

cessors than Simon Peter has done, especially in that Church which grounds its claims on succeeding to St. Peter's authority; but not in that Church alone.

20. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22. Kings v. 15, 16; Matt. x. 8. v. x. 49, xi. 17. † Jos. xxii. 25. † Ps. lxxxviii. 36, 37; Ezek. xiv. 3.

*Thy money perish, &c.* These words are not a prayer, or a wish, they amount to no more than a strong expression of abhorrence for the avarice and hypocrisy which Simon had so shamelessly betrayed. *Thou hast thought—rather, thou thoughtest*. The historic force of the tense is to be kept here: the Apostle uses it as looking forward to the day of his destruction. *The gift of God*, elsewhere called "the gift of the Holy Ghost." (See ii. 38, x. 45.) The very terms imply gratuity, the Greek noun being used in the accusative as an adverb corresponding to the Latin *gratis*. (See Matt. x. 8; John xv. 25; Rom. iii. 24; 2 Cor. xi. 7; Gal. ii. 21; 2 Thes. iii. 8; Rev. xxi. 6, xxii. 17.) The sin and folly of the sorcerer's offer lay not merely in the thought of bribing God, but in that of purchasing what, from its very nature, could be only a free gift. *Part . . . lot*. The two words are apparently synonymous: the first being literal, the second figurative, but not without reference perhaps to the *inheritance* of the kingdom of God, the *incorruptible inheritance*. (1 Peter i. 4.) "Christianity, with its glorious doctrines, promises and provisions, is no more to thee than if it had never been, and all the past portion of thy existence is a blank, so far as the realizing thy destiny is concerned. *For thy heart is not right, &c.* The baptismal water had been applied to him externally, but his inward parts were still unclean. The baptism of the Spirit must be combined with the baptism of water, else the latter remains incomplete, and the individual is no true Christian. The heart is the worst part of man till it be renewed, and then it is the best. Where most evil lies, there we must first begin to be good: all will be good, if the heart, which is the seat, the sink and seed-plot of all evil, be made good. A heart truly right with God, implies, 1. That we venerate Him. 2. That we en-

tirely submit ourselves to Him. 3. That we maintain a sacred intercourse with Him.

<sup>22</sup> Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God: *perhaps* the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee: <sup>23</sup> For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. <sup>1</sup>Dan. iv. 27; <sup>2</sup>Tim. ii. 25. <sup>3</sup>Jer. iv. 18; Heb. xii. 15. <sup>4</sup>Ps. cxvi. 16; Prov. v. 22; Isa. xxviii. 22.

*Repent, &c.*, literally, *repent from thy wickedness. Pray God.* This shows how completely the Apostles referred the forgiveness of sins to, and left it in, the sovereign power of God, without undertaking it in virtue of any assumed delegated power of absolution. *If perhaps.* This expression of doubt was designed to impress upon Simon the greatness of his sin, and the need of alarm on his part. The *heart* and the *thoughts* are the prime and principal spring of that wickedness that ruins souls and turns them into hell forever. (Matt. v. 19; Jer. iv. 14; Ps. ix. 17.) *Gall of bitterness.* Gall here signifies "poison," as, according to the opinion of the ancients, the poison of serpents resided in their gall. (Job. xx. 14; Rom. iii. 13.) The expression denotes extreme depravity—the corrupting and poisoning influences of sin. *The bond of iniquity.* The meaning is, that Simon was wholly enchained by sin—confirmed in the habit of sin. It is in Simon's corruption of heart, that we find an explanation of his strange and sad conduct. Had he been free from this most false interpreter of all law, human and Divine, how could he have been capable of so great an absurdity (leaving guilt at present out of the question) as to imagine that for money he could purchase the power of conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost?

<sup>24</sup> Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. <sup>1</sup>Ex. viii. 8; Num. xxi. 7; 1 Kings xiii. 6; Job xlii. 8; James v. 16.

*Pray ye to the Lord for me.* He thus refers back to the Apostles, their summons to him to *individual* prayer, and does it so that one might well doubt whether he spoke in derision or in truth, if it were not that he adds, *that none of these things, &c.* Simon here speaks in a very similar way to the stubborn Pharaoh in Ex. viii. 28, ix. 28, x. 17. He is afraid of "the perishing," but has no heart for repentance, and for the second time places man between him and his view of God, which

course of action would probably seem peculiarly natural to him, and would spring from the old fallacies of his previous system of deceit. He only half defiantly enunciates something which sounds like repentance, but is *not* repentance. And here Luke puts an end to the history.

<sup>25</sup> And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

The Apostles, having finished the business for which they came, returned to Jerusalem, for as yet they were not to disperse. *In many villages, &c.* Though the congregations were inconsiderable, their souls were precious, and hence the Apostles seized the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to them. John was one of those, who formerly asked leave to call for fire from Heaven, to consume certain Samaritans, but his Lord had now taught him better things. The true torches of God, enkindled by the fire of Divine love, afford both light and warmth wherever they appear. Even when we are traveling, the fear of God should be our guide, and the love of our neighbor, be our companion. (John iv. 3-5.)

<sup>26</sup> And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.—Josh. xv. 47.

*The angel of the Lord*—rather, "an angel." *Saying, Arise, &c.* Philip appears to have received this direction in Samaria (verse 13), and soon after the departure of the Apostles. *Toward the south*, because in Samaria he was so far to the north of Jerusalem. This expression points out, not the direction of the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, but that in which Philip was to travel, in order to find the road. *Gaza* was about sixty miles southwest of Jerusalem. It is one of the oldest cities in the world, being mentioned in Gen. x. 19. It has passed through various vicissitudes of conquest and recovered freedom. It was an important city in the time of the Crusaders, and was finally taken by Saladin. At present Gaza is a considerable town, with a population of about 15,000, known by the name Ghuzzeh, and much frequented by merchants going between Syria and Egypt. There were several roads leading from Jerusalem to Gaza. The words *which is desert*, are to

be considered as the words of the angel pointing out to Philip the particular road which he should take—namely, that which was then known by the name of the desert road, or which led through the desert of Judea.

27. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship: 28. Was returning, and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet.  
 2 Zeph. iii. 10. 1 Isa. lvi. 3-5. 2 Chron. vi. 32, 33.

Two countries were known in ancient times by the name of Ethiopia—the one lying south-east from Jerusalem, and the other situated in Africa, beyond Egypt and Nubia. In the last of these countries, now called Abyssinia, the queens were long distinguished by the name of Candace, as Pharaoh was a common name for the kings of Egypt. To this country the eunuch belonged. He was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and is therefore not viewed as one of the Gentiles. It is pleasant to observe how far the knowledge of God had already spread, preparatory to the publication of the Gospel. The Jews were dispersed among all nations. *Eunuch*—not necessarily one mutilated. In the courts of Oriental monarchs, these were generally mutilated, hence eunuch came to mean such. *Had come to Jerusalem for to worship*, which is a proof that he was a worshiper of the God of Israel. *Was returning*, &c. He had profited by the religious exercises in which he participated in Jerusalem, and even in traveling, he is improving his time. A copy of the Scriptures lay unrolled before him, and he was refreshing his memory with one of those prophetic songs (see on verse 32), which probably had been chanted at the recent festival, and ruminating on the meaning of the mystic page. God sees his simplicity and earnestness, and provides him an instructor, who should lead him into the great truths of the Gospel; which, without such an one, he could not have understood. Many, after having done their duty, as they call it, in attending a place of worship, forget the errand that brought them thither, and spend their time on their return, rather in idle conversation, than in reading or conversing about the Word of God. It is no wonder that such

should be always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

29. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31. And he said, How can I except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

1 Isa. lxxv. 21. 2 Hos. vi. 3. 3 Matt. xiii. 23, 51; Eph. v. 17. 4 Rom. x. 14. 5 Ps. xxv. 9.

*The Spirit* of verse 29, and the *angel* of verse 26, although coincident, are not identical, the Spirit being the Divine authority or power, of which the angel was the instrument or agent. *And Philip ran thither to him*, &c. On the supposition that Philip had never met the Ethiopian eunuch before, his conduct bears the appearance of rude and forward familiarity. But such is the simplicity of Eastern manners, than no sooner do two persons meet, than, although they are entire strangers to each other, they enter into free conversation the first moment of their interview—difference of faith is forgotten, and they talk as if they had all their lifetime been the most familiar acquaintances. Accordingly, the question of Philip, *Understandest thou what thou readest?* instead of being regarded as an evidence of impertinent curiosity, would appear in the eyes of the eunuch no greater freedom than universal custom warranted him to use. Nor is there any difficulty in conceiving how Philip, walking on foot, could by an effort of running keep alongside the chariot of the stately traveler. The carriage of the eunuch, as well as all the carriages mentioned in the Bible, far from being like the light and nimble coaches of modern times, which soon leave the pedestrian at a hopeless distance, was a clumsily built vehicle, whose ponderous dimensions borne along on a rough and miserable road, were not very compatible with expeditious traveling. Moreover, in the East, when persons are reading privately in a book, they usually go on reading aloud with a kind of singing voice, moving their heads and bodies in time, and making a monotonous cadence at regular intervals, thus giving emphasis, although not such an emphasis as would please an English ear, and convey a knowledge of the sense. From this practice, we can be at no loss to understand how it was that Philip should hear what passage in Isaiah

the Ethiopian eunuch was reading, before he was invited to come up and sit in the chariot. *How can I, &c.*, literally, *Why do ye ask me for, &c.* He confesses his ignorance. *Except some man*—he who has the first knowledge of Jesus, can understand the prophets without a human guide. How wonderful the modesty and humility of this distinguished individual! he thankfully accepts Philip's offer to instruct and teach him. Such as are modest and thoroughly humble are also truly docile and teachable, willing to learn knowledge, although from the mouth of an inferior. *He desired Philip, &c.* The guest in the chariot, who had been so courteously invited, soon becomes a guide to the true home. "The Holy Scriptures," says *Bengel*, "interest and delight the reader; even when he only partially understands them, the aroma of spices penetrates the envelope which encloses them."

32. The place of the scripture which he read was *this*, *He* was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: 33. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.—*Isa. liii. 7, 8.*

*As a sheep to the slaughter*—from *Isa. liii. 7*, a chapter so descriptive of the Messiah, that almost every verse is quoted or alluded to in the New Testament. (*John xii. 33; Mark ix. 12; Matt. viii. 17; Mark xv. 28.*) *Herè* is a description of the sufferings of the Messiah, which *He* endured with meekness and resignation, like a sheep quietly following the person who leads it to death, or a lamb submitting in silence to be robbed of its fleece, and a declaration that *He* was condemned through the injustice of men, and by violence was deprived of *His* life. *In his humiliation his judgment, &c.*, that is, *he was unrighteously condemned in his humble condition*, while acting faithfully as God's servant, *He* was put to death under the false accusation of blasphemy. *And who shall declare his generation?*—that is, set forth the wickedness of *His* contemporaries? Of the various meanings which have been attached to this clause, *this* certainly best suits the context. "For"—as a proof and demonstration of this indescribable wickedness—"His life was taken from the earth," *i. e.*, *He* was put to death. There is some difference between the quotation in these

verses and the original passage in *Isaiah*, owing, it is probable, to the former being taken from the Greek version of the Old Testament.

34. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man? 35. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.—*Luke xxiv. 27.* *Chap. xviii. 28.*

The Ethiopian officer could hardly fail to have heard at Jerusalem of the sufferings and death of Jesus, and of the existence of a continually increasing party who acknowledged Him to be the Messiah. But his question to Philip, whether the prophet in this passage meant himself, or some other man, clearly shows that he had not the least idea of any connection between the prediction and those facts. *Of whom speaketh the prophet this, &c.* This question was answered by Philip's sermon on Christ. He showed to his new companion the glorious burden of the prophecy he was reading, and interpreted in the light of Christ's wonderful life. *He preached unto him Jesus*—Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. His sermon is not reported. We have nothing more than his text, and his grand theme—Jesus. By the blessing of God upon the preached sermon, saving faith was effectually wrought in the eunuch's soul. The knowledge of the Saviour comprises the knowledge of the whole plan of salvation. (*1 Cor. ii. 2.*)

36. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37. And Philip said, If thou believest, with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

*Ex. 47.* *Mark xvi. 16;* verse 12. *John xi. 27; 1 Cor. xii. 3; 1 John iv. 15.*

*See, here is water*—more simply, "behold water!" as if already, his mind filled with light and his soul set free, he was eagerly looking out for the first water by which he might seal his reception of the truth, declare his conviction of the Messiahship of Jesus, and be enrolled among *His* visible disciples. Baptism was indeed suggested in the very prophecy the eunuch was reading: "So shall *He* (Messiah) sprinkle many nations," words which the Ethiopian, son of a distant nation, might feel rightly to include himself. "*Robinson*," says *Dr. Whedon*, "plausibly decides that this was 'a certain water,' as the Greek signifies, 'standing along the bottom of

the adjacent wady' (or valley, namely, of Tell el-Hasy). 'This water is on the most direct route from Beit Jibrin to Gaza, on the most southern road from Jerusalem, and in the midst of the country now *desert*, that is, without villages or fixed habitations. There is no other similar water on this road.' Undoubtedly 'many changes' may have occurred in the earth, rendering all such identifications somewhat uncertain; but the entire presumption is that the traveler stands on the very spot where Philip and the eunuch stood!"

*What doth hinder, &c.* There is a becoming modesty in his manner of soliciting baptism. He does not demand it as his right, but whilst the question is expressive of earnest desire, he leaves the Evangelist to determine whether he was worthy of so high a privilege. Philip throws no obstacle in the way of his desire. Simon, whose case is before related, had not believed with all his heart, and had "no part nor lot in the matter," though the rite of baptism had been solemnized. If the Ethiopian did believe—so believe that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, as to trust in Him for all that the soul can need, or God sees fit to bestow—then he had part in this salvation. The blood of Christ should "wash away his sins," as water cleanseth the defilement of the body; nay, there should be in him "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life"—he should "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," to comfort, and strengthen, and purify his mind.

38. And he commanded the charlot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing.  
1 Kings xviii, 12; Ezek. iii, 12, 14, 4Ps. cxix. 14.

*Went down both into the water.....when they were come up out of the water.* These words merely imply that Philip and the eunuch went into the water for the purpose of baptism, but they state nothing as to the mode of its administration. It is certain that *eis* does sometimes signify *into*, and *ek* *out of*, but it is equally certain that at other times the proper translation of the one is *to*, and of the other is *from*. When Jesus came to the *sepulchre* of Lazarus (John ix. 38), we know he did not enter

into it, and when ships came *from* Tiberias (John vi. 23), we do not suppose that they sailed out of the midst of the city, but that that was the place from which their voyage commenced. Besides, admitting that *eis* here means more than to the water's edge, the stronger sense of the words rendered "into the water" is fully satisfied, if we suppose that Philip and the eunuch stood in the water, which in any language would be naturally expressed by saying *they went into it*. The precise mode in which Philip baptized the eunuch is not certain, nor is it of any consequence.

*The Spirit of the Lord caught away, &c.* The removal was miraculous, although its mode and nature are not described. Similar miraculous removals appear to have happened in the case of Elijah. (1 Kings xviii. 12; 2 Kings ii. 16.) The same verb occurs in the description of the ecstasy of Paul. (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.) *Saw him no more, &c.* How admirable, how perfect are the works of God! These two persons were brought together by the agency of an angel, and now they are parted asunder by a miracle, but a miracle of wisdom as well as of power. For this sudden and supernatural removal of the preacher was a powerful confirmation of the doctrine which he taught, and had an obvious tendency to impress on the mind of the new convert this important truth, that although a man had been employed as the instrument of his conversion, yet the work itself was truly Divine, and the glory of it due to God alone.

We can easily conceive that this man would *go on his way rejoicing*. We can understand his feelings, and enter into the state of his mind. We know that he was acquainted with the Scriptures, which had brought him to perceive his condition in the world, as the creature of a pure and holy God. He must often have felt within himself a doubtful and anxious apprehension as to his state in the sight of that God. The Scripture told him what God required, but he knew likewise his own heart and practice, and he could not but see in how many things he had offended, and "come short of the glory of God." Like a mariner on a stormy sea, in a sinking

vessel, he would be full of doubts and fears. Now came certainty instead of doubt, and hope instead of fear. He had found an anchor for his soul, and fixed it upon Christ, the rock of ages. He had received a proof, proof not to be disputed, of God's "good-will toward men," His love and pity for the creatures He had made. Nay, he had received for himself a token of that love, and was enrolled as one of His adopted children. So *he went on his way rejoicing*. A wanderer on the earth, he had been led into a safe and certain faith. A creature of God, he had found assurance of His favor. A sinful being, he had found a remedy for his sin; a dying creature he had found "life and immortality."

It would not be all joy with him, as he passed onward in his course. He would have, like other men, his troubles, like other Christians, he would have his trials, but for the future there was hope, and for the present there was joy: "joy and peace in believing."

<sup>40</sup> But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through, he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cesarea.

*Found at Azotus, i. e.*, was next heard of there, after the transaction in the desert. This place was the ancient Ashdod, a city

of the Philistines, near the sea-coast. It was about thirty miles from Gaza. The ruins consist of a mound covered with broken pottery, and of a few pieces of marble. (See Amos i. 8.) A little village not far off, called Esdud, perpetuates the ancient name. *Cesarea*, probably his native place (xxi. 8, 9), was situated on the Mediterranean, and was anciently called Stratnice, or *Strato's Tower*. Herod the Great, who bestowed on the city much labor and expense in repairing and adorning it, and in constructing a harbor for it, named it *Cesarea*, in honor of the Roman emperor, Augustus Cæsar. A map of Palestine will show that, between Azotus, or Ashdod, and Cesarea, there were many considerable towns, in which Philip would have an opportunity to preach the Gospel. Cesarea is now a large heap of ruins, and its stones are used to build and repair the neighboring towns of Syria, whilst the old name Kaisariyeh still lingers to mark the spot where the proud metropolis of Roman Judea stood, and to teach a lesson of the vanity of earthly greatness. But in the Apostolic age Cesarea was at the height of its splendor—the city of palaces, the seat of Roman government and law, and the rival of Jerusalem as the capital of Judea.

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1. What is said of Saul? 2. What effect was produced by the persecution of the Church at Jerusalem? 3. What kind of men carried Stephen to his burial? 4. What did Saul do? 5. What is recorded of Philip? 6. What is said of Simon? 7. To whom were Peter and John sent? 8. What did they do? 9. What did Simon ask of Peter. 10. What was Peter's answer? 11. What did Simon then request? 12. Where was Philip directed to go. 13. Who was the "man of Ethiopia" referred to? 14. What is said of him? 15. What part of the Scripture was he reading? 16. What did Philip preach unto him? 17. On what condition was he baptized? 18. How was Philip caught away? 19. In what spirit did the eunuch go on his way?

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## CHAPTER IX.

1 *Saul, going toward Damascus, is stricken down to the earth, is called to the Apostleship, is and is baptized by Ananias.* 20 *He preacheth Christ boldly.* 23 *The Jews lay wait to kill him: 29 so do the Grecians, but he escapeth both.* 31. *The church having rest, Peter health Eneas of the palsy, 36 and restoreth Tabitha to life.*

AND Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest. 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that, if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

*And, rather, But.* The emphatic *yet* connects the course of Saul, as here set forth, with his earlier acts (viii. 3), and is intended to denote the remarkable fact that up to this moment his rage against the disciples burned as fiercely as ever. *Breathing*—not *breathing out*, literally, *inhaling*, as though *threatenings and slaughter*, or menace and murder, were the element in

which he lived. Can any man be conceived to be farther from Christianity than Saul at this time was? *The high priest*—probably Theophilus, brother and successor to Jonathan, who succeeded Caiaphas. *Letters*, of authorization: written by the high priest (in this case, but not always, president of the Sanhedrim) in the name of *the whole estate of the elders*. (xxii. 5.) The destruction of Christians in Jerusalem was not sufficient to gratify the wrath of this persecutor. He must go to *Damascus*, the capital of Syria, the great highway between Eastern and Northern Asia, about a hundred and thirty miles north-east of Jerusalem, the most ancient city perhaps in the world. As there was a large Jewish population in Damascus, there would be several synagogues. The Christians had not as yet ceased to worship there, and the rulers of the synagogues exercised an oversight over the religious opinions of their members. *This way*, rather, *the way*. If the expression was coined by the enemies of the disciples of Christ, it must have been a term of reproach, intended to represent them as being a separate faction or party by themselves. But if, as is more likely, the name was taken by themselves, and applied to them also by their enemies, then, in all probability, it was intended to set them forth as walking in the footsteps of Him who declares Himself to be “*The way, and the truth, and the life.*” *He might bring them bound, &c.* The Romans had granted the Sanhedrim the power of trial and condemnation in all religious matters: and Aretas, king of Arabia, then ruling in Damascus, was well disposed toward the Jews, and some think a Jewish proselyte, as he had married his daughter to Herod Antipas. The disciples of the Lord were now like a scattered flock without a shepherd, and Saul was like a beast of prey ready to devour them; they were like defenseless sheep, and he like a raging wolf seeking to destroy them; they were like lambs led to the slaughter, and he like a roaring lion thirsting for their blood.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 Cor. xv. 8; Matt. xxv. 40, 45.

On verse 3, &c., see on xxii. 6, &c.

*He journeyed.* Can we trace the probable route of this young hunter of heretics? The journey from Jerusalem was probably made on the Roman road, *i. e.*, that of the Itineraries, by Neapolis (Sichem) and Scythopolis, crossing the Jordan south of the lake Tiberias—Gadara, and so to Damascus. Or he might have joined either the Petra road, by Jericho and Heshbon, and so by Botsrah to Damascus, or the Egyptian caravan-track, which passes to the north of the lake of Tiberias, and near Cesarea Philippi. *He came near to Damascus*—so xxii. 6. Tradition points to a bridge near the city as the spot referred to. Events which are the turning points in one's history, so imprint themselves upon the memory, that circumstances the most trifling in themselves acquire by connection with them something of their importance, and are recalled with inexpressible interest. *Suddenly.* Already, perhaps, in sight of Damascus, his progress was arrested. God often permits the wicked to carry on their designs till they are on the eve of being accomplished, when He suddenly interposes to defeat them, in judgment or in mercy. He either overwhelms the builder under the ruins of his edifice, or makes him abandon his impious project, and consecrate his time and talents to the service of the sanctuary. *There shined round about him a light from heaven.* The light was instantaneous, not like that of the sun, for the full splendor of which we are prepared by the gradual illumination of the atmosphere, as he approaches the horizon, but like the lightning which, bursting from the clouds amidst the darkness of the night, dazzles and confounds us. Its brightness was unusual, as Paul himself informs us in his speech to Agrippa. (Chap. xxvi. 13.) It must have been different from any other light with which we are acquainted, for when the sun is in the meridian, and shining in a cloudless sky, lightning itself would scarcely be perceptible. It was a signal of the approach of the Son of God, “*Who looketh on the sun, and it shineth not, and sealeth up the stars.*” By this symbol—light—how clearly do we perceive the first step which the Almighty takes in the conversion of every



human soul which is brought out of the deadly darkness of sin, and the gloom of Satan's kingdom. (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

*Saul fell to the earth*, overwhelmed with a consciousness of the greatness of the Saviour who appeared to him, and of his own guilt, vileness and nothingness. Mark here the second step in a true and Scriptural conversion, a lowly, humbling, self-abasing view of our own heart, life and conversation, a view which throws all our thoughts of self-righteousness into the very dust, which lays us there ourselves with all our virtues, and all our amiable qualifications, as utterly poor, blind and naked, waiting the will of our Divine Master.

*And heard a voice, &c.* There was not merely an impression made upon Saul as if he had heard audible words, but he actually heard them. It was a part of the miracle that those who accompanied him heard the voice of the speaker, but failed to distinguish the words uttered. *Saul, Saul!* Though he was ignorant of Jesus, Jesus knew him—knew his name, his purpose, his mission, and appeals to him. *Why persecutest thou me?* The question appeals to Saul's conscience, and is designed to awaken in him a sense of the grievous wrong which he is committing. Paul strikes in Damascus—Christ suffers in heaven. Observe the unutterable tenderness, sympathy and loving kindness which are implied in the manner in which the Son of God here identifies Himself with His own persecuted, despised and suffering people. He charges Saul with persecuting *Him* when he persecuted *them*, and we can be at no loss here to discern the doctrine which he elsewhere informs us He will maintain at the final judgment: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of my servants, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 40, also, 45. *Why persecutest thou me?*) What have I done to merit this at thy hands? What have my people done to receive such treatment? What makes my cause so odious in thy sight? Why shouldst *thou* have done all this?—*thou* who knowest the law, and the prophets, and the psalms—*thou* who shouldst have known that all these things must have

been fulfilled which you are now resisting, and *thou*, who shouldst have believed that the Son of man ought to suffer many things, and to enter into His kingdom. "Why persecutest thou me?" I who have loved thee with an everlasting love, who have laid down my life for thy sake, who have interceded with my Father that this worse than barren fig-tree should be let alone until I should "draw him with the cords of a man, with the bonds of love?"

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.—verse 39.

That Saul *saw*, as well as *heard* this glorious speaker, is expressly said by Ananias (verses 17, 22, 14), by Barnabas (ix. 27), and by himself (xxiv. 16); and in claiming apostleship, he explicitly states that he had "*seen* the Lord" (1 Cor. ix. 1, 15, 8), which can refer only to this scene. *Who art thou, Lord?* This question of the bewildered persecutor indicates that he did not *immediately* recognize Jesus, although a presentiment respecting the nature of Him who spoke, may have at once followed the appeal made to his conscience. *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*

Never did information more unexpected and alarming burst upon the startled ear. Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified as the vilest of malefactors, without the gates of their city; Jesus, whom Saul believed to be an impostor, and whose name he had never mentioned but in terms of execration; Jesus, whose helpless followers he had, on all occasions, treated with the utmost indignity and cruelty; this Jesus now appeared in heavenly glory. *It is hard for thee, &c.* This is a proverbial expression, denoting that the design of a person will prove abortive, and will terminate in his own ruin. It is an allusion to a fierce ungovernable animal, which kicks at short spikes of iron, and which as it vents its impotent rage, destroys itself. "It is hard for thee to rush upon the bosses of Jehovah's shield, it is hard for thee to fight against Omnipotence, it is hard for thee to contend with God, for thou shalt not prosper, and it is hard for thee to seek the injury of my people, for thou wilt thereby merely injure thyself, because I am with them, and they shall be mine in that day

when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his son that serveth him, and he that toucheth them shall touch the apple of his eye." Self-ruin is the inevitable lot of those who persecute the Lord Jesus and His followers.

(See Deut. xxxii. 15; 1 Sam. ii. 29.)

<sup>6</sup> And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.—<sup>xvi.</sup> 30.

The effect produced on Saul is just what might have been expected. *Astonished*—at himself, his blindness, guiltiness, madness and cruelty, at the long-suffering patience that bore with such a bloodthirsty persecutor, at the marvelous goodness and mercy that condescended to expostulate with him, notwithstanding all that he had done. *Trembling* also at the same time, because he knew that he was in the presence of the Holy One of Israel, because he felt that he was condemned of his own conscience, as well as charged with persecuting the Son of God, and lest there should be no forgiveness for one like him, yet, notwithstanding all his doubts and fears, and terrible perplexities, he lays himself low at the foot of the cross, asking the question, so marvelous, considering from whom it came, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* This inquiry is, 1. *Personal* in its aim—*me*. We should think of ourselves in Divine things, and bring home every truth to our own business and bosoms. 2. *Practical*—not to know, to hear, to believe, to talk of, but to *do*. Practice is essential to religion. 3. *Impartial* *it its desire*. The true convert says not to Jesus, if the service be honorable or profitable, that is, carrying worldly credit or profit in it, then will I do it: no, but whatever it is, if it be Thine, and Thou appoint me to it, *Here am I*. (Is. vi. 8.) Five principles demand and more than justify the absolute surrender of ourselves to Christ: 1. The righteousness and excellency of His requirements. 2. The endearing relations in which He stands to His people. 3. His greatness. He is Lord of all. 4. The obligations He has laid us under by His kindness. 5. His engagement to reward our devotedness to Him. The recompense must be of grace, and not of works; but it is real. He is not unrighteous to forget our work

of faith and labor of love. *Arise, and go, &c.* Perhaps, in the present state of his mind, he could not have given attention to the instruction of the Saviour, and his situation on a public road, and in the midst of his unconverted companions, was unfavorable. It was in the calm and leisure of privacy, that he was to be prepared for the important services in which Jesus purposed to employ him. *And it shall be told thee, &c.* Not by me, not in a voice from heaven, not by some angel messenger, specially sent down to instruct and enlighten thee, but by some poor, unknown, ignoble disciple one of "*that way,*" which thou hadst intended to persecute to the death, one who has himself learnt by the appointed means of grace, and by constant application at the throne of grace, all that he shall be commissioned to teach thee. Thus does God destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent, that no flesh should glory in His presence, but that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord. In the apology of Paul before Agrippa (xxvi. 16-18) a longer address is given than is here recorded in verses 5 and 6. (See on next verse.)

<sup>7</sup> And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.  
<sup>8</sup>Dan. x. 7.

*Hearing a voice.* In xxii. 9, we read: "They heard not the voice of him that spake," &c. The Greek word for *voice*, like our word utterance, may signify either the vocal sound or the articulate words. So a man partially deaf would be said, popularly but truly, *to hear* and *not to hear* the same utterance. (Compare John xii. 29.) *Seeing no man.* They saw not, as Saul did, the speaker. The discrepancy in the two accounts of this great event are only seeming, not real—only in *the letter*, not in *spirit*. Those only will stumble at the difference in the forms of narration, who from enmity to the truth are striving to create or magnify discrepancies. "The devout and intelligent student of Scripture," says *Alford*, "will see in such examples a convincing proof of the simple truth of the narrative—the absence of all endeavors to pare away apparent inconsistencies or revise them into confor-

mity—the *bona fide* work of holy truthful men, bearing each his testimony of things seen and heard under the guidance, not of the spirit of bondage, but of that spirit of whom it is said, “*where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.*” The difference between these men and Saul marks the difference between mere convictions and true conversions. Many *hear* the word in a general way, and *see* enough to make them tremble, but then it is only truly effectual when it is addressed to us as the voice of One that speaks to us from heaven, when it disarms us of our enmity to Christ, excites in us the desire of knowing Him, and makes us willing, without hesitation or delay, to obey His commandments.

8. And Saul arose from the earth, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

When Saul's eyes were opened, he found himself blind. The blindness is not to be explained on natural principles. It was supernatural light that blinded him. It is more than probable that this blindness had a moral purpose, and served not only to intimate to Saul the blindness of the state in which he had been, but also to impress him with a deeper sense of the power of Jesus as the protector of his people, and to turn his thoughts inward, while he was rendered less liable to distraction by external objects. *But they led him by the hand, &c.* In how different a manner did Saul enter Damascus from that which he had planned! He is led, humbled, afflicted and blind, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, whose disciples he intended to drag to prison. Submissively he moves forward, asking no questions, starting no objections, and pleading no difficulties. He did not shrink from the ridicule he knew he would have to encounter at the instance of his old associates, or from the dangers to which he would be exposed at the hands of the scribes and Pharisees.

9. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

The anxiety of his mind and the anguish of his heart were so great that he had no appetite for food. It is not necessary to suppose that *three entire days* are here meant. According to the Jewish mode of speaking, they may have been

parts of two days, with one intervening whole day. But what three days must those have been! Only one other space of three days' duration can be mentioned of equal importance in the history of the world. “While his sight and taste were inactive,” says *Bengel*, “he was inwardly reunited in his retirement through prayer. (Verse 11.) The business of conversion is worth the bestowal of whole days, when one is being drawn to God.”

10. ¶ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias, and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth: 12. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.—xxii. 12.

*Disciple, i. e., of Christ, a believer, a converted Jew, as we know from xxii. Ananias.* All that we know of him is recorded here, and in the chapter just referred to. Not Peter, or James, or John, no great and eminent Apostle need be sent for to instruct the learned and highly-talented Saul, but some poor, simple-hearted Christian, of whom the Divine Word has never before made mention, is fully sufficient in God's hand, to teach this most richly endowed of all the early converts. Ananias may have taken refuge in Damascus from the persecution at Jerusalem. (See on verse 3.) *In a vision.* A real vision of the Lord Jesus, not an angel, for Ananias calls him “Lord,” and Christians “His saints.” (Verses 13, 14.) *Behold, I am here.* This answer implies that the person hears and waits to listen further (Comp. Gen. xxii. 1, 7, xxvii. 1; 1 Sam. iii. 8, &c.) He felt that the Lord was with him in reality.

*Straight*—a name which the street in that old city still retains. *House of Judas.* The house is still pointed out as the place where Saul lodged. “We visited the great cathedral,” says *Mr. Tristram*, “in the street which is called ‘Straight,’ and several of the mosques. The great mosque, once the Christian cathedral, and in yet earlier ages a heathen temple, is a noble structure, though, of course, without the interest or the splendor of the Mosque of Omar. We looked in at one magnificent portal, over which still remains engraven the inscription in Greek, ‘Thy Kingdom,

O Christ! is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.' There stand the words, unread by the Moslem. We will take them as a silent prophecy that the day is coming when this dark land shall be Christ's once more, and He shall reign forever and ever. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." *Saul of Tarsus*, afterward called *Paul*. Tarsus was the capital of the province of Cilicia, lying along the north-east coast of the Mediterranean. It was situated on the river Cydnus; was a "large and populous city," says *Xenophon* (and see chap. xxi. 39), "and under the Romans had the privilege of self-government." *For, behold, he prayeth*. Saul, as a strict Pharisee, had often formally performed this outward exercise of devotion, but now he *prayed*. The prayer of a converted heart, the prayer of faith, for the first time now passed his lips.

Observe the reasons assigned for the message received: 1. that Saul was praying, and, 2. that he had received—perhaps in answer to his prayer—a vision of Ananias coming and *putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight*. Saul's prayer reached the heart of Christ, and the mission of Ananias was the answer. Conscious, as we are, of the Omniscience of the great Jehovah, perhaps we are never so much struck by it, as when He thus condescends to demonstrate it to us in His dealings with ourselves, or our fellow-sinners; calling forth one man by name, describing the identical spot where another lodges. How accurately does it mark God's knowledge of all our movements, of the city, the street, the house in which we dwell; how certainly, therefore, of all that passes there!

<sup>13</sup> Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 11. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.—iv. 1. *iv.* 21.

*I have heard, &c.* Saul had been a distinguished persecutor. These words do not seem to be the expression of reluctance, as some suppose, but of astonishment, as if he had said, "Is it possible that I should be sent by my Lord to Saul of Tarsus, the violent opponent of the Christians—Saul, who was coming here with power and authority from the chief priests

to persecute the disciples." It could hardly fail to have been notified to the Christians at Damascus by their brethren at Jerusalem, that Saul was on his way to persecute them. *That call on thy name*. That Jesus Christ was worshiped by the primitive Christians, is a fact so clearly established in the New Testament, that nothing but prejudice, blinding the mental eye, can hinder any person from perceiving it. The truth is, that this worship was so general, and so publicly known, that it is used as a description of His followers, who are more than once denominated those "who called upon His name," a phrase which often occurs in the Scriptures, and signifies invocation or prayer. (See 1 Cor. i. 2, 3; 2 Tim. ii. 22; Acts ii. 21, xxii. 16; also 2 Cor. xii. 8; 1 Thes. iii. 11, 12; 2 Thes. ii. 16, iii. 16.)

<sup>15</sup> But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. 16. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xiii. 2; Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 19; Gal. i. 15; Eph. iii. 7, 8. <sup>2</sup> Rom. xi. 13; Gal. ii. 7, 8. <sup>3</sup> Chap. xxv. 24, &c. <sup>4</sup> Chap. xxviii. 17, &c. <sup>5</sup> Chap. xx. 23; 2 Cor. xi. 23-27; 2 Tim. i. 11, 12.

*Go thy way, &c.* Here is another, and the main argument, with which the message was again urged. The argument is, that Saul had been divinely ordained for great work and great trial. Saul's subsequent history realized all that is here stated. He bore the name of Christ to the Gentiles, he made the heathen world ring through all its temples with the doctrine of the cross. Before kings and rulers he stood expounding its meaning and enforcing its claims. (xxv., xxvi., xxvii.) *Great things* he suffered, too, for Christ's name's sake. The whole of his Apostolic life was a life of martyrdom. (2 Cor. xi. 23-28.) Our Lord, it should be observed, sends the messenger to tell Saul, not what great things he shall *do*, but what far greater things he shall *suffer*. And yet, notwithstanding this message, Paul accepted and fulfilled the ministry to which he was called! What resistless evidence, then, have we here, of the sincerity and unreservedness of Paul's consecration of himself to the service of Him whose tender expostulation had reached him from the cloud of light! Sufferings are, after all, the great achievements of the Christian. We should not, then, be disappointed, if

with every desire to do great things for our Divine Master, we are denied the power or the opportunity. If, as has been beautifully said,

They also serve who only stand and wait,"

how much more do they serve who are called upon to endure and to suffer! Yes, in the chamber of sickness, upon the bed of pain, we may as greatly glorify our Redeemer, as amid the trials of life.

17. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even Jesus*, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.—viii. 17. Chap. ii. 4.

Ananias immediately obeys, and proceeds to the designated house. *Putting his hands on him*, as the Apostles did in Samaria, but with a solemn declaration of the authority by which he did it. *Brother Saul* does not refer exclusively, nor even primarily to their common nationality as Israelites, but to the connection or fellowship now existing between them for Christ's sake, of which the former had already been assured by the words of the Lord. Beware of all those contracted views of Christian fellowship, which are daily dividing the seamless garment of our Lord into the veriest shreds and tatters, learn to make no distinction except that which the converted Paul himself made in after days, when he said: "Grace be with all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Let this be the broad platform of our Christian fellowship; let every minor point, whether of doctrine or of discipline, be merged in this—in every lover of our Redeemer recognize a friend, to the feeblest lamb of His fold stretch out a helping hand, to the weakest of His true and sincere followers offer a sympathizing heart. *The Lord, even Jesus*. This clearly shows in what sense the term "Lord" is used in this book. It is *Jesus* that is meant, as almost invariably in the Epistles also. *Hath sent me*, this was his commission. The design of his commission was twofold, outward and inward, bodily and spiritual. The physical effect was to be the restoration of sight. The other effect was that *he might be filled with the Holy Ghost*, a stronger expression than *receive the Holy Ghost*. (John xx. 22; Acts. viii. 15,

xvii. 19; comp. ii. 4, iv. 8, 31, vi. 3, v. 7, 55.) It is therefore the more worthy of remark that the instrumental agency employed was the imposition of the hands of one whom we do not even know to have been a deacon or Evangelist. That gift was so peculiarly Divine that the external medium was comparatively unimportant.

18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. \*xxvi. 20; Gal. i. 17.

The declaration of the purpose for which Ananias came is followed by the record of its instantaneous accomplishment, which, with the express Divine command, shuts out the idea of a natural cure. *He arose*—apparently without leaving the room. This symbolized His resurrection from the dead: he was a new man. The arch-bigot was gone forever, and the Apostle was up to do a work that the ages would bless, and which eternity would celebrate. *And was baptized*. Thus he was received into the communion of the Church, and dedicated to the service of Christ. *He received meat* (food) and *was strengthened*. The new feelings that had flooded his soul had taken away his appetite; now his spirit was calmed by a new faith, his appetite returned, he took food and was revived. *Then was Saul certain days*, &c. He associated with the disciples at Damascus, went to their meetings, and joined in communion with them. How amazing the change! Such are the aspects, in which Paul, thus far in this chapter, is presented to us. First, as an *enemy to the cause of Christ*, then as *conquered by the revelation of Christ*; and then, as *enlisted in the service of Christ*. What a change! How great! how Divine! how influential! It was the opening of a perennial fountain in the world's desert, the kindling of a bright and quenchless guiding star in the world's firmament.

20. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21. But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22. But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. \*Gal. i. 13, 23. \*Chap. viii. 3. \*Ps. lxxxiv. 7. \*Chap. xviii. 28.

*Synagogues*—Jewish place of worship. That *he is the Son of God*. This expression

is here used, as in John xi. 27, to denote the Messiah, as an official title. *Called on this name.* (See on verse 14.) The word rendered *proving* is taken from mechanics—proving by quotations of Scripture, skillfully arranged, and compared together, and connected with each other. (xvii. 1-4.) Observe 1, the time of Paul's preaching—*straightway*. He entered at once on his Master's work, not consulting flesh and blood about the difficulties and dangers that might attend it, but performing his duty with such zeal and immediate application, as became a person of his holy character and profession. 2. The effect of Paul's preaching. Some of his hearers were astonished and surprised that so bitter and persistent a persecutor had become a powerful preacher. Others were confounded, being unable to withstand the force and eloquence of his argument, by which he proved that *this is very Christ*—the very Messiah predicted by prophets and longed for by Israel. With such a theme as the Divinity of Christ, and all the life-giving and saving doctrines which flow from it—such as the great doctrine of the atonement, that Christ died for our sins to purchase to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; of the resurrection, that He rose again for our justification; of the intercession, that He ever liveth to make intercession for us; of His coming again, that He may judge the world and save His people—we cannot be surprised that the Apostle "increased the more in strength," &c. If we, as preachers, desire to produce these effects, the confounding of our spiritual adversaries, the increase of strength in our own souls, if we, as hearers, desire to participate in them, let us be assured that we must be content with this one subject, and, as the Reformers of old were contemptuously called, by the learned *Erasmus*, "men of one book," because they read but the Bible, so we must be content to be called men of one subject, and to preach but Jesus Christ.

23. † And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him. 24. But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall, in a basket. xxiii. 12, xxv. 3. †2 Cor. xi. 26, &c.; Ps. xxi. 11, 37, xxiii. 23. †Josh. ii. 15.

*Many days.* According to Paul's statement, he went immediately after his conversion to Arabia, and returned to Damascus, and it was not until three years after that he went to Jerusalem. (Gal. i. 16, 17.) By "many days," then, are here meant these three years, spent partly in Arabia, and partly in Damascus. *Took counsel to kill him.* "The Jews again," says *Chrysostom*, "have recourse to the logic of force. They no longer seek for suborned men, and false accusers and false witnesses." *Gates.* As the only outlets from the city. Paul must have been very closely concealed, as there can be no doubt that the ethnarch or viceroy of Aretas, then master of Damascus, rendered them every aid to apprehend him. *The disciples took him by night, &c.* Here remark two things. 1. The escape was not miraculous. In this way the Lord has often delivered His servants, and in this way He is continually able to deliver them. But He never needlessly multiplies miracles. In this instance the deliverance could be effected by human means, they were therefore properly employed, and Providence only rendered them successful. 2. We are not to sacrifice our lives if we can preserve them consistently with a good conscience. Our Lord told His disciples to beware of men, to be wise as serpents, as well as harmless as doves, and if they were persecuted in one city to flee to another. He Himself eluded apprehension till He knew His hour was come.

26. † And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples; but they were all a raid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. 27. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. 29. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians; but they went about to slay him. 30. ¶ Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. †Gal. i. 18, †iv. 36. †verse 20, 22. †verse 23.

*Assayed to join himself, &c.* The disciples were despised and persecuted. Saul had himself once hated them, and endeavored to exterminate them from the earth. But now the world is not worthy of them. He ranks them above princes and philosophers; in them is all his delight. Have we the same mind in us? Though in the course of duty, unless we go out of the world, we must often mingle with others,

yet are Christians those with whom we delight to associate? *But they were all afraid, &c.* They supposed that he only pretended to be a disciple, but was really come among them as a spy or informer. They well knew what a bitter adversary he had been and had not heard of him since the wolf had been turned into a lamb. If there seems something strange in this, let it be observed that Damascus was one hundred and fifty miles from Jerusalem; that the modes of modern communication were not then known, and that the war raging between Herod Antipas, and Aretas, must have interrupted the intercourse between the two capitals. Neither is it unlikely that the unbelieving Jews maliciously and artfully represented him as acting the part of a deceiver. (See on verse 28.)

*Barnabas* stood high among the disciples at Jerusalem. (iv. 36, xi. 22, on which see notes.) It is very probable that Barnabas and Saul may have been personally known to each other in youth. Cyprus is only a few hours' sail from Cilicia. The schools of Tarsus may naturally have attracted one who, though a Levite, was a Hellenist, and there the friendship may have begun, which lasted through many vicissitudes, till it was rudely interrupted in the dispute at Antioch. (xv. 39.) *The Apostles*, viz.: Peter and James. (Gal. i. 19.) The other Apostles were probably absent from Jerusalem at this time. *Declared unto them*, related fully, since they may have heard a report of their occurrence, but had received no definite information concerning it. *In the name of Jesus*, as the sphere of his preaching.

*And he was with them, &c.* He was fully admitted to their friendship, and recognized as a true Christian brother. He went in and out, had free intercourse with them. His stay here, however, on this occasion, was only fifteen days. (Gal. i. 18.) We may here see, 1. That those disciples were careful whom they admitted among them. They were only such as they *believed to be disciples*. They did not desire, for the sake of largeness, a church filled with indiscriminate members, and they could not bear them that were evil. 2. It is possible to err on the side of caution. We may be too strict as well as too

lax. It is easy to carry our suspicions too far, especially with regard to those against whom we have entertained any prejudice, or from whom we have received any injury or offense. 3. We may depend on testimony concerning character in the absence of personal knowledge. This, indeed, is not always infallible, but there are cases in which it ought to be admitted, and should be deemed sufficient not only for individuals, but churches to act upon, in receiving others to their countenance and their communion. 4. The introducing of a young convert to the fellowship of the saints is a good work, and should be encouraged. Some are backward, not from a want of inclination, but they want confidence and help. Many are kept back when they ought to come forward.

*Spake boldly*. His boldness was that of the strongest conviction, founded on irresistible evidence, and backed by his own conscience. *Disputed*. He did not, as a fanatic would, pour mere declamation on their ears, but submitted his theses for reasoning and discussion. *The Grecians* were the Hellenists, or foreign Jews, of whom Saul was one himself. (See on vi. 1.) *In the name of the Lord Jesus*. Notice the subject of his ministry. As a man of genius and learning, he could have taken to them many subjects. He could have discussed the beauties of their classic literature, charmed them with sketches of their wonderful history, or dilated on the ethics of revelation. Such subjects would have been acceptable to them, but he selected a subject which they hated, which he once hated, but which now possessed him—"the Lord Jesus." This became his subject forever now, he viewed everything through it, he judged the world by it. *But they went about to slay him*. (See on verse 23.) *When the brethren knew* their hostile design, Paul departed in conformity with their advice. Another motive concurred with this. (See xxii. 17.) *Cesarea*. (See on viii. 40.) *Tarsus*, Saul's native city. It was the capital of Cilicia, on the river Cydnus. (See on viii. 40.) In sending Saul away from Jerusalem, the disciples not only consulted for his safety, but complied with the Saviour's direction in Matt. x. 23. The Apostle

tells us that when he left Jerusalem on this occasion, he came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Gal. i. 21), which seems to imply that he did not go to Cilicia by sea, but traveled thither through Syria.

31. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified, and walking on in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

(Zech. ix. 1; chap. viii. 1. †Ps. xciv. 13. †Rom. xiv. 19. †Ps. lxxxvi. 11; Col. i. 10. †John xiv. 16, 17. †Zech. viii. 20-22.)

*Rest*—from both the persecution by Saul, and the persecution of Saul. But concurrently with this, it is supposed that the trouble of the Jews arising from the project of the Emperor Caligula of placing his statue for worship engrossed all their thought and arrested the persecution of Christians. The trouble of her foes was the peace of the Church. Thus it is also with ourselves. Our trials may be varied and numerous, wave may follow wave, until we are almost tempted to believe that they will never cease, and yet, amidst the darkness of the storm, our God is preparing for us the light and placid sunshine. *Edified*, or, built up. It probably refers to both external and internal strength and accession of grace. *Walking*, a common Hebraism to denote a course of conduct. *In the fear of the Lord*, in conformity with that state of mind, denotive of rule or manner. The word rendered *comfort*, rather means *exhortation, admonition, encouragement*. *Multipled*. Even when referring only to the influence of the Holy Ghost, on the external growth of the Church, Luke still testifies that *that* influence was an essential, animating and moving power in the life of the Church.

32. †And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. 33. And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. 34. And Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole, arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. 35. And all that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned unto the Lord.

(Chap. iii. 6, 10, iv. 10.—Chron. v. 16.—Chap. xi. 21; 2 Cor. iii. 16.)

This and the following miracle form the introduction to the very important portion of Peter's history which follows in chap. x. *Passed throughout all quarters*—not now fleeing from persecution, but peacefully visiting the churches. *Lydda*, the Lod or Ludd of the Old Testament (Ezra ii. 33), was about a day's journey from Jerusalem. It was at this

period a place of considerable importance. *Josephus* observes that it was not less than a city in size. At present it is a considerable village, retaining its ancient name Ludd. The probability is that Eneas was a Christian, for it is said that Peter "came down also to the *saints* which dwelt in Lydda," and in general faith was a prerequisite in those upon whom miracles of healing were wrought. Observe, 1, the difficulty of the cure here effected. The disease was *palsy*, which had taken away the use of the man's limbs, and confined him to bed for *eight years*. 2. The manner of the cure. He does not even name himself as the instrumental cause, or involve the name of Christ (as in iii. 6), but expressly represents Him as the efficient and immediate agent. In comparing this with the manner of Christ's miracles, the different characters of the *servant* and the *Son*, the *creature* and the *God*, are everywhere apparent. 3. The effects of the cure. The instantaneousness of the cure shows that it was miraculous. The man at once arose, proving thus that the cure was perfect. *Make thy bed*. (See on John v. 8.)

*And all that dwelt, &c.* The miracle seems to have been wrought publicly, the man was well known. *Saron*, Hebrew, *Shareni*, was an extensive and fruitful plain, extending from Carmel to the vicinity of Joppa. It was proverbial for the fragrance of its flowers. This miracle was the occasion of a general conversion to the new religion in that part of the country. It symbolizes the mission of Christianity, which is *restorative*. Christ came to seek and to save, &c. The Gospel is the *power* of God unto salvation. It does not create new faculties, but, under the Spirit's blessing, *restores*. It implants in the soul a new principle of life, and restores it, 1, to God's knowledge; 2, to God's fellowship; 3, to God's image.

36. Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 37. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. 38. And (inasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. 39. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, *Tabitha, arise*. And she



opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42. And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. 43. And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.  
†1 Tim. ii. 10; Titus ii. 7, 14. †Or, be grieved. †Eccl. ix. 10. †Matt. ix. 23. †Mark v. 41, 42; John xi. 43. †1 Kings xvii. 23. †John xii. 11.

*Joppa*—the modern *Jaffa*, on the Mediterranean, a very ancient city of the Philistines, afterward and still the seaport of Jerusalem, from which it lies distant forty-five miles to the north-west. *Tabitha*. This name, in Aramaic, answers to *Dorcas*, in Greek, signifying a *gazelle*. It appears also in the rabbinical books as a female name; the gazelle being in the East a favorite type of beauty. (See Song of Sol. ii. 9, 17, iv. 5, vii. 3.) *Lightfoot* remarks, that she was probably a Hellenist (*i. e.*, a Grecian Jewess), and thus was known by both names. *This woman was full of good works*. She is described by her personal religion. This was not only real, but eminent. She was not like multitudes whose life is filled up with vanity and vice. She was full—not of pretenses, and of words, but of *good deeds*. Her religion was substantial and practical. She not only obeyed, but *abounded* in obedience. We should constantly make progression in religion. We should be anxious, not only to gain heaven when we die, but to glorify God, and serve our generation while we live.

*She was sick, and died*. This was during the period in which Peter abode in the vicinity. *Washed*. The custom of washing the dead was common, not only among the Jews, but also among the Greeks and Romans. *Upper chamber*. It was common to deposit dead bodies alone in some sequestered chamber of the house. Religion does not exempt us from the common calamities of life, or the ravages of mortality. The grave is “the house appointed for all living.” This peculiar consideration, indeed, attends the death of the godly, that they are disposed of infinitely to their advantage, and in this view, “if we love them we should rejoice because they go unto the Father.” But this very consideration also aggravates our grief. That which prepares them for the enjoyment of another world, qualifies them for their passage through this, and in proportion to their gain is our loss.

*Nigh to Joppa*. The distance between the modern village of Ludl (the ancient Lydda) and Jaffa is only about nine miles. *Disciples . . . . . sent . . . . . two men*. The Christian love of all for the departed *Gazelle*, says *Dr. Whedon*, is unanimous in the prayer that she may return to life. There is a blessed faith in the existence of a truly *present* resurrection power. The chiefest of Apostles, the wonderful first disciple of Jesus, is but nine miles distant. Perhaps he can restore to us even our beloved dead. *Would not delay*. They do not expressly utter the request for a miracle. Only they hope he will not delay; just as if the soul might soon go too far to hear and return.

*And all the widows, &c.* These were the particular objects of *Tabitha's* beneficence. They are a class of claimants upon kindness and charity, more frequently mentioned in the Scriptures than any other, unless it be “the fatherless,” who are commonly noticed along with them. And, surely none have greater demands upon our tenderness and compassion. We ought to have some *definite* plan of usefulness to pursue. But we should not bind ourselves down so exclusively to any one class of beneficiaries as to be unable or unwilling to aid other claimants, however deserving or pressing; nor should we lay such stress upon our own objects of charity as to think slightly or meanly of those which may be preferred by others. *Weeping, &c.* It was only after death that it became known what a treasure she had been to the Church; the odor of the costly ointment filled the house, when the vessel in which it lay concealed, was broken. (John xii. 3.) *Coats and garments*. These were specimens of the articles of clothing *Dorcas* had made for poor widows. She did the work *herself*; she did not, as is customary with many in these days, employ others to do it for her, and feel that she had done her duty by giving a subscription for the purpose, she used her own hands, she plied the needle herself. *While she was with them*. She viewed life as “the time to serve the Lord,” and her “own generation by the will of God.” Some are future benefactors. They do not refuse, they only procrastinate. This is unwise,



JOPPA (NOW JAFFA).

for in the meanwhile both the benefactor and beneficiary may die. (Prov. iii. 27, 28.) Some are benevolent when they leave us, not while they are *yet with us*. But if it is well to bequeath, it is better to achieve. Dying alms are commonly suspicious; they arise from necessity rather than choice. There is little merit in distributing what we can hold no longer. Let us, therefore, be our own executors.

*Peter put them all forth*, after the example of his Master, and in order that he might be undisturbed in his prayers. (See 2 Kings iv. 33; also Matt. ix. 25.) *Prayed*, namely, to Christ, in whose name the Apostles performed their miracles. (See verse 34, iii. 6, 16, iv. 10.) "This prayer is the essential feature by which the resurrection of Tabitha is distinguished from that of the daughter of Jairus. Jesus, without any preceding prayer, took the dead child by the hand, and recalled her to life, but Peter does not do so until he had prayed to the Lord for this miracle." Peter's words were not, "I say unto thee, Arise," in the language of authority, but simply, *Tabitha, arise*, as an intimation that Jesus had restored her life; and it should also be remembered that there was no witness to the transaction. Peter speaks as one who felt assured that his prayer had prevailed. (See Matt. xvii. 20.) *And when she had opened her eyes*, &c. The graphic minuteness of detail here imparts to the narrative an air of charming reality.

*And he gave her his hand*—in the way of welcome or congratulation. (See Mark i. 31.) *He presented her alive*. Touching spectacle! Peter *giving* and *they receiving* this present! "There, take your benefactress, and dry up your tears." We here see that kindness was the principle of the miracle, not self-applause, not vain glory. Then Peter would have claimed her as an attendant, and required her to follow him

as a standing proof of his supernatural powers, but he resigns her to those who stood in need of her services. It is exceedingly cheering when a pastor can publicly diffuse the blessing which he has sought in his closet on his knees, and scatter it as the seed of new and more abundant fruits. Luke mentions the grief of the widows as they stood around the corpse of Dorcas, but does not describe their joy when she was restored to life—it could not be described.

*Many believed in the Lord*, literally, *upon the Lord*—Christ, whose Gospel had been so signally attested as true. This was the moral purpose of the miracle, and it was realized. Tabitha was raised more for the good of others than her own, for her being restored to natural life was the occasion of raising many to a life of faith. Peter remained here *many days*, because the place was large, and the people evinced a preparation for the reception of the Word. The Apostle's host on this occasion was a namesake of his own. When God opens a wide door for a minister on any spot, it becomes his duty to tarry as long as possible, so that the good seed may take root. The occupation of Simon was that of a *tanner*. That Peter made his abode with this individual, whom some of his countrymen would have disesteemed on account of his employment, is evidence that he thought little of worldly dignity in connection with his being an Apostle. His Master had taught him by instruction and example, that true greatness is best adorned by condescension. (Matt. xviii. 4; Mark ix. 35.) The sphere in society, indeed, to which Peter had been accustomed, was that of ordinary, though very respectable, men, and he, doubtless, would not think of any special difference, as to the common usages of life, between himself and Simon of Joppa.

1. For what purpose did Saul go to the high priest? 2. What occurred as he came near Damascus? 3. What did the voice say unto him? 4. Whose voice was it? 5. What did he reply? 6. What did the Lord then say to him? 7. What is next said of Saul? 8. What direction did the Lord give to Ananias? 9. What did Ananias answer? 10. What did the Lord then say to him? 11. What took place when Ananias went to Saul? 12. What effect was produced by Saul's preaching? 13. Why were the disciples afraid of Saul? 14. Who brought him to the Apostles? 15. State the particulars of the cure of Eneas by Peter. 16. What was the character of Dorcas? 17. By whom, and how, was she restored to life? 18. With whom did Peter spend many days in Joppa?

## CHAPTER X.

<sup>1</sup> *Cornelius, a devout man, 5 being commanded by an angel, sendeth for Peter: 11 who by a vision 13, 20 is taught not to despise the Gentiles. 31 As he preacheth Christ to Cornelius and his company. 44 the Holy Ghost falleth on them, 48 and they are baptized.*

Thus far, in the progress of the Gospel, efforts for the conversion of men to Christianity had been confined to Jews and circumcised proselytes. The disciples of Christ had not yet entered fully into the spirit of the Gospel, so far as concerns its extension to all nations, they still adhered very much to Jewish opinions in respect to ceremonial cleanness and the impropriety of associating with people of other religions. They believed, indeed, as the terms of their Lord's last commission to them plainly showed (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15), that the Gospel was to be everywhere spread, and preached to all men. Still they expected that people of other nations would first become Jews, and adopt Jewish rites, and then, *as being Jews*, would become followers of the Messiah. (See 28, 45, xi. 2, 3, 18, xv. 1, 5.) This prejudice would have operated so as finally to prevent the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles, had not God, by a particular interposition of His mercy and goodness, convinced Peter, and through him all the other Apostles, that He had accepted the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and would put no difference between the one and the other, purifying their hearts by faith, and giving the Gentiles the Holy Ghost, as He had before given Him to the Jews. The means which He used to produce this conviction in the minds of the Apostles, are detailed at length in this chapter, in which, what Abraham is to the Jewish saints, Cornelius is seen to be to the Gentile Christians—the first called out miraculously by God—the moral father of the great family.

**T**HERE was a certain man in Cesarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band:

A certain man. Eneas also, who likewise had a Roman name, was only thus styled in ix. 33. *Cesarea*—a city on the coast of the Mediterranean between Joppa and Tyre, about seventy miles north-west of Jerusalem. It is sometimes called *Cesarea Palestine*, to distinguish it from

*Cesarea Philippi*. Herod the Great enlarged the city, and gave it its name in honor of Augustus Cæsar, the Roman Emperor. Its inhabitants were chiefly Greeks: it contained a fine harbor, many splendid temples, palaces, and other buildings. It was the seat of the Roman governor, and became the capital of Palestine after the overthrow of the Holy City. It was one of the most magnificent cities of the Eastern world. After the destruction of Jerusalem, when Judea became a Roman province, Cesarea was the chief city of Palestine (Acts xxiv. 27, xxv. 1–13), and was often visited by Paul (Acts ix. 30, xviii. 22, xxi. 8). It was here that he made his eloquent defense before Felix, Festus and Agrippa (Acts xxiii., xxv., xxvi.), and here he suffered two years' imprisonment. Philip the Evangelist resided here (Acts xxi. 8).

*Cornelius*, a familiar but honorable name in Latin, being that of a distinguished Roman family. A *centurion* was strictly the commander of a hundred men, but the title was applied with some degree of latitude to those who led the subdivisions of a legion. *The Italian band*, so called, as distinguished from native soldiers quartered at Cesarea. An ancient coin makes express mention of such a cohort in Syria. Many of these soldiers were alive when these things were written, and could testify to them. Cornelius, though a Gentile, though a soldier, though a commissioned officer, was yet a pious, charitable, good man. Alas! how little the soldiers of our day, in general, resemble the centurion! In all nations, places, and lawful pursuits, God has a number of persons to honor Him in the world, according to their present measure of light received from Him. (See on verse 2.)

<sup>2</sup> A devout man, and one that <sup>b</sup>feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to <sup>c</sup>the people, and prayed to God alway.

<sup>a</sup>viii. 2. <sup>b</sup>xxii. 12. <sup>c</sup>Ecc. vii. 18. <sup>d</sup>Gen. xviii. 19. Ps. ci. 2-7, xviii. 8. <sup>e</sup>Ps. xli. 1. <sup>f</sup>Ps. cxix. 2; Prov. ii. 3-5.

Cornelius was one of those Gentiles, not uncommon in the Apostolic age, who had become dissatisfied with the religious worship of his ancestors, and was attached to the purer religion of the Jews. (See on verse 4.) He worshiped God, the know-

ledge of whom he probably obtained by residing with his men in Judea. *Feared God with all his house.* Here is a union of *personal* and *relative* duty. This was like Joshua, who said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." *Which gave much alms to the people.* The reference is to the Jewish people. (See verse 22.) *And prayed to God alway.* Philip the Evangelist was probably already in Cesarea, preaching the Gospel (Acts viii. 44). The narrative supposes that Cornelius was not ignorant of the facts of the life of Jesus. (See particularly verses 36, 37.) Hence it is not improbable that the great subject of his prayers was that he might obtain more religious light, and especially might be led to the truth with regard to Jesus Christ. (See on 3, 4.) Here is an union of *piety* and *morality*, or, of *devotion to God* and *charity to men.* And their union forms the consistent, the graceful, the respectable character of the real Christian, the man of true worth. If we leave either of them out of our system, even though we excel in the other, we can stand trial only in one point of view. It is only on one side our character is fair, on the other it will always be open to much reproach. And as we dishonor ourselves, so we do great injustice to religion. For, by dividing its parts from one another, we never fail to expose it to the censure of the world: And perhaps, by this sort of partial and decided so-called goodness, religion has suffered more in the esteem of mankind than by open profligacy. The unbeliever will scoff at our piety when he sees us negligent of moral duties. The bigot will deery all morality when he sees us pretending to be a follower of virtue, though we be a despiser of God. Whereas he who fears God, and is at the same time just and beneficent to men exhibits religion to the world with full propriety. It shines in his conduct with its native splendor, and its rays throw a glory round him.

<sup>3</sup> He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.—Heb. i. 14.

The angel appeared to him about the ninth hour (3 o'clock; P. M.), or the third hour of prayer, which the devout pagan probably observed of his own accord, in company with the Jews. He then saw in

a *vision* (that is, by an internal process, of which God was the author, but, in other respects, *distinctly*, not by a deception of the senses) an angel of God, who entered the chamber, and addressed him by name. (See Dan. ix. 20, 23; Luke i. 11, &c.) Hours of prayer are truly hours of grace, when the angels of God are most of all prompt in coming.

<sup>4</sup> And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.—Isa. xiv. 19.

*Afraid*, as the flesh ever is in the presence of spiritual beings. *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God*, that is, "they have ascended to heaven, like the smoke of the sacrifices, so that they *remind* God of thee." It will be observed that the angel places the "prayers" and "alms" in a different order to Luke, in verse 2. *There* the outward acts were placed before the inward, according to the custom of men, but *now* the inward feelings are placed first, as they are valued before God. Nothing ascends to God as a sweet savor, except that which came from Him, was wrought by Him, and was done for His sake. (Phil. ii. 13.) The acceptable sacrifices of the New Covenant are, 1. The prayer of faith. 2. The alms of love. What Abram was, in respect of justification, before he heard and believed what was promised him concerning the Messiah, Cornelius was in respect of salvation before he heard and believed the words by which he was to be saved. Both were the *subjects* of faith according to their light. Abram believed from the time that he left Ur of the Chaldees, and Cornelius could not have *feared God* without believing in Him; but the *object* by which they were justified and saved was not from the first so clearly revealed to them as it was afterward. Hence, what is said of Cornelius in verses 2, 4, is easily reconciled with the fact, that after this he was directed to send for Peter, who should *tell him words by which he and all his house SHOULD BE SAVED.* (Chap. xi. 14.)

<sup>5</sup> And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter. <sup>6</sup> He lodgeth with one Simon<sup>ba</sup> tanner, whose house is by the sea-side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.  
bix. 43. cxi. 14.

*Joppa.* (See on ix. 38.) He who was to speak to Cornelius this great message

is exactly specified both by name and surname, his city, locality and house being mentioned, but yet no title of honor is given to him. The fact that Peter was sent for to come to Cornelius, and not just the reverse, is likewise suitable to the greatness of the event; it forms, as *Bengel* remarks, the beginning of the Apostles' *going forth* to preach to all nations. *By the sea-side*. The ancients had their tanners' houses and workshops apart from towns (on account of the fetid odor), and near rivers, for convenience of water necessary in preparing skins. *He shall tell thee*, &c. What an honor was here put upon the Gospel ministry! Cornelius has now an angel from heaven talking to him, yet he must not receive the Gospel from him, nor be told by him what he ought to do, but all that the angel has to say is, "Send for Peter, and he shall tell thee." God has not employed as the messenger of His mercy, superior beings, whose greatness would have made us afraid, and to the charms of whose eloquence the success of His Word might have been ascribed. "He hath put the treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men." We are addressed by mortals like ourselves, to whom we can listen without terror, and who, being sinful, weak and imperfectly enlightened, can be considered only as instruments of the Divine operations.

7. And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually: 8. And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

*Was departed*—another token of the objective reality of the vision. *He called*. He did not go himself for Peter. This he would have readily done, but he was ordered by the angel to *send* (verse 5.) *His presence* was proper and necessary at home. He was a man in office, and in command. He had a weighty trust reposed in him; and we are to abide with God in our callings. *Household servants*, i. e., two of his domestics. They were in all probability godly servants. (Verse 2.) A godly man will choose, as far as he can, those that are religious to attend him. (Ps. ci. 6, 7.) Or, he will be likely to render them such, if they are not such

when he engages them. The *devout soldier* had the same religious spirit as his master; he also had renounced idolatry, and was a worshiper of the true God. *And when he had declared all these things*, &c. Here we have not a harsh injunction, not a bare order, couched in a few unexplained terms, not the sealed instructions, the orders of a tyrant, who is to be implicitly obeyed, and is afraid to trust. Here is intercourse, openness. How happy, when in such relations in life, there is union and harmony, condescension, kindness, unreserve, on the one side, and respect and obedience, without encroachment on the other.

9. On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour: xxi. 5, &c.

*On the morrow*—Starting at three in the afternoon, they completed the journey of almost thirty miles from Cesarea to Joppa on the next day about noon. Thereby their arrival and Peter's noon-day prayer would coincide. *Upon the house-top*, the roof which, according to the Oriental manner, was flat, or but slightly inclined. It was the place often chosen for the performance of religious duties. The situation does not expose one necessarily to public view. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 12; Jer. xix. 13, xxxii. 15.) *Sixth hour*, or noon. This was one of the stated hours of prayer among the Jews. Prayer is the heavenly attendant of the Christian during the whole day. (Ps. lv. 17.) He who would see "heaven opened," must pray.

10. And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance:

Peter is prepared, in mind and body, for the extraordinary revelation which awaits him. *Would have eaten*, rather, *desired to eat*. *While they made ready*; while his friends, the people of the house, were preparing either his noon-day meal, or in anticipation of it, and at his request. *He fell into a trance*, in Greek, there fell on him an *ecstasy*, a preternatural, abnormal state of mind, preparing him for the reception of the vision. In the mode of instruction which God employed in this instance, He adapted Himself to the peculiar circumstances in which Peter was placed. "The divine light that was making its way to his spirit, says *Neander*.

revealed itself in the mirror of sensible images, which proceeded from the existing state of his bodily frame."

11. And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth;

<sup>a</sup>Chap. vi. 5; Rev. xix. 11.

*Heaven opened* (not the heavens, as Stephen, vii. 53). *A certain vessel*. The word *vessel* is here used in a general sense, like our word *article*, or *implement*. A more particular description is immediately given. *A great sheet, &c.*—a large square piece of cloth, drawn up at the corners, and thus capable of holding what might be placed in it.

12. Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

All . . . . . *four-footed beasts, &c., i. e.*, the *clean* and the *unclean* (ceremonially) all mixed together. The Apostles, while they thought that the distinction of clean and unclean animals and meats was to continue, and the Gentiles were *unclean*, had forgotten, or never understood, the contrary declaration of Christ, in Matt. xv. 17, 18. Even our Lord's command, indeed, "Go, teach all nations," &c. (Matt. xxviii. 19), they had misunderstood, thinking the command applied only to those who had previously embraced the Jewish religion; for which reason they had hitherto avoided the society of Gentiles, and had not communicated to them the doctrines of Christ. We see, therefore, how *necessary* it was, that this intention of God should be manifested more strongly than language could do it, by a most impressive exhibition of the *thing itself*, which could not be mistaken. At the same time, it is true, that the removal of the distinction of meats need not have seemed strange to the Apostles, since we find from the rabbinical writings, that the Jewish masters maintained that this would take place in the time of the Messiah.

13. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill, and eat.

*Came a voice*—a voice became audible. *Rise*, this may imply that he was on his knees. The direction to prepare food for himself from that collection of animals, was intended to excite in his mind the thought that the ceremonial, or religious distinction between clean animals and unclean, was abolished. (See on next verse.)

14. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

<sup>a</sup>Lev. xi. 2, &c., xx. 25; Deut. xiv. 3, &c.; Ezek. iv. 14.

The same Peter who, on a previous occasion would not consent that the Lord should wash His sinful servant's feet, cannot even now believe that He is able to cleanse that which was unclean according to Jewish principles. *Common, i. e.*, not sanctified by Divine permission to eat of it, and so "unclean." The distinction of meats was a sacrament of national distinction, separation and consecration. The devout Jews religiously kept the precepts of the Mosaic law concerning this distinction. (See Dan. i. 8, 12.) Hence the course Peter now pursued in reference to a command, against which all his religious notions as a Jew revolted.

15. And the voice spake unto him again the second time. What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

<sup>a</sup>Matt. xv. 11; verse 23; Rom. xiv. 14, &c.; 1 Cor. x. 25; 1 Tim. iv. 4.

The prohibited animals were not unclean from any natural impurity, but in virtue of a positive institution, in consequence of which an Israelite could not use them for food, without contracting defilement. They were cleansed when the institution was revoked, and might thenceforth be eaten without any other scruple than what arose from a regard to health, or to taste.

16. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

*This was done thrice*, for the same reason that the dream of Pharaoh was doubled, "because the thing was established by God, and God would shortly bring it to pass."

17. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. 18. And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. 19. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. 20. Arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

<sup>a</sup>Chap. ix. 43. <sup>b</sup>Chap. xi. 12. <sup>c</sup>Chap. xv. 7.

Eastern houses are surrounded with a quadrangular court, and the entrance being by a small but well-secured gate, which is at a considerable distance from apartments occupied by the family, visitors have often to stand long at the gate knocking or calling aloud, before they obtain admittance. The houses of the richer class cannot boast of a statelier approach, and as in the limited establish-

ment of Simon the tanner, there might be no servants, and that artisan himself, together with his family, were in all probability enjoying their meridian repose, the messengers of Cornelius had to exercise all the patience which an application for access into a house in the East generally requires. Observe, 1. How Peter meditated on what he had seen and heard. Whatever passes from God to man, either by the eye or through the ear, ought to be the subject of our deepest meditation. 2. The care which the Holy Spirit took to settle satisfactorily Peter's doubts and reasonings. Here we see both the Divinity and the Personality of the Holy Ghost. He that knows the thoughts of man's heart, as He did Peter's, is truly and really God, and He that commands and forbids, as Peter was here commanded to go to Cornelius, and forbidden to doubt of the lawfulness or success of his journey, is really a Person.

21. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius, and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek; what is the cause wherefore ye are come? 22. And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel, to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. 23. Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. 24. And the morrow after they entered into Cesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

<sup>1</sup>Verse 1, &c. <sup>2</sup>Chap. xxii. 12; Heb. xi. 2. <sup>3</sup>Verse 45.

*Behold, I am he whom ye seek, &c.* As *Chrysostom* observes, Peter shows that he had no thought of concealing himself from them, by first making himself known and then inquiring why they sought him. *Cornelius the centurion, a just man, &c.* (See on verses 2, 4.) The description here given by the messengers of Cornelius of their Master, is worthy of notice, and is highly creditable to him as coming from them who knew him best. Instead of "devout," as in verse 2, we have now "just," a term descriptive precisely of that trait of character with which the dependents of the man would be best acquainted from experience. *And of good report, &c.* This statement was eminently judicious, both in reference to themselves, who were pagans, it is true, but doubtless were favorably inclined to the Israelites, and also in reference to Peter, to whom they thus intended to recommend their master. *To send for*—otherwise Cornelius

himself would not have hesitated to come. *Hear words of thee*, but of what kind they could not as yet tell. *Then called he them in, &c.* They were wearied with their journey, and needed refreshment, and it was thought expedient that they should rest that night with Simon the tanner. *Certain brethren from Joppa, &c.* Some of the believers who dwelt at Joppa, that they might witness and be ready to attest the whole of what passed on this unprecedented occasion. They were six in number, as we learn from chap. xi. 12. *And the morrow after, &c.* (See on verse 9.) *And Cornelius waited for them.* He had not occupied himself in other business meanwhile, but wholly devoted himself to this matter, and during this whole time was being prepared for it. *Called together*, not merely to do honor to his visitor, but for their own instruction. *His kinsmen*, from which some infer that Cesarea was his native place, or at least that he had formed intimate connections in the country. *Near friends.* This bond is more comprehensive than kindred, and applies even to relationship by marriage, neighborhood, &c. Not all kinsmen and connections are *friends*. He assembled those who he thought would wish to be present. They were therefore men themselves not unlike Cornelius. (Verse 2.) How often friendship, cultivated with the good or bad, unexpectedly results either in our profit or injury! The desire that others should share in our spiritual gifts, is the great characteristic of love and friendship. "We impoverish ourselves," says *Quesnel*, "when we share our earthly goods with others, but the more liberally we impart our spiritual riches to them in love, the more abundantly we ourselves become endowed with them."

25. ¶ And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. 26. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up, I myself also am a man.—"Chap. xiv. 14, 15; Rev. xix. 10, xxii. 9.

*Cornelius met him*, at the door, or in the court of the house. The first interview appears to have taken place there, and then the centurion and the Apostle proceeded to the room where the company were assembled. (See verse 27). *At his feet*, rather, *upon the feet*, viz., of Peter. The word here rendered *worshipped* denotes a total and reverential prostration of the



body to the earth; a mark of profound respect, which the Jews and other Orientals rendered, not to kings only, but also to persons of high dignity. But the Romans yielded this homage to the Deity only, and therefore Peter declined it, by saying, *I myself also am a man*. Yet it does not follow that Cornelius meant to have transferred the honor due to the Deity, to Peter, for he was *devout and fearing God* (verse 2), and Peter had just been represented in the vision as a man, but, struck with reverential awe at the sight of a Divine legate, he could not preserve the due distinction between the honor to be rendered to the ambassador and the Principal.

27. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

*Talked with him*—familiarly. *He went in*—into the inner part of the house. *Many*—a joyous harvest.

28. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation, but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

<sup>1</sup>John iv. 9. <sup>2</sup>Chap. xv. 8, 9; Eph. iiii. 6.

*Ye know, &c.* There is no command in the Law of Moses, forbidding familiar intercourse with the Gentiles, but this was an interdict of the Jewish doctors, who had burdened the Mosaic Law with many added injunctions. *Josephus* says, "Those strangers who came to us on any other account but that of religion, he (Moses) permitted not to be mixed with us in any familiarities." *Tacitus* says, "The Jews entertained among one another obstinate hate, ready mercy; toward all others hostility and hate." *That I should not call any man, &c.* The intent of the vision which had appeared to Peter was now distinctly perceived by him. To visit a Gentile was no longer to be regarded as an act of impiety.

29. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for. I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?

*Therefore*—Peter thought it necessary to let them know how he came to change his mind in this matter, by a Divine revelation, lest he should be upbraided with want of stability. *For what intent*—for what reason. Although Peter knew the reason, both from revelation and from the messengers of Cornelius, yet he desires him to relate it for the benefit of the com-

pany, and that Cornelius himself might be the more impressed by the narration. Among the reasons and intents under which the services of ministers, in matters which relate to their spiritual interests, can only be sought by any people, the following may be mentioned: 1. In general, a regard to their personal salvation. 2. Instruction in the truth. It must be their desire to "hear words of him." 3. Faithful and constant application and enforcement of truth. 4. The continuance of the ordinances and discipline of the Church of Christ. Those who send for ministers to be over them in the Lord, should maintain a teachable spirit, and be "intent" upon growth and advancement in knowledge and piety.

30. And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,—<sup>1</sup>Matt. xxviii. 3; Chap. i. 10.

*Four days ago, &c.* This probably means, four days ago unto this hour in which he was then speaking. The fast commenced with the day and had continued unbroken until the ninth hour (corresponding with our three o'clock, P. M.), when the angel appeared. This view agrees with the number of days which had elapsed since the angel's communication, viz.: four, and allows time enough for the abstinence to justify the use of "*fasting*." *I prayed in my house*—house being put for household, as is ordinary. An old writer observes: "He was praying in his family in his ordinary course, and there he had the benign appearance of that kind messenger from heaven, to direct him to the way by which he might come to a more distinct knowledge of the Mediator, and of worshipping God in Christ. According to the light he had, and the sincerity that God had given him in proportion thereunto, his acceptance above was declared before. But God resolved to help him, in the method and way which he most approved, unto more distinct notices, and these he is directed how to come by, even at the time when he was engaged in his domestic performances of religion in his house." (See on verse 2.) Religious fasting, in order to the greater seriousness and solemnity of praying, was used by devout people that were not Jews, as at *Jonah*, iii. 5. *In bright clothing*. Effulgent dress,

probably the same with the white raiment of the two men upon Olivet. (See on chap. i. 10.) This may be regarded in both cases as an emanation or reflection of the Divine glory, with which these messengers from heaven were invested, and as a proof of their legation and a source of awe to the beholders.

31. And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. \*Verse 4, &c.; Dan. x. 12; Heb. vi. 10.

See on verse 4.

32. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon whose surname is Peter: he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner, by the sea-side; who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

See on verses 5, 6.

33. Immediately therefore I sent to thee: and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. †Deut. v. 27.

*Thou hast well done.* A formula of praise. He praises Peter because he had not delayed to come. *Before God, i. e.,* in the presence of God. He who so wonderfully arranged matters as to call us together, is present with us, to assist you in speaking and us in hearing. Would that all congregations had a consciousness of God's presence! *All here present, &c.* Our public worship would prove much more both comfortable and profitable, if our hearts met in it as one, so that we could use this expression concerning our hearing of the Word. *All things that are commanded, &c.* They were assembled, not as a matter of custom, not for a mere performance, not for entertainment, but to learn. They were not seekers after a knowledge of Peter's private speculations, or of aught that was human in thought. They desired information concerning the *Divine will*: and they wanted to know "all" of it. As Peter himself was, so all the ministers of Christ are, confined within their commission, they must only speak what God commands, neither are hearers bound to receive anything else. Woe unto us, if when God sends us on His errand, we tell our own tale. The word is the *counsel of God*, and it is the counsel of God only, and the whole counsel of God also, that we are to declare, and our people are to hear.

34. † Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35. But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

\*Deut. x. 17; chap. ii. xix. 7; Job xxxiv. 19; Rom. ii. 11; Gal. ii. 6; † Peter i. 17. \*Rom. ii. 13, 27, iii. 22, 29, x. 12, 13; Eph. ii. 13-15.

*Then Peter opened his mouth,* these words (as in viii. 35) inform us, with great solemnity, that the following address contains important truths. The address itself, consists of three parts: 1. The introduction, verses 34, 35, stating that all men, without regard to national distinctions, may alike be received into the kingdom of God, provided that they fear Him, and do that which is right. 2. A brief exhibition of the life and work of Jesus, extending to the judgment, verses 36-42. 3. The assurance, supported by the prophetic word, that through Christ, every one who believes in Him, shall receive remission of sins, verse 43. *Of a truth I perceive*—in truth, I comprehend. Truth is the foundation, so that Peter's knowledge rests on the truth, and, indeed is truth. *No respecter of persons, i. e.,* not partial in the way of regarding one man as better than another, on the ground of national descent.

*But in every nation, &c.* These words have often been quoted to prove that the works of heathens are pleasing to God, as well as those of Christians, but they are grossly perverted. Any person who considers the context, will see that they do not teach that men of every nation may work righteousness, but that, to whatever nation those who work righteousness belong, they are accepted. No two things can be more different, and that the latter is the true meaning is evident, because the Apostle is speaking in reference to the prejudices of the Jews, who believed that they were the objects of the Divine favor, to the exclusion of every other people. This he now discovered to be an error, for, in the case of Cornelius, God had shown that if there were any righteous Gentiles, they also were acceptable to Him. But Cornelius, it must be remembered, was not such a Gentile as Socrates, or Cato, or Aristides, but one who knew the true God, and worshiped Him. (See on verse 4.) Besides, as Cornelius was directed by a vision to send for Peter, who would tell him "what he ought to do" (verse 6), it cannot be supposed that the Apostle, in the first words he utters, would declare that the Gospel, which God had interposed in a miraculous manner, to make known not the centurion, was not

necessary to him, because there were other means, by which the Divine favor might be obtained—in other words, that the great end of religion might be accomplished without his instructions. Before the words can be applied to mere heathen, therefore, it must be proved that a person, by unassisted reason, may acquire the knowledge of the true God, and, without the aid of supernatural grace, may perform such works as the unerring Judge, “by whom actions are weighed,” will accept. “I think the text proves,” says *Doddridge*, “that God would sooner send an angel to direct pious and upright persons to the knowledge of the Gospel, than suffer them to perish by ignorance of it. But so far from intimating that such persons may be found among those that reject Christianity . . . it determines nothing as to their existence in every nation.”

<sup>36</sup> The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all.)  
<sup>a</sup>Isa. lvii. 19; Col. i. 20. <sup>c</sup>Ps. xxiv. 7-10; Matt. xxviii. 18; Rom. xiv. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 20, 22; 1 Peter iii. 22; Rev. xvii. 14.

*Peace*—salvation in general—the glad tidings of the Gospel. *Of all*—masculine, not neuter: Lord of all men, and therefore of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. This description evidently refers not to God, but to Jesus Christ, the last antecedent: He is the Supreme Head and King of men.

<sup>37</sup> That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached:

*Know*. The word so rendered, does not here mean full and accurate knowledge, but, in a popular way, “*hear and know*,” as in *ii. 22, v. 7, ix. 13*. Philip had preached at Cesarea. (*viii. 42*.) “*That word*”—the report concerning Jesus they had heard.

<sup>38</sup> How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him.  
<sup>a</sup>Luke iv. 18. <sup>b</sup>Heb. i. 9. <sup>c</sup>Matt. xiii. 15. <sup>d</sup>John iii. 8. <sup>e</sup>John iii. 2.

*Jesus* transfers the mind from the Gospel history to the personal subject of it. *Of (or, from) Nazareth*, as the place of His residence. (See *Matt. ii. 23*.) *Anointed*, endowed Him with extraordinary spiritual gifts for the performance of His Mediatorial functions, and thus consecrated Him

to His great offices as the Messiah. (See on *i. 2*, and on *iv. 26*.) *With the Holy Ghost and with power, i. e.*, with the power of the Holy Ghost, or with power as a necessary consequence of this endowment. *Who went about, &c.* Jesus did good by His miracles, His ministry, and His example. His *motives* in doing good were pure and perfect. Some men do good for a time, but Jesus *persevered* in doing good. (See *Rom. v. 7, 8; 1 Peter ii. 21*.) Three things are observable in the ministry of our Lord: 1. His unwearied diligence. (*John iv. 34, ix. 4*.) 2. His self-denial. (*Matt. iv. 2; John vi. 16*.) 3. His love for perishing sinners. In order to copy the bright and beautiful example of Jesus, we must have the mind which was in him. (*Phil. ii. 8*.) We cannot imitate His *miracles*. The attempt would be presumptuous. But let us follow Him in diligence and zeal, in pure benevolence, and in disinterested love. Let us go about as we may have opportunity, and do good to all. We should visit the sick, relieve the needy, instruct the ignorant, and direct perishing sinners to Christ. *Healing all those that were oppressed, &c.* His triumph over this form of Satanic agency is singled out as the highest exhibition of His wonder-working power. (See Appendix.) *For God was with him*. This Nicodemus also perceived, and honestly acknowledged. “No man,” said he (*John iii. 2*), “can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him.”

<sup>39</sup> And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree.—<sup>b</sup>Luke xxiv. 18.

*Witnesses*. You know the report, and we are witnesses of the facts. *Whom they slew, &c.* As the truth of the resurrection must depend on the reality of the death of Christ, it was necessary that this should be stated, and shown to rest on the most indubitable evidence. Peter was not ashamed to own that the person whom he preached as the Messiah suffered an ignominious death. The shame of the cross was done away with by the glory of the resurrection.

<sup>40</sup> Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly: 41. Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.  
<sup>a</sup>Matt. xxviii. 1, 2. <sup>b</sup>John xiv. 22. <sup>c</sup>xx. 21. <sup>d</sup>John xv. 16.

*Him God raised up the third day.* He lay long enough under the power of death, to prove that He was dead, and not too long, lest it should be supposed that His disciples had time sufficient to have practiced some deceit or imposture, to prevent which, the Jews took care to have the tomb well guarded, during the whole time He lay there. (See on chap. ii. 27.) *Not to all the people*, for it was impossible without raising a mob. Those who knew Him best were the only persons perfectly qualified to judge, and become witnesses. If they, without any secular motive, and even contrary to every one, testified that He was risen, who can question this fact? No fact is ever attested by a multitude; witnesses are always selected. The *witnesses* were not so by chance, but *chosen before of God.* *Eat and drink.* (See on Luke xxiv. 41; John xxi. 10.)

42. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.  
1. Matt. xxviii. 19, 21. 2. John v. 22, 27; chap. xvii. 31; 2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Peter iv. 5.

*Commanded us*, or peremptorily required us, not leaving it to our discretion, but making it a part of our official duty. *To preach, i. e.*, proclaim, publicly announce, as heralds did. *Testify*—bear witness. *Ordained of God*—by an unchangeable decree. *Quick*, or, living. By the living are meant those who will be alive when Jesus comes to judgment, and by the dead those who lived previously but will then be dead. In naming Christ's office as Judge, the climax of His dignity is testified to, so that there may be held out to the penitent, faith in the atonement through Him. This important truth of the Christian religion the Apostle Paul also explicitly declared to the Athenians, as a chief reason why men should repent and embrace the Gospel. (Chap. xvii. 31.) Our Lord had also taught before His crucifixion, that the final judgment of men was to be a part of His official work (John v. 22, 27), and He had, according to Peter's declaration, instructed His Apostles to bring forward this truth in its due prominence.

43. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.  
1. Luke xxiv. 27, 44, John v. 39. 2. John iii. 14-17; Rom. x. 11.

*Forgiveness through this exalted One*, is the closing note of Peter's beautifully simple

discourse. *To him give all, &c.*—*i. e.*, This is the burden generally, of the prophetic testimony. It was fitter thus to give the spirit of their testimony, than to quote them in detail on such an occasion. But let this Apostolic statement of the evangelical import of the Old Testament writings be devoutly weighed by those who are disposed to rationalize away this element in the Old Testament. *Whosoever believeth, &c.* This was evidently said with reference to the Gentile audience then before him, and formed a noble practical conclusion to the whole discourse. (See Matt. iii. 17, xxvi. 28; Heb. ix. 22; Acts v. 31.) Let not the peculiarities of the preaching of the Apostles, as set forth in verses 36-43, be overlooked. 1. The substance of its testimony—the life, sufferings and resurrection of Christ. 2. The authority by which it is supported—the command of Christ, and the call of all men unto salvation. 3. Its object—the salvation of believers through the peace of Christ. How does Jesus Christ bestow peace? (Verse 36.) 1, As our Prophet (verses 37-39), 2, as our High Priest (verses 39, 43), and, 3, as our King (verses 40-42.)

44. ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.  
1. Chap. iv. 31.

Here is the issue of Peter's sermon. God owned Peter's word, by conferring the Holy Ghost on the hearers, even while he was speaking. This descent of the Spirit was necessary, in order to his admitting Cornelius and his friends into the Church, without the remonstrance of his Jewish brethren who were present. They were not yet prepared for acknowledging the Gentiles, their brethren, without circumcision and submission to Moses' law. It is a blessed and cheering sight, when the servants of God can perceive that the word takes hold of their hearers, and that, through it, the Holy Spirit powerfully influences their hearts.

45. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost: 46. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.—1. Ver. 23. 2. Chap. ii. 4. 3. Chap. viii. 12.

*They of the circumcision . . . were astonished.* The Jews had long ago a proverb

among them, "That the Holy Spirit never rests on a heathen." This *astonishment* shows that notion prevailed even in these Christians, whether the proverb was so old or not. *Gentiles*, literally, *the nations*, *i. e.*, all besides the Jews. We should never yield to a feeling of dissatisfaction, when God bestows His gracious gifts on others, but rather rejoice in their happiness, and praise the Lord for it. *Speak with tongues*, &c. Various and foreign languages. This is the Pentecost of the Gentiles. What is called (chap. ii. 11) "speaking the wonderful (or mighty) works of God," is here more concisely expressed, *magnifying God*, *i. e.*, setting forth His greatness. *Can any man forbid water*, &c. Peter at once makes the practical application: If these men have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, that is, believers belonging to Israel, who then can refuse the water, so that they shall not be baptized? The reason here assigned is, that they who had received the baptism of the Spirit must certainly be fit for that of water. Why should the sign be withheld from those who were possessed of the thing signified? If God was willing to accept them as converted Gentiles, why should man insist upon their

coming forward as converted Jews? *He commanded them to be baptized*. Peter did not baptize them himself, but ordered others to perform that ceremony. So our Lord did not Himself baptize, and it was Paul's usual custom to employ others to administer baptism. (See John iv. 2. 1 Cor. i. 14, v. 17). "As none of these expressions" (says an able commentator, in reference to the passages just pointed to) "can be intended to detract from the value and importance of the rite in question, they may be best explained as warning us against the error of exalting this part of the Christian system to a disproportionate importance, which may be just as superstitious as the eucharistical corruptions of Popery, or the hierarchical excesses of prelacy. *In the name of the Lord*. That is, as disciples of the Lord Jesus, acknowledging Him as their Lord. Baptism in His name was the public avowal of their being His disciples. The Church should never refuse to recognize him to whom God has given the certificate of His Spirit. *Tarry certain days*—remain. And as we are in the next chapter informed, Peter complied with the request: he remained and did eat with them. (xi. 3.)

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1. Who was Cornelius? 2. What was his character? 3. What did he see? 4. What did the angel say to him?
  5. What did Cornelius do? 6. As the messengers drew near to Joppa where was Peter? 7. What did he see in the trance? 8. What did he hear? 9. What was the meaning of the vision? 10. What did the Spirit say to Peter? 11. State the interview between Peter and the messengers. 12. How did Cornelius receive Peter? 13. What did he say to him? 14. What did Peter say in reply? 15. What great event took place "while Peter yet spake these words?" 16. What is said about baptism?

## CHAPTER XI.

1 Peter, being accused for going in to the Gentiles, smaketh his defence, 18 which is accepted, 19 The gospel being spread into Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, Barnabas is sent to confirm them, 20 The disciples there are first called Christians, 21 They send relief to the brethren in Judea in time of famine, 22

AND the apostles and brethren, that were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, 3. Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. 4. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying; 5. I was in the city of Joppa, praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, 6. certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me; 6. Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 7. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. 8. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. 9. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. 10. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cesarea unto me. 12. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house. 13. And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14. Who shall tell thee these words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. 15. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost tell on them, as soon as at the beginning. 16. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, I have indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. 17. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God? 18. When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

<sup>a</sup>x. 23. <sup>b</sup>Gal. ii. 12; chap. x. 9, &c. <sup>c</sup>Job. ex. 23. <sup>d</sup>Gal. ii. 12. <sup>e</sup>Luke i. 3. <sup>f</sup>x. 10. <sup>g</sup>ex. 15. <sup>h</sup>x. 19. <sup>i</sup>x. 30.

The descent of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles at Cesarea, and their reception into the Church, was an event so extraordinary that the tidings of it would soon reach the ears of the other "apostles and brethren," who were still resident in Judea. They that were of the circumcision, that is, the believing Jews. These held the opinion common to the Pharisees, that it was not lawful to eat with Gentiles, but in this they had no countenance from the law of Moses. Contended with him. They held him not for a pope, but a heretic. What will become of Moses, the law, and the temple if he, the most eminent of the Apostles, lowers himself to the level of Saul of Tarsus, and allows baptism to be, not the sequence, but the substitute of circumcision!

Thou wentest in, &c. It can scarcely be doubted that there was a great deal of that miserable, narrow, and malign feeling peculiar to intolerant religionists, expressed to Peter on this occasion. Peter

rehearsed, &c. (From 4 to 16; see on x. 10-18, &c.) He listened attentively to what was spoken, nor, when he replied, did a whisper of censure escape his lips. He was calm, generous, dignified, and said that which was best adapted to justify himself and conciliate them. His account differs a little in form from the facts recorded in the preceding chapter, but the difference being simply formal, serves to show his consciousness of accuracy. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift, &c. This is the logic of his address. He regarded the facts as showing unmistakably that it was God's will that the Gentiles should have the Gospel, and that therefore it would have been the utmost presumption on his part to have attempted to withstand that will. When they heard these things they held their peace. His argument was conclusive and satisfactory; and more than this, for it is said they glorified God, "they devoutly rejoiced in the new conviction that God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." In consequence of Peter's statement, "the objectors not only expressed themselves satisfied, so that they in silence withdrew their reproaches, but they glorified God, because that God had also to the Gentiles given repentance unto life. The inseparable connection between repentance and eternal life should not pass unnoticed. Yet repentance is no recompense to God, it is not the thing that shall make Him our friend, for He "grants," or gives this repentance. But it is necessary to make us capable of relishing the pleasures of His friendship, which we can never do if we do not turn to Him.

19. ¶ Now they which were scattered abroad, upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21. And the multitude of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

<sup>1</sup>Chap. viii. 1. <sup>2</sup>Matt. x. 6. <sup>3</sup>Chap. vi. 1, ix. 29. <sup>4</sup>Luke i. 66. <sup>5</sup>Chap. xv. 19; 1 Thes. i. 9.

Now they which were scattered abroad. Luke here resumes his account of the Christians who had become fugitives in consequence of the hostility of which Stephen, and, immediately afterward, the Church in general, had been the objects. Phenice, properly the strip of coast, about 120 miles

long, extending from the river Eleutherus (near Aradus), to a little south of Tyre, and belonging at this time to the province of Syria. (See xv. 3, xxi. 2.) Its principal cities were Tripolis, Byblos, Sidon, Tyre and Berytos. It is a fertile territory, beginning with the uplands at the foot of Lebanon, and sloping to the sea, and held a distinguished position for commerce from the very earliest times. *Cyprus* is an island near the north-east angle of the Mediterranean Sea, next to Sicily in size, remarkable for its richness of soil and the dissoluteness of its inhabitants. In Christian history it is celebrated as the birthplace of Barnabas, and as one of the fields of Paul's memorable labors.

*Antioch.* Here we have the first notice of this important city. Antioch was the capital of Syria, and the residence of the Roman governors of that province. It was founded by Seleucus Nicator, and named after his father, Antiochus. It was almost an oriental Rome, in which all the forms of the civilized life of the empire found a representative. *Preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only*, who were dispersed in all those parts, and had synagogues of their own, they did not yet understand that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs. *Men of Cyprus, i. e., Jews born in Cyprus.* (See ii. 5-9.) *And Cyrene* (See xiii. 1, ii. 10.) These, as well as the Cyprians, were more accustomed to associate with Gentiles. *Grecians.* (See on vi. 1.) *Preaching the Lord Jesus*—the Gospel concerning Jesus, wherever they came. This they did, even though they were not Apostles, nor held any other office in the Church. That they did not act presumptuously in adopting this course, was demonstrated by the blessed results stated in the next verse. *The hand of the Lord was with them.* The hand is the organ or instrument of working in man; when it is attributed to God, it denotes His power and help. *A great number believed, &c.*—many more than could have been expected, some of all sorts. They were convinced of the truth of the Gospel, embraced it, and the effect of this was, that they turned away from all their former grounds of confidence, to trust only in the righteousness of Christ—turned from their

loose, careless, carnal way of living, to a spiritual, holy, heavenly life.

22. ¶ Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch, 23. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 21. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord. cix. 27. 13 John. iv.—xiii. 43, xiv. 22. Ps. xvii. 3, 2 Cor. i. 17. Prov. xxiii. 13, 26.

*The Church which was in Jerusalem*, partly from its seniority, partly from its local situation, and partly from its connection with the Apostles, still continued to be the center of influence to the Christian world. *Sent . . . . Barnabas . . . . as far as Antioch.* (See on verse 19.) It is here implied that on the way to Antioch he found Churches to visit. It was in the first instance, no doubt, a mission of inquiry, and no one could be more suitable to enquire into the proceedings of those Cyprians and Cyrenians than one who was himself a "Grecian" of Cyprus (iv. 36), and "a son of consolation." (See on iv. 36, and ix. 27.) In those places where the work of God prospers, the Church should send ministerial help, to promote and build up that work. An infant Church is placed in critical circumstances. Young converts have but little light; they are weak and feeble, their carnal friends and relations oppose them, and they are opposed by all the powers of darkness.

*Had seen the grace of God.* Grace means Divine influence, and is so called because it is derived from the free and unreserved communication of God. As grace is an internal principle, it is, of course, discernible only in its effects. Experience is valuable; there is no real religion without it, and it is from our inward dispositions we must chiefly assure our minds before God; but as others cannot read our hearts, only our lives, therefore in our lives our godliness must appear. *Was glad.* He rejoiced, 1. As a man of piety. Piety is, so to speak, absorbed in the promotion of God's glory, and whenever a man is converted, there is one in whom He is glorified. 2. As a man of benevolence. He knew that the body is nothing as compared to the soul, and that every subject of divine grace is not only blessed in himself, but he is made a blessing to others. 3. As

a minister, who regarded salvation as the very end of his office, the design of his labors. 4. His pleasure was disinterested. Barnabas could rejoice, though he had not been the means of producing here the results in which he took so much pleasure. Some, alas, cannot rejoice to see things done by others, especially if they do not belong to their own communion, if they cannot pronounce the shibboleth of their party. *Echorted them all*—young, old, those who had just entered a religious course, and those who had been walking in it; the weak and wavering in the faith, and the strong and established. None must put off his armor till he has quitted the field. *Purpose of heart, i. e.*, a purpose sincere, earnest. Religion is a poor business unless the heart be in it; but everything will follow the heart. *They would cleave unto the Lord*—adhere to Jesus—as their Teacher, who should lead them into all truth; as their Saviour, whose blood cleansed them from all sin, and whose righteousness justified them before God, and gave them access with confidence; as their Helper, in every duty and conflict, without whom they could do nothing, and through whose strength they could do all things; as their Comforter, the consolation of Israel; as their Example, whose life was to be made manifest in their mortal bodies; and as their Master, who had every claim upon them, having bought them with a price, and rescued them from their enemies, and to whom as their rightful Owner they had given themselves, body, soul and spirit.

Three things are here said of Barnabas in a way of commendation: 1. *He was a good man.* The life of this great and good man, as related in other parts of Scripture, abundantly confirms the character here given him. He sold his possessions for the support of the infant cause of Christ. (iv. 36, 37, ix. 27.) As he loved Jesus, so he loved His people. He appears to have possessed much of the tender and affectionate, being called “a son of consolation.” Assiduous in discovering and encouraging the first dawns of God’s work, he was the first person that introduced Saul into the company of the disciples. (See on next verse.) 2. He was *full of the Holy Ghost.* This expression

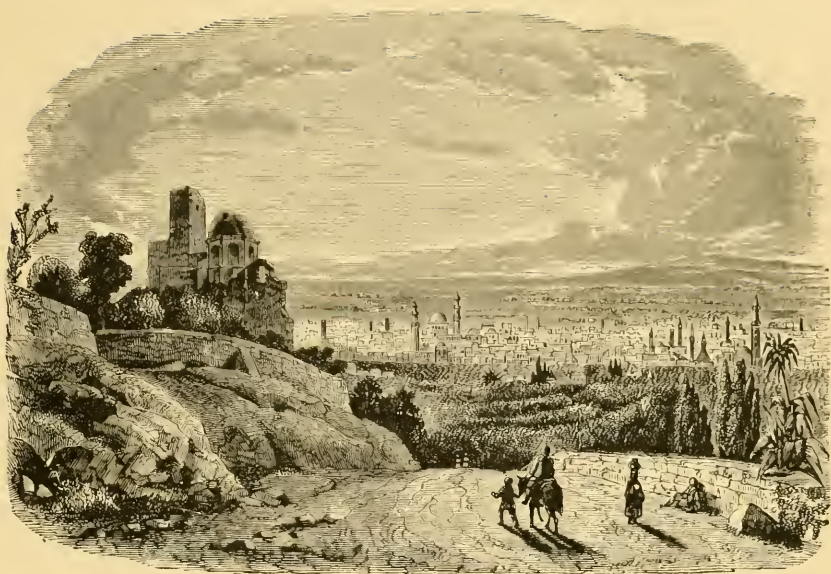
here signifies His indwelling and ordinary operations, or what is elsewhere called “an unction from the Holy One.” (See Gal. v. 22, 23.) The word *full* is not here to be understood in an unlimited sense, but in a comparative sense, and denotes that he was habitually and eminently under the Spirit’s influence. 3. He was *full of faith.* This term appears, in this connection, to include, at least, the three following ideas: Having the mind occupied by Divine sentiment, being rooted and grounded in the truth of the Gospel, and daily living upon it. The first of these ideas distinguished him from those characters whose minds are void of principle, the next, from such as are always hovering upon the borders of skepticism, and the last, from those who, though they have no manner of doubts about the truth of the doctrines of the Gospel, yet scarcely ever, if at all, feel their vital influence upon their hearts and lives. *And much people was added unto the Lord.* The labors of Barnabas resulted also in the accession of new believers. It may be laid down as a rule, which both Scripture and experience will confirm, that *eminent spirituality in a minister is usually attended with eminent usefulness.* We do not say their usefulness depends upon their spirituality, as an effect depends upon its cause, nor yet that it is always in proportion to it. God is a Sovereign, and frequently sees proper to convince them of it, in variously bestowing His blessing on the means of grace. But yet He is not wanting in giving encouragement to what He approves, wherever it is found. Our want of usefulness is often to be ascribed to our want of spirituality, much oftener than to our want of talents.

25. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26. And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

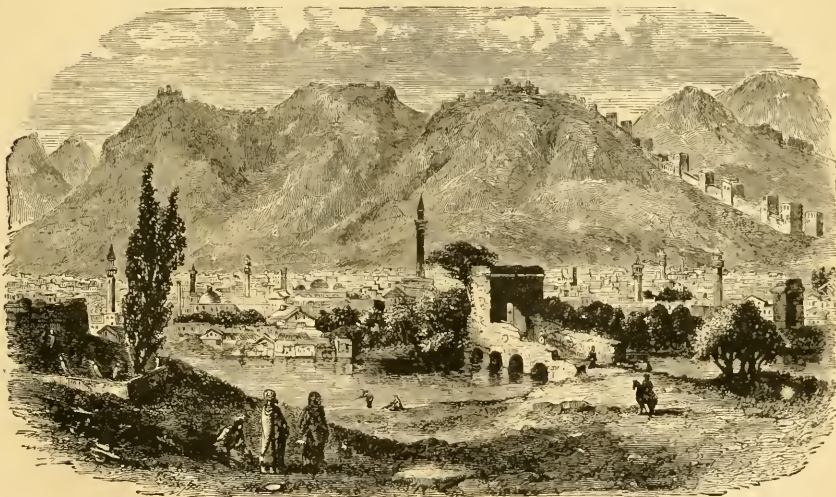
\*Chap. ix. 27, 30. \*Matt. xxviii. 19.

*To seek Saul, &c.* Here is additional evidence of the goodness of Barnabas. As a preacher he does not seem to have been equal to the Apostle Paul, yet so far was he from caring about being eclipsed by Paul’s superior abilities, that he went in search of him, and brought him to Antioch, to assist him in the work of the Lord. How worthy this example of imitation!





DAMASCUS.



ANTIOCH IN SYRIA.

If this spirit was more common, might it not be hoped that, according to God's usual manner of working, more *people would be added to the Lord?* *A whole year, viz.:* that of A. D. 44. The Apostle had spent the intervening years, from A. D. 39 to 44, in Syria and Cilicia. *Assembled themselves, &c., i. e.,* they met in (and with) the Church, for worship and instruction. *Taught much people,* or more exactly *a sufficient crowd,* implying that their hearers were not only numerous, but of various classes and descriptions. *And the disciples were called, &c.* Was the name "Christians" given by human or Divine authority? On this the Scriptures offer no certain information, nor can anything be affirmed with confidence. It is not at all probable an appellation so inoffensive, and even so honorable, originated with their enemies, they would have invented one that was more opprobrious. But supposing it to have been assumed first by the disciples themselves, we can scarcely suppose they would have ventured to take a step so important as that of assuming an appellation by which the Church was to be distinguished in all ages, without Divine direction, especially at a time when the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were so common, and in a church where prophets abounded. (See chap. xiii. 1.) Nor is it easy to imagine that they would assume a new appellation without recourse to the prophets for that direction, or that, supposing it to have had no other than a human origin, it would have been so soon and so unanimously adopted by every part of the Christian Church. This opinion receives some countenance from the Greek word here rendered "called," which is not in any other instance applied to the giving a name by human authority. In its genuine import, it bears some relation to an oracle. Names, as they are calculated to give just or false representations of the nature of things, are of considerable importance, so that the affixing one to discriminate the followers of Christ in every period of time seems to have been not unworthy of Divine interposition.

What significance is there in the fact that, not in Jerusalem, the city of the Old

Covenant, the city of the people who were chosen to the exclusion of all others, but in a heathen city, the Eastern centre of Greek fashion and Roman luxury, and not until it was shown that the New Covenant was inclusive of all others—that then and there God's people were first called Christians, and the Church received, under an overruling God, its true and honorable name! What blessed import is there in this name, reminding us, as it does, that those who worthily wear it, have, from a mature deliberation and an unbiased mind, embraced the religion of *Christ*, received His doctrine, believe His promises, and make it their chief and habitual care to shape their lives by His precepts and example! What sad regrets, too, we may add, does this name inspire, as it bears us back from the present divisions of God's people to the happy period when the Church of Christ was "one fold under one Shepherd," and the seamless coat of the Redeemer was of one entire piece from the top to the bottom!

27. † And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28. And there stood up one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar. 29. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwell in Judea: 30. Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. †Chap. ii. 17, xiii. 1; Eph. iv. 11. †Chap. xxi. 10. †Rom. xv. 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 1; 2 Cor. ix. 1, 2.

*Came prophets.* These were evidently endowed by the Holy Spirit, with the power of foretelling future events. The scarcity, predicted by *Agabus*, was to extend *throughout all the world*, as the Roman empire was ostentatiously called. The famine might be very general, and severely felt in the various provinces of the empire, though some places might be less straitened than others. *Eusebius* says of this famine, that it oppressed almost the whole empire, and that it was recorded by historians most averse to our religion; viz. : by *Suetonius*, in the life of *Claudius*, who says, it happened "through a long barrenness." *Josephus* says that it raged so much in Judea . . . . . that many perished for want of victuals: and *Dion Cassius*, that it was a very great famine. *In the days, or, reign, of Claudius Cesar.* *Claudius* reigned thirteen years, from the year 41 to 54. In his reign, and

therefore within these years (probably in the years 44 to 45), this famine took place. It is not implied that this prediction of *Agabus* was made before *Claudius* commenced to reign, but it is merely an intimation by the historian when the famine occurred. *Every man*. There was not one disciple who did not contribute something. The new love glowed in every heart, and found its expression in the gift of every hand. *According to his ability*. Not according to what other people did, or what other people expected, but "according to his ability." Each did the utmost he could. *Determined to send relief, &c.* The beneficence was prompt. They did not postpone sending the relief, or adjourn it for future consideration: the thing was done at once. *Sent it to the elders*—an office well-known to be borrowed from the synagogue, after the model of which, and not at all of the temple, the Christian Churches were constituted by the Apostles. *By the hands of Barnabas and Saul*. This was Saul's second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. It is thus evident that the disciples ar-

ranged judiciously for the distribution of the relief they sent, in a most effective way. Here, then, we have a beautiful display of that philanthropy which the ancient seers beheld as the light of coming ages, and which has ever been the inspiration of the godly. It is

"That bright chain of love which God hath given,  
Reaching from heart to heart, and thence to heaven."

True faith always manifests its power and efficiency by works of love. (Gal. v. 6.) When indications of the approach of afflictions appear, our first thoughts and efforts should not be solely devoted to the work of adopting precautionary measures in our own behalf, but should also refer to others, whose situation may be more exposed than our own. Cases often occur like that of the widow of Sarepta (Luke iv. 26; 1 Kings xvii. 9), who was first of all directed to bestow her limited store on the prophet *Elijah*, but who was abundantly afterward consoled by the provision which was made for her and her son. Such will be the experience of those in whose hearts faith and love abide.

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1. Who contended with Peter at Jerusalem? 2. Why? 3. What did Peter say? 4. What effect was produced by his address? 5. What is said about "those which were scattered abroad?" 6. What success had they in preaching? 7. Whom did the church in Jerusalem send forth to Antioch? 8. What is said of Barnabas "when he came, and had seen the grace of God?" 9. What was the character of Barnabas? 10. Where did Barnabas then go? 11. How long did he and Saul labor at Antioch? 12. What were the disciples called first in Antioch? 13. Who came from Jerusalem unto Antioch? 14. Who predicted a great dearth? 15. Did it come to pass? 16. What did the disciples determine to do? 17. By whose hands was the "relief" sent to the elders?

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## CHAPTER XII.

<sup>1</sup> King Herod persecuteth the Christians, killeth James, and imprisoneth Peter; whom an angel delivereth upon the prayers of the church. <sup>20</sup> In his pride taking to himself the honour due to God, he is stricken by an angel, and dieth miserably. <sup>24</sup> After his death, the word of God prospereth.

**N**OW about that time, Herod the king, stretched forth his hands, to vex certain of the church.  
<sup>a</sup>Or, began.

About that time, i. e., when Barnabas and Saul went to Jerusalem, as has just been related. This Herod was the grandson of Herod the Great, by his son Aristobulus, and nephew to Herod Antipas. The royal title of the family expired with the

first Herod, but was restored to this man, whom the Roman emperor constituted king of Judea. He was praised by the Jews for his attachment to their laws and nation. He began to persecute, by vexing certain of the Church, perhaps by fines and imprisonments, but a nobler sacrifice was necessary to appease his rage, and to gratify his sanguinary counselors.

<sup>2</sup> And he killed James <sup>b</sup>the brother of John with the sword.—<sup>b</sup>Matt. iv. 21, xx. 23.

*James*, one of the Apostles whom Jesus honored with peculiar intimacy. (See Ap-

pendix.) He is here called *the brother of John* to distinguish him from James the son of Cleopas. *Killed . . . . with the sword, i. e.,* beheaded him, for he had the power of life and death, as had the Roman procurators before him. Our Lord predicted (Mark x. 35-40) that the sons of Zebedee would be called to suffer great affliction with Him. This, as we see, was fulfilled in the elder, in the violent death he now suffered.

3. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

xxiv. 27. John xxi. 18. Ex. xii. 14, 15.

*Saw it pleased the Jews.* To obtain popular applause was, as *Josaphus* tells us, one of the chief motives which influenced the conduct of Herod; for this reason he sacrificed the life of James, and now desired to sacrifice the life of Peter. It was pleasing to the Jews. The people were now hostile to the Christians. The Pharisees, the popular faction, had declared against them. Perhaps observing the numerous conversions to Christianity, they regarded the Jewish religion as in danger, and looked upon Christians in general as they did on Stephen, as blasphemers of Moses and of God. Such are too often the motives that influence the actions of ambitious men, when exalted to power; they do not so much consider what is right and just, as what may render them popular and pleasing. *Then were the days of unleavened bread.* For seven days at the feast of the Passover the Jews had to eat unleavened bread. (Ex. xii. 15.) The passover itself was partaken on the first day, but the feast was continued six days longer, hence it is called "the feast of unleavened bread." (Ex. xii. 13.)

4. And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quarters of soldiers, to keep him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. [For after Easter we should rather read, "after the Passover," i. e., after the whole festival was over. The word in our authorized version is an ecclesiastical term of later date, and ought not to have been employed here.] 5. Peter therefore was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. 6. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the prison. 7. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals; and so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9. And he went out, and followed him, and wist not that it was true, which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. 10. When they were past the first and the second ward,

they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of his own accord, and they went out and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. 11. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. 13. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. 14. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. 15. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. 16. But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. 17. But he beckoning unto them with the hand, to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go, shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place. 18. Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. 19. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Cesarea, and there abode.

1 Or, instant and earnest prayer was made; 2 Cor. i. ii.; Eph. vi. 18, 19; 1 Thes. v. 17; James, v. 16. 2 Ps. xxxvii. 32, 33; chap. v. 19. 3 Chap. xvi. 26. 4 Ps. cxvii. 1. 5 Chap. x. 3, 17. 6 2 Chron. xvi. 9; Ps. xxxiv. 7; Dan. iii. 28, vi. 22; Job. i. 14. 7 Ps. xxxiii. 18, 19, xxxvii. 16; 2 Cor. i. 10; 2 Peter ii. 9. 8 Verse 5, 9. 9 Or, to ask who was there. 10 Matt. xviii. 10. 11 Chap. xiii. 16. 12 Ps. lxxvi. 16.

*A light shined.* The angel brings to the prisoner no lantern, lamp or candle, yet he brings a *light*, the beaming of his own person. Peter sees by it his prison, his chains, his cloak, his sandals, and his emancipator. *Chains fell from his hands.* Literally, *the chains.* What human hand could have snapped those manacles, and freed him without the knowledge of his guards? Would the shock of an earthquake or the flash of lightning have done it, without injuring him or the soldiers? *Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals, &c.* Here again is personal intelligence. The angel did for Peter what he could not do for himself—break his fetters; but does not do for him what he could do for himself—put on his tunic and mantle. *Wist not that it was true,* actual, as distinguished from a dream or vision. Peter's uncertainty arose from the extraordinary nature of the interposition; it was too strange to be credited. He was bewildered by the scene, unable at the moment to comprehend that what he saw and did was a reality. *And forthwith (suddenly) the angel departed from him.* Hitherto it seemed to Peter as if he were dreaming. But now, when he stood alone in the midst of the city, his consciousness first returned fully and distinctly, and he said, "Now I perceive in truth—and I am sure that I do not deceive myself—that the Lord has sent His angel

and delivered me from the power of Herod and the eager expectation of the Jews, which shall not now be fulfilled." *It is his angel.* The Jews believed tutelary angels were appointed to all men; so did the Gentiles, for *Censorinus* says, "The genius is a god, in whose protection so far as each one is, he lives: it is appointed so assiduous an observer of us, that it is never absent longer than an instant, but accompanies us from birth to the last day of life." (See Matt. xviii. 10.) *Beckoning unto them.* His motive was *haste*: he tells briefly the particulars of his deliverance, and, while it was yet night, hastily departs. *Into another place.* "I see in these words," says *Alford*, "a minute mark of truth in our narrative. Under the circumstances, the place of Peter's retreat would very naturally at the time be kept secret. It probably was unknown to the person from whom the narrative came, or designedly left indefinite." *Now, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers what was become of Peter.* His mysterious deliverance created great excitement and confusion. Fear and wonder filled them with mental tumult "as soon as it was day." Day would reveal the enormity of the night, and the revelation would produce "no small stir," &c. *Now as soon as it was day, &c.* It may easily be imagined that the soldiers who had been commanded to guard the prisoner, and who were responsible for his safe-keeping, were greatly embarrassed when it was day, as they knew not what had become of Peter. And when the diligent search which was instituted, led to no results, Herod subjected the guards to a trial before a military court, and directed that they should be executed. *From Judea, i. e., from the inland or interior.* Herod resided usually at Jerusalem, and went now to Cesarea, as *Josephus* informs us, to preside at the public games in honor of the Emperor Claudius.

Observe, 1. *The miraculous deliverance.* The Romans secured their prisoners in a singular way. A quaternion, or four soldiers, were appointed to mount guard over them, and four such quaternions were considered indispensable to watch the cell, and the approaches to it, as well as

to afford the means of relieving those whose duty it was to be in immediate attendance on the prisoners, by a regular night watch of three hours each. Around the right arm of the criminal was fastened a pretty long chain, while the other end was attached to the left of a soldier, so that a guard was bound to the prisoner, and was under the necessity of attending and moving with him in every change of place, and almost every variety of posture. When the security of the prisoner was of more than ordinary importance, two guards were appointed, one on each side, having a chain attached to both hands; and it was in this irksome and painful manner that Peter was fettered, with a chain both on his right and left arm, extending to two guards, on either side, on the occasion of the angelic visitant so unexpectedly releasing him from confinement. So strict was the discipline to which soldiers on guard were subjected, that if, by any means, the prisoner who was chained to them was permitted to escape, their negligence was visited with capital punishment, and hence we can easily imagine the indescribable state of confusion and terror into which the guards were thrown the next morning, when they found that the Apostle had disappeared. No clanking of the chains, no harsh grating of the ponderous doors, no sound of footsteps betrayed the motions of Peter, as he followed his supernatural guide, and, accordingly, as neither a clue could be obtained of the prisoner's retreat, nor an account given of his mode of escape, except that he had effected it while they slept, Herod determined to carry the military law into execution, by commanding those who had been appointed to the office of guarding Peter, to be put to death.

Observe, 2. *The state in which Peter was found when his deliverance came*—he was sleeping. What an instance of sublime composure this! Think of the place A prison—a dark, filthy cell. Think of his position. Chained to two soldiers—linked to two wretches from whom his nature must have recoiled with horror. Think of those who were watching him—sixteen soldiers. Think of the time. It was the night when Herod intended to bring him forth and put

him to death. Peter must have been aware of his danger. He knew that the wretch who was "vexing the Church," who had just killed James, and who imprisoned him, intended to take away his life. Yet he sleeps, sleeps far sweeter and safer than his bloody persecutor could sleep that night. His sleeping in these circumstances suggests three things: First, A gracious Providence. Sleep is one of the choicest of the temporal gifts of God. How it reinvigorates the frame! What more did Peter want than sleep? It was the right and needful thing for the season, sleep for the night. "He giveth His beloved sleep." Secondly, An approving conscience. A condemning conscience would have kept sleep away. Peter knew that he was engaged in the right work. Thirdly, A sense of security. He had no fear or alarm about the future. He had committed himself to the care of heaven. He felt himself safe in the hands of his Master. He knew that Christ had said, "I give unto my sheep eternal life." What need we fear when this is done? "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Observe, 3. *The efficacy of united, believing and persevering prayer.* Whilst Peter was in prison, "prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him." Prayer is the refuge and solace of those who are in any trouble. It is, indeed, one of the designs of affliction to excite us to pray more frequently and earnestly. And intercession or praying for others, as well as for ourselves, is a duty. Thus our Lord teaches us, when we pray, to say, "Our Father," and "give us day by day *our* daily bread." Thus we are commanded to pray for all men—and surely, therefore, for the servants of Christ, and those who are suffering according to the will of God. The Church did not draw up a petition and present it to God. They go at once, not to the jailer, but the judge, not to the servant, but to the Lord of all. Let us imitate their example. Let us, when we wish even to carry an enterprise with our fellow-creatures, engage the Lord on our side, and follow the admonition of David, who had often tried the measure and found it successful: "Commit thy way unto the

Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." Nor, as it was on the very night preceding the day that Herod would have brought Peter forth for execution that his deliverance was effected, let us despair if the Divine interposition in our behalf is delayed, as it was in the case of the woman of Canaan, who cried to Jesus so piteously on behalf of her daughter, or of Abraham, when Isaac was even bound and laid on the altar, and the knife was uplifted.

"Just in the last distressing hour,  
The Lord displays delivering power;  
The mount of danger is the place  
Where we shall see surprising grace."

Observe, 4. *The instrument employed in the rescue.* "The angel of the Lord came upon him." The age of miracles is past. Angels do not now come in a visible manner, to perform services to the saints but their agency is as real and beneficent as ever. "They are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." They defend the people of God against the incursions of their spiritual adversaries, and preserve them from dangers which are often unperceived. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." These glorious creatures do not disdain to minister to man, who was made a little lower than they. His nature, united to the Son of God, reigns above all principalities, and powers on the throne of the universe, and every believer can call the Lord of angels his friend and brother. Perhaps, those remarkable events, which sometimes occur in the history of the saints, and for which it is difficult to assign any satisfactory cause, those wonderful escapes, those inexplicable impressions on the mind, those unexpected revolutions in their favor, the sudden and unlooked-for patronage of the wicked, the unaccountable failure of the designs of their enemies, the surprising accomplishment of their hopes, when the ordinary means had been tried in vain, and every appearance seemed to justify despair, may be referred to the secret operation of their powerful and vigilant guardians.

Observe, 5. *How strongly Peter's bondage represents the case of man by nature.* A cap-

tive of Satan—fast bound in the prison of an unconverted state, tied down to earth by a thousand chains of sinful propensities, and watched by infernal spirits! What but the same power which released Peter could release this spiritual prisoner? What but the light of God's Spirit shining into his heart could dispel the moral darkness? What but the force of Omnipotence could burst his chains of sin? And what but Almighty Providence could open for him an easy passage through the midst of opposing difficulties? All that God did, *literally*, for Peter, He does, *spiritually*, for those whom He delivers from Satan's bondage. Do we feel that we are in this pitiable situation? Are we groaning under the yoke of sin? Then are we in a fair way of being rescued, for whenever a person renounces all dependence on himself, realizes his moral helplessness, and cries, through Jesus, for deliverance, the Lord will assuredly hear, and answer him. And if we have any friend in this captive state, who is yet unconscious of his danger, let us do as the disciples did—pray fervently—and the Lord who released Peter, in answer to prayer, may likewise answer ours.

20. † And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain, their friend, desired peace, because their country was nourished by the king's country.  
 †That was over the king's bed-chamber. †Ezek. xxvii. 17.

According to the statement at the close of the last verse, Herod, who resided usually at Jerusalem, went now to Cesarea. This was done, as *Josephus* informs us, to preside at the public games in honor of the Emperor Claudius. Was highly displeased, &c. Herod probably showed his displeasure, the cause of which is unknown, by putting restrictions on the commerce of Tyre and Sidon (which were then subject to the Romans), preventing them from obtaining supplies from Judea, and closing his ports against them. Having made Blastus, &c. Having conciliated Blastus, probably, by means of a bribe. Blastus is a Roman name, and Herod being long resident in Rome, it is not improbable that he would have a Roman as his chief steward. Desired peace, &c. Peace is not here opposed to war, but to alienation—reconciliation. Phœnicia being a

district of narrow limits, depended upon the adjoining countries for its supplies of grain. It seems from the days of Solomon to have been specially dependent on Palestine. (1 Kings v. 11.) Besides, Judea must have been one of the principal countries where the Phœnicians disposed of their goods. The splendid harbor of Cesarea also must have been most convenient for their numerous ships. It was therefore their policy to live on good terms with Herod Agrippa, as it was in his power to cripple their trade, and to stint them in their supplies of grain.

21. And upon a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22. And the people gave a shout, saying It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. 23. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.—v. Jude 16.

The Jewish historian says that Herod's robe was richly wrought with silver, which, reflecting the rays of the rising sun with an unusual splendor, gave his flatterers an occasion of complimenting him with the title of a deity, which he did not reject, as he ought to have done, with abhorrence, and that immediately he was seized with exquisite racking tortures in his bowels, so that he was compelled, before he left the place, to own his folly in admitting such compliments. Five days after, he expired in violent agonies. The angel of the Lord smote him. Angels are friends or foes, according as they have the friends or foes of God before them. Peter, who is chained, guarded, and condemned to death, is rescued. Herod, sitting on his throne, surrounded by courtiers, and worshiped by the people, is punished. Who would not, in both cases, adore the ways of God?

24. † But the word of God grew and multiplied.  
 †Col. i. 6.

There is something inconceivably delightful and sublime in these words, considering their context. The enemies of God and His Son shall perish, but His Gospel shall grow by their opposition, and eternally triumph. The Word of the Lord is incorruptible seed; no one can deprive it of its power to produce fruit.

25. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.  
 †or, charge. xi. 23, 30.

Barnabas and Saul, who were previously mentioned last in xi. 30. The connection

between that verse and the one before us, makes it highly probable, if not entirely certain, that the intervening narrative records events which took place during this official visit to Judea. *Returned from Jerusalem, i. e.*, made that their last point of departure. *Barnabas and Saul* is still the order of the names, and so continues,

until the public recognition or appearance of the latter in the character of an Apostle. *John* was a relative of *Barnabas*, as we learn from Col. iv. 10, and this relationship may have led to the present connection. He appears next in the history as their associate in missionary labors. (xiii. 5.)

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1. What vexed certain of the church? 2. Whom did Herod kill? 3. How? 4. What did he do to Peter? 5. By whom was prayer made for Peter? 6. In what state was he when Herod would have brought him forth? 7. What is said of "the angel of the Lord?" 8. Describe Peter's release from prison. 9. What is said of him when he "was come to himself?" 10. Where did he then go to? 11. State how he gained access to the house of Mary? 12. What did he say to those gathered there? 13. When Herod could not find Peter what did he do to the keepers of the prison? 14. What is said of the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon? 15. Why did the angel of the Lord smite Herod? 16. What is said of the Word of God?
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### CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Paul and Barnabas are chosen to go to the Gentiles.* 7 *Of Sergius Paulus, and Elymas the sorcerer.* 14 *Paul preaches at Antioch, that Jesus is Christ.* 42 *The Gentiles believe:* 45 *but the Jews gainsay and blaspheme:* 46 *whereupon they turn to the Gentiles.* 48 *As many as were ordained to life believed.*

The first seven chapters of this book might be entitled, *The Church among the Jews*; the next five (viii.-xii.) *The Church in transition from Jews to Gentiles*, and the last sixteen, beginning with the present chapter, *The Church among the Gentiles*.

NOW there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as *Barnabas*, and *Simeon* that was called *Niger*, and *Lucius* of *Cyrene*, and *Manaen*, which had been brought up with *Herod* the tetrarch, and *Saul*.—Or, *Herod's foster-brother*.

The mention of prophets and teachers presupposes the existence of a flourishing Church at Antioch, a Church composed probably rather of Gentile than of Jewish Christians. *Prophets*—those who were gifted with inspiration, and delivered Divine communications to the Church. *Teachers*—those who devoted themselves to the work of instruction. *Barnabas* is first named, probably because the eldest. *Simeon* is one of those Jews who bore a Latin surname in addition to their Hebrew name, like *John*, whose surname is *Mark*, mentioned in xii. 25, and like *Saul* himself. Of this man we find no mention elsewhere. The name *Niger* is of Roman origin, signifying *black*, and was probably added to his

original name by some Roman acquaintance. *Lucius*, probably the same as is mentioned in Rom. xvi. 21, was a native of *Cyrene*, that African city abounding with Jews, and which sent to Jerusalem our Saviour's cross-bearer. *Manaen* is a Hellenistic form of the Hebrew *Menahem*. (2 Kings xv. 14.) *Manaen* is spoken of as the foster-brother of *Herod the tetrarch*. This was *Herod Antipas*, the tetrarch of Galilee, and since we learn from *Josephus* that this *Herod* and his brother *Archelaus* were children of the same mother, and afterward educated at Rome, it is probable that this Christian prophet or teacher had spent his early childhood with these princes, who were now both banished from Palestine to the banks of the Rhine. Let us not pass this slightly over. What different courses do men take who were once in the same condition! Here we see *Herod* and *Manaen*, brought up together in the same house; the one becoming a profligate, a persecutor, the actual murderer of *James*, and the intentional murderer of *Peter*, awfully ending his course, being smitten of an angel of the Lord, and eaten of worms, the other becoming a disciple of *Jesus*, and a preacher of the Gospel. So diverse were the characters of these two individuals, brought up together,



playing in the same room, hearing the same voices, and surrounded with the same examples, during the most impressive period of life!

2. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

<sup>1</sup>Gal. i. 15. <sup>2</sup>1 Tim. ii. 7.

As they ministered to the Lord, &c.—as they were engaged in religious services, particularly prayer. The mention of *fasting*, in this connection, seems to intimate that the occasion was one of peculiar solemnity, probably having reference to some anticipated efforts for spreading the Gospel. *The Holy Ghost said.* While they were thus engaged, perhaps to all at once by audible communication, or by special revelation to some one among them. *Separate,* The verb contains the idea both of selection and consecration. *Me, for me, or to me, i. e.,* for the Holy Spirit. The Spirit makes the revelation, selects the missionaries, assigns to them their work. The personality of the agent may be inferred from such acts. The command in this form was addressed to the associates of Barnabas and Saul, but the latter would hear the same voice pointing out to them their duty and directing them to perform the service laid upon them. *Called them, i. e.,* Barnabas and Saul, but not the rest of you. This work was not to supersede or take the place of the stated ministry, but to be superadded to it.

3. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

The immediate consecration and dismissal of the two men, demonstrates that their associates had clearly understood the revelation of the Spirit. While fasting and praying, they laid their hands on both—solemnly commended them, their journey, and its great object, to the protection and the grace of God (xiv. 26), and thus sent them forth.

4. So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

*Departed,* rather, *went down* from Antioch, which was inland, to *Seleucia*, which was near the coast. Seleucia, built by Seleucus Nicator about B. C. 300, was a strong and almost impregnable city on the Orontes, about four miles from its mouth. It was the port of Antioch, and was about

sixteen miles distant from it by land, and about forty by the river, on account of its windings. *Thence they sailed to Cyprus.* This large and fertile island, situated off Syria, nearly opposite to Seleucia, is about forty-eight miles distant from the coast, and may be seen from the mouth of the Orontes. It is about 130 miles in length, and fifty in its greatest breadth. In ancient times it was remarkable for its fruitfulness, being celebrated for its wine, wheat, oil, pomegranates, figs and honey. In the time of the Apostles it had many considerable cities, of which Citium, Salamis, and Paphos were the principal. If the sentence of excommunication, which had been published against those who confessed Jesus to be the Christ, was still in force (John xi. 57), it is evident that it was little noticed at a distance from Jerusalem: for the Apostles were constantly allowed to preach in the synagogues. John and Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas, to perform such services by their direction, as he was capable of, with a view, no doubt, of his being employed more and more as a preacher of the Gospel.

6. And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: 7. Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man, who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 8. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him. 9. And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 10. And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 11. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

<sup>2</sup>1 Tim. iii. 8.

*Unto Paphos.* (See on verse 4.) This place was situated on the western extremity of Cyprus, and was famous for its luxury and licentiousness. It contained a splendid temple, dedicated to Venus, whose worship was of the most dissolute character. *A certain sorcerer.* One of a numerous class of impostors who, at this time of general unbelief, were encouraged even by cultivated Romans. (See on viii. 9.) *A false prophet (and) a Jew,* or a *Jewish false prophet*, as the last word in Greek may be either an adjective or a substantive. This man was, therefore, not a heathen sorcerer, like Simon Magus, but a Jewish renegade, or still more probably a

professed Jew, but falsely claiming inspiration. *The deputy*—Roman deputy—*of the country*, the island of Cyprus. *A prudent man*, &c. How remarkably does the application of terms, by the mouth of the Spirit of God, differ from their application by the mouth of the world! If we can conceive an instance of what the world would term the height of imprudence, we have it here. A Roman governor of high rank, condescending to send for the teachers of a new religion, for men who were preaching certain doctrines promulged by one Jesus, who had suffered as a criminal under the Roman governor of Judea, and desiring to hear from them the word of God! The strong probability that if he received it, he would lose not only his office, but his life, the certainty that if he even rejected it, he would seriously injure his character among his Gentile friends by the inquiry, would have been quite sufficient to stigmatize him in the eyes of the world as a most imprudent and injudicious man. Yet the Spirit of God has declared this man to be a “prudent man.” And surely the term is most appropriately applied, for can there be a better evidence of prudence than passing onward as we know ourselves to be, to a state of boundless existence beyond the grave, seriously to inquire, whether the faith which we profess, the religion to which we belong, be indeed the word of God, and sufficient to carry us safely into the eternal mansions?

*Elymas the sorcerer* (for so is his name by interpretation), or, for so his name signifies. These two appellations refer to his assumed character, not his proper name; that was *Bar-jesus*, son of Joshua. *Saul*, (who is also called Paul.) The historian from this period distinguishes the Apostle by the latter name. Learned men have conjectured that this change was made by Saul himself, out of deference to Sergius Paulus, who was perhaps the first idolatrous Gentile, or at least the first person of rank, converted by his instrumentality. It was customary among the Romans to assume the name of a person whom they highly esteemed. We have an example of this in Josephus, who adopted the name of Flavius, in compliment to the Emperor

Vespasian, of whom he was a great favorite. But others ascribe the change to the Apostle's new situation. He was hitherto chiefly conversant with the Jews and Syrians, to whom the name of Saul was familiar; but coming, and indeed remaining the greater part of his future life, among the Greeks and Romans, they would pronounce his name Paul, proper names undergoing a partial change in different languages. But in whatever manner the change of the Apostle's name happened, certain it is that ever after he was known among the Gentiles by the name of Paul. From this time, likewise, he is generally mentioned by the historian before Barnabas, because he was now shown to be the principal person, although formerly he was mentioned after Barnabas, because he was the younger disciple, and because his Apostolic authority was not fully understood. What did Paul? “Filled with the Holy Ghost” he “set his eyes on him.” We are not fond of hard names and harsh language, says an eminent divine, and there is nothing we should more guard against than mingling our passions with the cause of truth: “for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” The same actions require not only the same circumstances, but the same warrant. When, therefore, the Samaritans would not receive our Saviour when He was going up to Jerusalem, and James and John seeing this said, “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?” He turned, and rebuked them and said, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.” Paul not only knew the depravity of this wretch, how he misrepresented their doctrine, and calumniated their designs, but he was “filled” with the Spirit as a “spirit of judgment and of burning,” he spoke in the name of the Lord, and as a prophet, whose appeal was sanctioned by the event. Observe, secondly, his denunciation.

*And now behold*, &c. The doom had five characters. It *corresponded with the crime*. Here was blindness for blindness, judicial blindness for criminal blindness. It was

suddenly inflicted. *Immediately there fell upon him a mist and a darkness.* It was comparatively mild. It was only the loss of sight: but Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead. It was temporary. He was not to "see the sun for a season." It was useful. Like other judgments at the beginning of the Gospel, it was to guard Christianity from abuse, and to awaken attention, that others might hear and fear, and turn unto the Lord. And as this was the design, so this was the effect of it. *When he saw what was done, &c.* Had this "prudent man" listened to the dictates of worldly policy, had he attended to the advice of worldly counselors, he certainly never would have arrived at this merciful conclusion; but determining, through the grace of God, to hear and to inquire for himself, he was brought in humility, and faith, and obedience, to Him, whom truly to know is everlasting life.

13. ¶ Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia, and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. Chap. xv. 38.

*Paul and his company.* (See on verse 9.) *Loosed, launched, or sailed.* *Paphos.* (See on verse 6.) The first city they come to is *Perga in Pamphylia*. Pamphylia was a province of Asia Minor, lying over against Cyprus, and Perga was the metropolis of the province, situated not on the sea-coast but on the river Cestrus, about seven miles from its mouth. A bar obstructs the entrance of this river at the present time, but *Strabo* says expressly that it was navigable in his day as far up as Perga. The ruins of this city are to be seen still, sixteen miles north-east of the modern Adalia, or Satalia. They consist of "walls and towers, columns and cornices, a theater and a stadium, a broken aqueduct, and tombs scattered on both sides of the site of the town. Nothing else remains of Perga but the beauty of its natural situation, between and upon the sides of two hills, with an extensive valley in front, watered by the river Cestrus, and backed by the mountains of the Taurus."

*And John departing from them, &c.* What induced John to leave the mission and return to Jerusalem, we are not informed. It is generally supposed that he shrank from the dangers and difficulties of the

mission. That his return was not altogether justifiable, is evident from Paul's afterward refusing to take him on his second missionary journey. (Acts xv. 37-9.) Possibly John was influenced to some extent in his course, by regard for his aged, and, as it appears, pious and widowed mother, then living at Jerusalem. If so, this tends, in some degree, to diminish the culpability of the desertion of the scene of his labors. That he should have remembered the claims which such a parent had upon him before he embarked in the great cause of evangelizing the heathen, is true, that he who "loves father or mother more than Christ, is not worthy of him," is equally certain, but whatever be the verdict which many may pass upon him, who may thus have deserted for a season the work in which he was engaged, from the strength of filial affection, and the love of a tender and perhaps declining parent, we cannot speak harshly of an act where such may have been the motive, and surely He will not judge harshly of it, who, amid the agonies of the cross, looked down upon her who had given him birth, and provided for the remaining years of her embittered pilgrimage, a solace and a home.

14. But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.—xviii. 4. sVerse 27; <sup>1</sup>Ileb. xliii. 22.

*Into the synagogue, &c.* They met them in their place of worship. Sabbath days should be kept holy in solemn assemblies, they are instituted chiefly for public worship. Paul and Barnabas were strangers, but wherever we come, we must inquire for God's faithful worshippers, and join them, as those that desire to keep up a communion with all saints. *Sat down,* probably near the entrance. The Pentateuch was so distributed, as to allow of being read through in the year, and to each passage was adjoined a portion, having some affinity with it, from the prophets. The reader, or another, then explained. *Bengel* thinks Deut. i. and Isa. i. were the lesson, since these chapters are even yet read on one Sabbath, and Paul, at verse 18, refers to Deut. i. 31. *Rulers, &c.* These

were probably the elders of the Jews in Antioch, *i. e.*, the heads of families, or other hereditary chiefs and representatives, as such conducting or controlling public worship. These now *sent* the hyperetes (or clerk) to Paul, &c. *If ye have any word, &c.*, literally, "if any word of exhortation be in you." There is, says *Beza*, some emphasis in this Hebraism, by which it is understood, that whatever there is in us of Divine grace, is derived to us from God, that we may carry it about as a treasure shut up in earthen vessels.

16. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

Paul seized the opportunity, accepted the invitation, and with the bearing of an orator, "beckoning with his hand," and the zeal of an Apostle, commenced his sermon. By "men of Israel" Paul means the Jews and Jewish proselytes then present; and by "those that fear God," the devout Gentiles who had renounced idolatry, and worshiped God in the synagogues, without, however, becoming proselytes to Judaism by submitting to the rite of circumcision—the so-called proselytes of the gate.

17. The God of this people of Israel chose your fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

<sup>1</sup>Deut. vii. 6, 7. <sup>2</sup>Ps. cv. 23. <sup>3</sup>Exod. xiii. 14, 16.

*Exalted*, made them numerous and powerful. *With an high arm, i. e.*, one raised on high, and so ever ready to protect and defend them. (Comp. Exod. vi. 6.)

18. And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.—Exod. xvi. 35.

*Suffered he their manners, i. e.*, bore with them, endured them. Another reading differing in a single letter, and preferred by most modern critics, yields the meaning, *bore them as a nurse does, i. e.*, nursed or nourished. (See Num. xi. 12; Deut. i. 31; also 1 Thes. ii. 7.)

19. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

<sup>1</sup>Deut. vii. 1. <sup>2</sup>Josh. xiv., &c.

*Destroyed, or, cast out; seven nations.* (Comp. Deut. vii. 1; Josh. iii. 10, xxiv. 11.)

20. And after that, he gave unto them judges, about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.—Judges ii. 16.

As this appears to contradict 1 Kings vi. 1, various solutions have been proposed. Taking the words as they stand in the Greek, thus, "after that by the space of

450 years, he gave judges," the meaning may be, that about 450 years elapsed from the time of the covenant with Abraham until the period of the judges, which is historically correct, the word "about" showing that chronological exactness was not aimed at. But taking the sense to be as in our version, that it was the period of the judges itself which lasted about 450 years, this statement also will appear historically correct, if we include in it the interval of subjection to foreign powers which occurred during the period of the judges, and understand it to describe the whole period from the settlement of the tribes in Canaan to the establishment of royalty. Thus, from the exodus to the building of the temple were 592 years (Josephus, *Antiqui.*, viii. 3, 1); deduct forty years in the wilderness; twenty-five years of Joshua's rule (Josephus, *Antiqui.*, v. 1, 29); forty years of Saul's reign (v. 21), forty of David's, and the first four years of Solomon's reign (1 Kings vi. 1); and there remain just 443 years, or, in round numbers, about 450 years.

21. And afterward they desired a king; and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

<sup>1</sup>1 Sam. viii. 5. <sup>2</sup>1 Sam. x. 1.

*Desired a king.* They wished to have a government like that of the nations around them. (See 1 Sam. viii. 5, 7, 22.) *Saul the son of Cis.* Cis is the same as *Kish* in the Old Testament. (1 Sam. ix. 1, 2). For the manner of Saul's selection to be king, &c., see 1 Sam. ix. 10. *Forty years.* This agrees with Josephus, (*Antiqui.*, vi. 14, 9.) The Old Testament does not mention the length of Saul's reign.

22. And when she had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

<sup>1</sup>1 Sam. xxxi. 6. <sup>2</sup>2 Sam. v. 3. <sup>3</sup>1 Sam. xiii. 14.

*Had removed him, literally, having removed (or deposed) him, i. e.*, from his kingly office, as recorded in 1 Sam. xv. 11, 23, 35, xvi. 1. *I have found David, &c.* These words do not occur in the Old Testament, but are made up from two passages: Ps. lxxxix. 20, where God testifies, "I have found David my servant," and 1 Sam. xiii. 14, where Samuel, addressing Saul, says, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart." *After mine own heart*, referring to the general character of David. He was

not, like Saul, a bad man, who had occasional fits of piety, but a good man, notwithstanding the transgressions he committed, and which he so bitterly repented of. *My will*, literally, "the wills." Implying the several particulars, in which David, a prophet, a king, and a type of Christ, accomplished the commands and purposes of God.

23. Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: 24. When John had first preached, before his coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he; but, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.—Ps. cxxxiii. 11. \*Matt. i. 21. \*Matt. iii. 1-11.

The emphasis of this statement lies, 1, in the *seed* from which Christ sprang—David's—and the *promise* to that effect which was thus fulfilled; 2, on the *character* in which this promised Christ was given, of God—"a Saviour." His personal name, "*Jesus*," is emphatically added, as designed to express that very character. (See on Matt. i. 21.) *When John had first preached, &c.* (See on Matt. iii. 1-11.) *Fulfilled his course.* John's ministry finished the legal, and brought in the evangelical dispensation. His career was brilliant and his success extraordinary. By the authentic historian *Josephus* he is spoken of in terms of the highest encomium. His course was hurried and impetuous, eager, as it were, to reach his destination, and to mingle his grand soul with its kindred elements in eternity. He was raised up for a particular service, and when that was accomplished he was removed. Note, 1. There is a prescribed course or sphere of action appointed to every individual by the Author of our nature. 2. There is a set and limited time allotted to that sphere, and course of action. 3. Our happiness and our honor consist entirely in completing the course which God has assigned to us. It is a great mistake to suppose that we should be able to conform ourselves to the will of God, and to our own sphere of action, better in some other state, and therefore to be dissatisfied with that precise state in which His providence has placed us. The wisdom of each consists in fulfilling his *own* course. The memory of John the Baptist is perpetuated with honor, because he "fulfilled his course," while that of Herod and Pontius Pilate

are covered with infamy. Which of these characters will we imitate? Will we be among those whom God condescends to honor, to whom He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord?" or will we now surround ourselves with a few sparks of worldly pleasure, and lie down in eternal darkness?

26. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. 27. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and the rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath-day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. 28. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. 29. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.—Matt. x. 6. Luke xxiv. 20, 44.

*Children of the stock of Abraham.* All ye that are Jews. *Feareth God*, (i. e., the true God), although not belonging to the chosen people. *To you*, i. e., as some understand it, you as distinguished from the Jews of Palestine, referred to in the next verse. But as we know that these were not excluded from forgiveness and salvation, the meaning rather seems to be, that the rejection of the Gospel by the people at Jerusalem, ought not to occasion its rejection elsewhere. *The word of this salvation, &c.* The Gospel brings salvation, 1. By way of *discovery*. It reveals salvation exclusively of any other way; no angel in heaven could have discovered it, if God had not first declared it in and by the Gospel. 2. By way of *tender and offer*. This joyful message of salvation is sent to every man's door, and entreats every sinner to accept it. 3. By way of *efficacy and power*. The Gospel, says an old writer, brings with it a convincing and converting power to put men into a state of salvation, and has also an establishing and confirming power to preserve them in that estate. Blessed be God, that to us, even to every one of us, is the word of this salvation sent. What monsters, then, are they who are enemies to the preaching of the Gospel! They are enemies to our salvation: the only way to heaven is by Christ, the only way to Christ is by faith, and the only way to faith is by the word—it cometh by hearing. *Because they knew him not.* A gentle excuse for the persecuting high priests, &c. They did not know that Jesus was the Christ, because they did not know the

prophets. And *why* did they not know the prophets, *which were read every Sabbath day?* Because they did not *desire to know His will*, and therefore they knew not the doctrine of God: nor did they know that in condemning Christ, they fulfilled those very Scriptures which were read every Sabbath day in their synagogues. (See on ii. 23; iii. 17.) Jesus Christ is the subject of all the prophecies. *No cause of death*—Christ's innocence. *Though they found*, rather, *because* they found no cause, although they sought it. Human judges found no fault in Him, but there was another Judge, who found Him laden with the sins of mankind. *Fulfilled all*, &c. All that was foretold concerning the sufferings of the Messiah was fulfilled in Christ, and circumstances are noticed here, that made His resurrection the more illustrious. They *laid Him in a sepulchre*, and thought they had Him fast. "Let no one take offense at a Saviour to whom Jerusalem could give nothing better than the accursed tree, and a grave which the civil authorities sealed. Thus it is written, and thus it must needs be." (Chap. xvii. 3.)

30. But God raised him from the dead: 31. And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 32. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers: 33. God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again: as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 34. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. 35. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

<sup>a</sup>Chap. i. 3. <sup>b</sup>Rom. iv. 13. <sup>c</sup>Ps. ii. 7. <sup>d</sup>Ps. xvi. 10

*But God raised him, &c.* To take away the scandal of the cross, the Apostle shows that our Saviour's resurrection was as glorious as His death was ignominious. God wiped away the reproach of the cross by raising up Christ from the grave, and declared Him to be His Son with power, by the resurrection from the dead. *And he was seen, &c.* (See on chap. i. 3.) *Glad tidings, &c.* The Apostle intimated that the doctrine he preached, if received aright, and understood by them, would bring them the greatest honor and satisfaction imaginable, because, in the resurrection of Christ *the promise which was made unto the fathers, the patriarchs, &c., was fulfilled unto their children. Thou art my Son, &c.* Some refer these words to the incarnation of

Christ, but here they are introduced as a prediction of His resurrection. Although He was the Son of God from eternity, yet by His resurrection he was openly declared to be so: it was the inauguration of His Sonship. As the Apostle in Rom. i. 4, regards the resurrection of Christ merely as the *manifestation* of a prior Sonship, which he afterward (chap. viii. 32), represents as *essential*, it is plain that this is his meaning here. "The expression in the Psalm, *I have begotten thee,*" says *Dr. Alexander*, "means, I am He who has begotten thee, *i. e.,* I am thy father. *To-day* refers to the date of the decree itself (*Jehorah said, To-day, &c.*); but this, as a Divine act, was eternal, and so must be the Sonship it affirms. *The sure mercies of David.* From Isa. lv. 3.—"I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David," *i. e.,* of Christ, the Son of David, as frequently in the Old Testament (Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, xxxvii. 24, 25; Hos. iii. 5), and it may refer particularly to the last words of David, "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." It was the resurrection of Christ, which rendered His mercies sure to His people, who without that, could have no hope from Him. (1 Cor. xv. 14.) *See corruption.* "Experience putrefaction." (See on ii. 27.)

36. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:—1 Kings ii. 10

"Served his *own* generation." Not indeed exclusively, for he has served every generation since. He is now serving the present. Christians now living bless God for His writings. Who has not found in them a treasury of experience, a flame at which he has often lighted his torch, a harp that has often driven away his evil spirit? There are some who not only serve their own age, but levy a tax of admiration and gratitude upon every future one. Such were the Reformers. Such were Luther, and Calvin, and Knox, and others. And nothing can be more unjust than to censure these men who did so much, because they did no more, or diminish their fame by reproaching them with a few faults, which were rather the errors of the times than of the men. If we cannot serve other generations let us serve our own. Some

strain too much after distant objects, and overlook what is immediately before them. Some leave large sums when they die. They had better be their own executors, and see and enjoy the application of their own liberality. They had better convince the world that they act from choice; for at death they can retain nothing, but *must* part with all they possess. *By the will of God.* Nothing comes by chance in our affairs. The Lord determines the bounds of our habitations, appoints us our stations and offices, and assigns us our talents and opportunities. It was not only by God's providential will that David served his own generation, but also by His revealed will. This he made the rule of his conduct. "Lead me," said he, "in Thy truth, and guide me, for Thou art the God of my salvation, on Thee do I wait all the day"—like a servant, to receive and obey the orders of his master. We must not follow our own fancies, or do that which is most agreeable to our feelings, but what God requires of us.

*Fell on sleep.* When those who survive can declare with truth, after the death of an individual, that, although the days of his pilgrimage may have been few and evil, he had always fulfilled the will of God as far as his ability extended, they could not inscribe a more honorable epitaph on his tombstone, or pay a nobler tribute to his memory. *And was laid unto his fathers.* This form of expression appears to have arisen from the practice of the Hebrews in burying the dead. Their sepulchres were large caves, either natural or artificial, with spacious apartments. When a person died, and his body was laid in one of these receptacles of the dead, in which the corpses of his deceased kindred had before been deposited, he was said to be gathered unto his fathers, or ancestors. (See Gen. xxv. 8.) The expression was familiarly used to convey the thought of dying and being buried, with the additional thought, in many instances, of the departed soul going to join the souls of deceased ancestors in the invisible world. (See Gen. xlix. 29; Judges ii. 10.) *And saw corruption.* He also saw corruption in the body, like all except the One of whom all prophecy testified as the promised One.

37. But he, whom God braised again, saw no corruption.—<sup>b</sup>Chap. ii. 24.

That is, Jesus Christ, whom God the Father raised to life the third day, saw no corruption. Sin had no inheritance in Him, therefore death could have no more dominion over Him, but He overcame death in its own territory—the grave. Thus the Apostle draws the argument home, that the foregoing words could not be meant of David's person, but of the Messiah, whom David typified and represented.

38. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39. And by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.  
<sup>1</sup>Dan. ix. 24; Luke xxiv. 47; 1 John ii. 12. <sup>2</sup>Isa. liiii. 11; Hab. ii. 4; Rom. iii. 28, viii. 1.

Jesus had been shown to be the Messiah, and He is, *therefore*, the author of pardon and salvation to those who believe on Him. *Through this man the forgiveness of sins* (having been procured) *is announced unto you.* (Comp. x. 36; Luke xxiv. 47.) The next verse reaffirms and amplifies the proposition. *And by him all that believe are justified, &c.* All who really believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is both able and willing to cleanse them from their sins, to clothe them in His righteousness, to guide them by His Spirit, and afterward to receive them into glory, and who give themselves up freely and unreservedly to be governed by Him, as well as to be saved by Him, to belong to His obedient as well as His believing people—all such "are justified from all things," they stand now, acquitted before God, every sin which hitherto sullied their conscience, and distressed their mind, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God, if, indeed, deeply repented of, and brought to "the blood of sprinkling," is pardoned east into the depths of the sea, whence it shall never again rise to shame, or to condemn them. Blessed promise! yet not too good, not too great, to be strictly and undeniably true. *All that believe*, says the Apostle, *are justified from all things*: not future, or he would have said "shall be justified," not uncertain, or he would have said, "justified from some things," but, blessed be God, present, and certain, and unlimited: "are justified from all things," are acquitted, are more than acquitted, are considered holy through the imputed

righteousness of Christ, are abundantly pardoned, and received into God's love, and shall be abundantly blessed, and received into God's glory.

40. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: 41. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.—<sup>42</sup>Isa. xxix. 13; Hab. i. 6.

*Lest that come upon you, &c.* The quotation is from Hab. i. 5, according to the Septuagint, with some unimportant variations. God threatened Israel by the prophets with the desolation and destruction of their country; but they would not believe till they experienced the truth of the prophecies in all their horrors. Here their descendants are warned of impending ruin, the dreadful nature of which Paul does not pretend to describe; but intimates that nothing could prevent it if they believed not in Jesus as the Messiah. The prophecy primarily referred to the captivity, and was also verified in the destruction of Jerusalem. But the language here employed is applicable to all ages, and denounces the wrath of God upon unbelief and rebellion: “*I work a work in your days,*” namely, a work of judgment, “*a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you,*” even although warned of the judgment, you will be so hardened and insensible as not to believe in it: you will cling to delusive hopes of safety, even when danger is at the door. Well might Paul apply these words as a warning to those who rejected the Gospel.

42. † And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 43. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. 44. † And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together, to hear the word of God. 45. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. 46. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

*In the week between, or, in the Sabbath, between.*—<sup>†</sup>Chap. xiv. 22; Heb. vi. 11, 12, xii. 15. <sup>†</sup>Chap. xviii. 6. <sup>†</sup>Matt. x. 6; Luke xxiv. 47; Rom. i. 16. <sup>†</sup>Deut. xxxii. 21; Matt. xxi. 43; Rom. x. 19. <sup>†</sup>Isa. xlix. 6.

*When the congregation was broken up, &c.* After this religious assembly had been dismissed in the customary manner, a considerable number of Jews and proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas to their abode,

and were again addressed, in a still more unconstrained and familiar manner. They were urged to adhere with constancy and fidelity to the grace of God, by which they had already been influenced. Would that it were more the custom in these our days, for those who have been impressed by the public ministry, or have been led by what they have there heard, to inquire further into these great and important subjects, to go at once to their ministers: how many doubts might be removed, how many mistakes corrected, how many impressions corroborated, how much of zeal, comfort, and strength, imparted to the first weak, tottering steps in the Christian life, if there were, as there most obviously ought to be, this free communication between every Christian minister and his people! *Came almost the whole city together, &c.* The crowd was probably increased by the instructions and appeals of Paul and Barnabas during the interval. *Blaspheming, joined here with contradicting,* seems to intimate that the Apostles were the objects of it; the word denotes here *to revile, to report slanderously, to defame.* *Seeing ye put it from you,* through their own prejudice, stubbornness, and sin. *Judge, or adjudge yourselves unworthy,* that is, their conduct furnished matter or occasion of their condemnation as unworthy, unsuitable persons, in their temper and conduct, of enjoying eternal life. (See Rom. ii. 27.)

*First have been spoken to you.* This was necessary according to the commission which Christ gave the Apostles, implying strongly that they were first, in all places, to address the Jews, which plan they adhered to on this and every future occasion, (Matt. x. 5; Luke xxiv. 47.) There was a Divine propriety in this plan, for the Jews were possessed of the Old Testament Scriptures, and valued them; they were peculiarly qualified to judge of the truth of the Gospel: and their reception of it was calculated to rouse the attention of the Gentiles to consider it. And as this people were scattered among all nations where the Apostles went, they became proper witnesses to appeal to in respect of the prophecies, the fulfillment of which the Gospel announced. They were therefore, through the good providence of God,



instrumental in introducing the Gospel into all nations, and God honored them as His chosen people, by selecting from among them almost all the first ministers of the Word. *Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* Two things are suggested here: 1. A lamentable condition for a people. These unbelieving Jews are left—the Apostles turn from them—the Gospel is withdrawn. A greater calamity this to a people than if the sun went down and left their heavens in sackcloth. Mercy will not always continue with a people. “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” 2. An obvious duty for a ministry. It was right for these Gospel laborers to leave a rocky, sterile and unproductive soil, and try elsewhere. Their field is the world. Ministers are not only justified, but often bound to leave their sphere of labor. That ministry which is unsuccessful in one sphere, is often gloriously prosperous in another. These Apostles wrought wonders amongst the Gentiles.

*For so hath the Lord commanded us, &c.* The Lord Jesus gave them directions to witness to Him in Jerusalem and Judea, first, and after that, *to the utmost part of the earth, to preach the Gospel to every creature, to disciple all nations.* This is according to what was foretold in the Old Testament. When the Messiah, in the prospect of the infidelity of the Jews, was ready to say, *I have labored in vain,* He was told, to His satisfaction, that though *Israel was not gathered yet He should be glorious*; that His blood should not be shed in vain, nor His purchase made in vain, nor His doctrine preached in vain, nor His Spirit sent in vain. *I have set thee, not only raised thee up, but established thee, to be a light of the Gentiles, not only a shining light for a time, but a standing light, set thee for a light, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.* Those of any nation should be welcome to Him, some of every nation have heard of Him (Rom. x. 18), and *all nations shall at length become his kingdom.*

48. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.  
Chap. ii. 47; Rom. viii. 30.

*They were glad*—to perceive that their accession to Christ was matter of Divine ar-

rangement as well as Apostolic effort. *And glorified the word of the Lord*—by a cordial reception of it. *And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed*—a very remarkable statement, which cannot, without force, be interpreted of anything lower than this, that a Divine ordination to eternal life is the cause, not the effect, of any man's believing. *Leighton* says, “Who can conceive whence this should be, that any man should believe, unless it be given him of God? And if given him, then it was His purpose to give it him, and if so, then it is evident that He had a purpose to save him; and for that end He gives faith: not therefore purposes to save, because man shall believe.” (See Rom. viii. 29; Acts ii. 47.)

49. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

It is not stated how long Paul and Barnabas remained in Pisidian Antioch, but probably it was for some time, during which they would preach the Gospel in the neighborhood. Christianity would also be diffused throughout the region by the zeal of their converts.

50. ¶ But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.—2 Tim. iii. 11.

*The Jews, being filled with envy.* (Verse 45.) The words *devout* and *honorable* are not to be taken in a spiritual, but in a conventional sense, they were “devout” in the sense of being proselytes, “honorable” in the sense of social rank. It was the object of the crafty Jews to gain the men through the influence of the women, and thus effect the expulsion of the Apostles from the city. By women God's kingdom is often greatly advanced or retarded. *Expelled*—but there was no legal expulsion, for they visited Antioch again on their return. (Chap. xiv. 21.) Paul alludes to this persecution in 2 Tim. iii. 11. The powerful and successful preaching of the Gospel usually stirs up violent persecution against preachers of the Gospel.

51. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.  
Mark vi. 11; Luke ix. 5; chap. xviii. 6.

Shaking off the dust of the feet imported disapprobation and rejection. The act derived its significance from the idea that

those renounced in this way were so unworthy that the very dust of their land was defiling. In taking this course Paul followed the direction of Christ, given in Matt. x. 14. "The people of the world" says *Starke*, "need convincing evidence that the truth is communicated to them, not for the sake of private advantage, but solely for the purpose of enabling them to obtain salvation. If they will not accept of heaven, let them retain the earth and its dust." *Iconium*, an important town of Asia Minor, referred by Xenophon to Phrygia, by Strabo to Lycaonia, by Ammian to Pisidia, while Pliny seems to represent it as the seat of a distinct provincial government. It is still a place of some importance under the corrupted name of *Conieh* or *Koniyeh*.

52. And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.—Matt. v. 12; 1 Thes. i. 6.

The new disciples, won from among the Gentiles into the new Israel, were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost, through their faithful continuance in the mighty grace of God which had been poured out upon them. The little flock did not, as is too often the case, disperse, or become lukewarm, as soon as the agents by whom they were brought to a saving knowledge of the truth were taken from them. Here we learn that God's grace, and the Church's joy, may and do increase under the greatest opposition and persecution of men. Infinite wisdom and sovereign power know how to overrule the contradiction of sinners, for glory to Himself and good to His Church.

1. Who were in the Church at Antioch? 2. What did the Holy Ghost say as they ministered to the Lord and fasted? 3. What did they then do? 4. Where did Barnabas and Saul go? 5. What is said of a "certain sorcerer?" 6. What did Saul say to him? 7. What is said of Paul in the synagogue of Antioch? 8. State some of the particulars of his address. 9. What impression did it make? 10. What is said of the spirit and conduct of the Jews? 11. What did Paul and Barnabas say? 12. What effect had their statement upon the Gentiles? 13. How were Paul and Barnabas treated? 14. How did they receive their persecution? 15. What is said of the disciples?

## CHAPTER XIV.

1. *Paul and Barnabas are persecuted from Iconium. 8 At Lystra Paul healeth a cripple, whereupon they are reputed as gods. 19 Paul is stoned. 21 They pass through divers churches, confirming the disciples in faith and patience. 26 Returning to Antioch, they report what God had done with them.*

AND it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude, both of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed.

*Iconium.* (See on xiii. 51.) *Both together.* How happy is it for ministers of Christ to walk and work together in unity. *So.* With such success. Persecution had increased their power. The orator of this world would experience but little satisfaction, unless it could be said that he "so spake that a multitude" applauded, that an admiring audience hung upon his lips: the minister of Christ, on the contrary, is anxious "so to speak that a great multitude may believe." His great desire is, that instead of the power of eloquence and the

charms of oratory, the power of Divine truth and the charm of Divine love may pervade every sentence which he delivers; that he himself may be overlooked and forgotten in the wondrous message of mercy and condescension which he brings, and that by the power of the Holy Ghost, those whom he addresses may be led to yield themselves willing captives, not to the strength of his arguments, but to the sweet attractions of his Master's love. *Greeks*, when opposed to Jews, means Gentiles who follow the religion and manners of the people of Greece. (Comp. verse 5.) The original word is frequently used in this sense. (See chap. xviii. 4, xix. 10, xx. 21; Gal. iii. 28; Col. iii. 11.) It is different from that which is translated *Grecians*. (Acts vi. 1.)

2. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil-affected against the brethren.

*Unbelieving.* (xvii. 5, xix. 9; John iii. 36; Rom. ii. 8, x. 21, xi. 30, 31, xv. 31; Heb. iii 18, xi. 31; 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8, 3, 1, 20, iv. 17.) It is often rendered *disobey*, (xxvii. 19.) *Stirred up.* (xiii. 50.) Not elsewhere. *Made . . . . . civil-affected.* (vii. 6, 19, xii. 1, xviii. 10; 1 Pet. iii. 13.) He who is not willing to obey the truth himself, is easily tempted to seduce others from it. *Against the brethren.* That is, not merely against the two missionaries, but also against the newly-converted Christians in the city. Luke here applies this endearing name of "brethren" to the Christians, because nothing was more hateful to the unbelieving Jews, than that believing Jews and believing Gentiles should constitute *one* holy brotherhood in Christ.

3. Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.—Matt. xv. 20; Heb. ii. 4.

*Long time.* Not thinking that they should yield to violence. *Speaking boldly in* (rather, *upon*) the Lord, *i. e.*, in dependence upon Him. It was their reliance on Christ that inspired them with so much courage. That minister who is afraid to speak and plead for Christ now, will be ashamed to look Him in the face at the great day. *Which gave testimony.* The Lord by the testimony of miracles confirmed the word of grace. *Unto the word of His grace.* A noble definition of the Gospel. The end of the ministry is to build up, as well as to bring in, and this is done by our constancy in preaching, and exemplariness in holy living.

4. But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the Apostles.  
<sup>b</sup>Chap. xxviii. 24.

This has ever been, and, doubtless, will ever be, the effect of a faithful, uncompromising display of the word of truth, unless all who hear it are indifferent to its dictates and deaf to its calls, to newness of heart and life; or unless, by the power of Divine grace, all who hear it are convinced and converted, it cannot be otherwise. Until the Gospel was introduced into Iconium, doubtless the city was perfectly quiet, and to the mere casual observer its state was infinitely preferable before the name of Christ was heard within its walls. But how did that deceitful calm appear to the heart-searching eye of

God? He knew it to be not the repose of peace, but the apathy of death. He knew that the very division which worldly men might deplore, and ignorant men might misunderstand, was the natural effect of the sifting nature of the word of truth—dividing, it is true, but dividing only the wheat from the chaff, the sheep from the goats, the people of the Most High from the deluded followers of their eternal enemy. This effect of the dissemination of Divine truth, so continually apparent during the first ages of the Gospel, is by no means infrequent at the present day, wherever it is plainly and faithfully promulgated.

5. And when there was an assault made, both of the Gentiles and also of the Jews, with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them; 6. They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra, and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 7. And there they preached the Gospel.—Matt. x. 23.

An *assault, impulse, inclination*, as in James iii. 4. *With their rulers, i. e.*, those of both nations, viz.: the heathen magistrates, and the officers of the synagogue. *Stone them*, as blasphemers of the law of Moses. (Chap. vi. 13.) *Ware, or aware.* The original order of the next clause is, *to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe.* Lycaonia was an inland tract of Asia Minor, lying between Phrygia, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Cilicia. Lystra was in the southern part of it, thirty miles south of Iconium. The site of Lystra is supposed to have been recently discovered. Derbe was east of Lystra and south-east of Iconium, mentioned by Cicero as the residence of his friend Antipater. Some travelers suppose both the site and name to be preserved in the modern *Divle*. *The region, &c.* This denotes the places in the vicinity of Lystra and Derbe, hence the adjacent parts of Lycaonia. *They . . . fled.* In this they acted in perfect consistency with the spirit of Christ's religion, which by no means obliges its professors to court unnecessary dangers. There certainly are occasions when our duty would require us to make the most important sacrifices, even life itself, for the cause. But this is a very different thing from that indiscreet zeal, which, without considering times and seasons for acting or suffering, is equally ready to encounter all. Our Lord Himself sometimes escaped, even by

miracle, out of the hands of His enemies yet when His hour came, the hour proper for Him to suffer, He yielded like a lamb to the slaughter. And the Apostle Paul, of whose flight we now read, showed on other occasions the most undaunted resolution, prudence without timidity, courage without rashness. In order, therefore, to form a right judgment of the act, we must consider the attending circumstances. In the present case these were such, that no advantage, but on the contrary much mischief, was likely to arise from a different conduct, for "the multitude of the city was divided." (Verse 4.) Thus the probable, or rather certain, consequence of another meeting had been a civil commotion, to prevent which no method could be so effectual as what was adopted. And it contains a lesson of wisdom and moderation, of great advantage on all such, and all other less trying occasions. Nothing can more obstruct the progress of religion, than the upholding of any dissensions or animosities on the subject: for its mild and gracious influence is lost upon hearts raging with contention, and distracted with furious passions. Better is it to wait a more favorable moment, or if none such can be hoped, to fly the contest, and prove our faith by our lives: an argument at once cogent and inoffensive, conciliating and impressive, without clamor, debate or violence, and above all others best fitted to subdue unreasonable prejudices and strong antipathies. *There they preached.* The storm of persecution only extends the blessed effects of the Gospel.

8. ¶ And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:—Chap. iii. 2.

*Lystra.* (See on verse 6.) *Sat.* Being unable to walk, it is probable he sat in some place suitable for attracting the notice of the people and exciting their sympathy, like the blind man in John ix. 8, who "sat and begged," or the lame man in Acts iii. 2, who was daily laid at one of the temple-gates in Jerusalem. "Impotent and a cripple from his mother's womb!" Who has not, in his own experience, realized the affecting picture? And how sad is the condition of those, who are even now as helpless as this lame man, as help-

less in spiritual things, as much in darkness and impotency as when they were born, and who, in this sense, never yet have walked, and are unable even now to "run the way of God's commandments," having never yet received, because they have never yet truly sought to receive, the aid from on high, so to do!

9. The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed: 10. Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

¶Matt. ix. 23, 29. ¶Isa. xxxv. 6.

*The same heard, &c.* Rather, was listening to Paul's preaching. *Steadfastly beholding.* It is the part of spiritual prudence to observe the emotions of the hearers, especially of the afflicted. *Faith to be healed.* This faith seems to signify either a general belief of the power of Barnabas and Paul, or rather of Jesus Christ, whose ministers they were, to heal infirmities and diseases, or a persuasion that a cure would be performed upon himself in particular. In the former case, his faith was founded on the account which he had heard of the character and miracles of Christ, and of the extraordinary gifts which He had bestowed on His followers; in the latter, it was the effect of a supernatural impression upon his mind. This faith Paul perceived by the power of discerning spirits, or the power with which the Apostles were occasionally endowed, of discovering the thoughts and dispositions of men. *Said with a loud voice, &c.* The cure immediately followed the command. The disorder in the man's joints was removed, his limbs recovered strength, and, with the fondness so natural to a man who has recently acquired a new power, which he had long and earnestly desired, but despaired of ever possessing, he tried it in every way, leaping and walking. That the miracles of the Gospel were real miracles is evident from this important fact, that they were not done in a corner, but in the chief places of concourse, in the streets of cities, in the midst of assembled multitudes, in the presence of enemies as well as of friends.

11. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, the gods are come down to us, in the likeness of men. 12. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. 13. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

¶Chap. xxviii. 6. ¶Dan. ii. 46.

The complete restoration of the helpless cripple to the use of his limbs, drew all eyes toward men who possessed more than mortal powers, and immediately a persuasion gained ground among the people, that the mysterious strangers were no other than gods, who had "descended in the likeness of men." It was the universal belief of the Greeks and Romans, that their deities frequently condescended to visit the world, disguised in human form. Innumerable passages in the works of the poets will occur to the classical reader, in which gods and goddesses are described as negotiating with men, and taking a most active interest in what is going on here below; and those incarnations are not to be considered as the wild invention of the poets—an ingenious machinery by which they carry on the different parts of their story, but as objects of the popular belief which the poets took as they found it, and merely applied it to embellish the creations of their genius. Moreover, it was a part of the fanciful theology of the heathens, that in such expeditions generally the deities traveled in pairs, and that Jupiter and Mercury were inseparable companions. Hence we may perceive the foundation of the opinion entertained by the Lycaonians, that the Apostles were Jupiter and Mercury. Not doubting that Paul, from the copiousness and persuasive power of his oratory, was the fabled god and patron of eloquence, they concluded from his always having the attendance of that little active deity, that the other grave and majestic stranger could be no other than Jupiter.

The whole city being in a state of excitement at the arrival of such unexpected visitors, it was proposed to honor them, according to the idolatrous customs of the place, by offering sacrifice, and in the brief notice given by the Evangelist of this strange expression of popular admiration, we meet with several of the peculiarities of heathen worship. The temples were usually built in the suburbs, and the images of the gods placed before the gates of the cities, and as the number or grandeur of the statues erected to the honor of the patron deity of the place was usually far greater than those of any other object of

their worship, the image of Jupiter, who was regarded as the tutelary deity of that town, would stand in stately majesty at the chief gate of the city. Thither, accordingly, the priest of that divinity directed the oxen to be driven, whose blood was to stream at the feet of the statue, in honor of the occasion, and whose brows, as well as those of the crowd who followed, were adorned with chaplets of flowers. These garlands were formed of a wreath of cypress, or pine leaves, or the blossom of any particular tree that might be consecrated to the god for whose honor the sacrifice was intended. No one appeared without the distinction of the flowery coronet, as that would have thrown dishonor on the festive occasion; whereas, every one decorating their brows with the appropriate garlands, was supposed by that token to take part in the sacrifice that was offered, and to render homage to the object of reverence, by strewing his altar, or the neck of his image, with sweet-scented flowers.

14. Which when the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15. And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 16. Who in times past, suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

<sup>1</sup>Mat. xxvii. 65. <sup>2</sup>Chap. x. 29; James v. 17; Rev. xix. 10. <sup>3</sup>1 Sam. xii. 21. <sup>4</sup>1 Kings xvi. 13; Jer. xiv. 22; John ii. 8; 1 Cor. viii. 4. <sup>5</sup>1 Thes. i. 9. <sup>6</sup>Gen. i. 1; Ps. xxxiii. 6, cxlv. 6; Rev. xiv. 7. <sup>7</sup>Ps. lxxxii. 12; chap. xvii. 30.

When Barnabas and Paul noticed, from the preparations and the preparatory words of the priest, what the meaning was of this cry in the Lycaonian dialect, which was at first unintelligible to them, then they rent their clothes, being actually filled with horror at the heathen idolatry, and at finding themselves (poor fellow-sinners) in danger of being looked upon as gods, thus affording a palpable proof that they were mere flesh and blood, as other men, and throwing aside all godlike demeanor, and putting an end to the arrangements for the offering, they rushed out among the people, and cried out to them. *Like passions.* Obnoxious to the same common infirmities. This is also the meaning, James v. 17, and nothing could be more absurd, or injurious to the character of these holy men, than to imagine that it refers, in either of the places, to anything of uncontrolled passion. *Turn*

from these vanities, that is, from these *idols*, and *false gods*. *Unto the living God*, &c. The Apostle thus spake to the ignorant barbarians among whom he was, in reference to the consideration of God as the glorious object of our worship. "Thus doth the word magnify Him above the inanimate, senseless deities of the pagan world, who were wont to worship stocks and stones and the works of their own hands, and bow down and pray to a god that could not save. And how should we magnify to ourselves the object of our worship, under this notion, and admire and bless God that He hath revealed Himself to us, so as we are not left altogether ignorant whom we are to worship, that we do not worship altogether we know not what. We know the object of our worship carries in it the reason of its own being worshiped, which renders it a rational worship. He is the living and so the true God whom we worship."—*Howe*. *Who*. An anticipation of an objection, lest the Lycaonians should suppose that, had these things been true they would have heard them from their parents. *Times*, literally, *generations*, *past*, departed, gone by. *Suffered*, permitted, or allowed, not approved, much less required, but did not hinder or prevent. *All nations*, *i. e.*, all but one to whom He granted an exclusive revelation. The multitude of those in error does not remove the error. *To walk in their own ways*. God bestowed on them neither the law nor the prophets. Yet left them without excuse in not acknowledging God. (Rom. i. 20, 21.) Though the law was silent, He gave them whence they might learn to know Him. "If we attend," says *Plotinus*, "to the voice of all created nature, it will loudly proclaim its origin from the deity, not from the Cretan Jupiter, or the Arcadian Mercury, but from the unknown God, whom Paul preached to the Athenians." To suffer either nation or person to walk without control or check, from word or rod, from ordinances or providences, in the ways of sin and wickedness, is a very dreadful and tremendous judgment. (See on next verse.)

17. <sup>o</sup>Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

<sup>o</sup>Rom. i. 20. <sup>o</sup>Job v. 10; <sup>o</sup>Ps. cxlviii. 8; <sup>o</sup>Matt. v. 45.

Nevertheless, he left not himself, &c. Al-

though the Gentiles in past generations had no written revelation, yet they were not left in complete darkness; God left among them the witnesses of His existence and perfections in the works of creation, and in His benevolent dealings with them. (See Rom. i. 19, 20.) *In that he did good*, &c. With these words the Apostle would turn the attention of the Lystrians from the false gods they worshiped to the real Giver of every good. They were indebted for the blessings of life, which they ascribed to Jupiter and Mercury, to the living God. Jupiter was regarded as the giver of rain and fruitful seasons, and Mercury, as the god of merchandise, was looked upon as the dispenser of food. The mention of rain in particular, as one of the clearest manifestations of the Divine benignity, was in accordance with the old Jewish saying, that "there were three keys—of life, rain and resurrection—always kept in God's hand," not given to any delegate or proxy, as indicating a more direct or special act of power on the part of the Supreme. The apparent irregularity with which it falls, the difficulty of foretelling it, and its absolute necessity to the prolonged existence of either animate or vegetable creatures, single the rain out as worthy of emphasis in this brief record of Heaven's gifts to man. "The circuit of the waters," in their wonderful passage from the sea into the atmosphere by evaporation, their condensation into clouds and rain, their fall upon the earth into streams and mighty rivers, and their return to the great reservoir of the ocean from which they issued in an invisible form, is to every devout mind a perpetual miracle of celestial power and goodness. (Jer. v. 24.) "If we hearken to the voice of the world," says an ancient philosopher, "we shall hear it say nothing but God hath made me." It will be observed that Paul in this discourse, as well as in that at Athens (Acts xvii. 23-31), to which this bears a striking resemblance, dwells upon those truths which his hearers could appreciate, he builds upon the principles of natural religion, thus affording to all succeeding missionaries an example for imitation in their reasoning with the heathen. "In this appears the goodness of God; consid-

ering how hateful sin is to Him, and how powerful He is to punish it, how easy were it, if it pleased Him, in one moment to cut off all the ungodly, high and low, throughout the whole world! Yet He bears, and forbears to punish! Oh! what a world of sin is every day committed in nations, in cities, and villages, yea, in families, which he doth not strike with present judgments, and not only forbears to punish, but multiplies His common mercies on them, 'sun and rain and fruitful seasons.'—*Leighton.*

13. And with these sayings, scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

*Scarce restrained they, &c.* (See on x. 26.) In view of the conduct and language of the Apostles, as now stated, observe, 1. Their benevolence. Nothing could have been more truly benevolent than their ardent concern for the spiritual good of this people, their grief and distraction, for the perverse impiety which they were about to commit, and their strenuous endeavors to restrain them from the deed, by making known to them the true God, to whom alone religious homage is due. 2. Their humility. This appears in putting themselves upon the same level with those poor ignorant persons, who would have offered sacrifice to them; "We also are men of like passions with you!" Instead of feeling the least complacency in the honors designed them, they betray nothing but horror and shame, at having any part, however unwilling, in the profane attempt. 3. Their zeal for the honor of God. This is conspicuous through every part of the transaction. This, indeed, seems to have been the prime object in their thoughts, and chief cause of their violent emotion. To witness that adoration paid to the creature, which only belongs to the Creator, was shocking in their sight, as offering violence to the first principles of rational piety.

19. ¶ And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. 20. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. 42 Cor. xi. 25.

*Antioch and Iconium*, from both which places Paul and Barnabas had been expelled by the same influence. (See on verse 5, and chap. xiii. 50.) *Persuaded the people, &c.* The fickleness, as well as the

emptiness of human applause, is well illustrated by the history before us. The same multitude who could be satisfied with nothing short of paying Divine honors to Paul, and even worshipping him as a god, in a few short days treated him as the worst of malefactors, persecuted him, as they hoped and believed, even unto the death, "stoned him, and drew him out of the city, supposing him to have been dead." He had swooned away, and lay for a time senseless. "*Howbeit,*" continues the Evangelist, "as the disciples (those converted at Lystra) stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city." Thus realizing, by his own repeated experience, the truth of the affecting description which he himself has bequeathed to us, "We are troubled on every side, but not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed." To this instance of stoning the Apostle refers in 2 Cor. xi. 25. The wounds inflicted on him at this time may have left some of those scars on his body to which he alludes in Gal. vi. 17, as proof that he was Christ's servant.

21. ¶ And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch. 22. Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. *Hart made many disciples.* \*Chap. xiii. 43. \*Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. iii. 12.

What fortitude, what patience, what magnanimity, appear in the Apostles on this occasion! How fit to be chosen the witnesses of Christ's resurrection! So far from being deterred by the violence they suffered, they venture, not only into other churches and places, but return again to the very Lystra where they had encountered such bitter and cruel hostility. *Confirming, &c.* The office of the Apostles was two-fold. To sow the seed of instruction in the mind—to regenerate men by the Divine word to a heavenly light—this was their first object. When this was done, they, secondly, endeavored to confirm their new converts—to lead them on—to corroborate and strengthen them—to teach them to bear the trials, and bring forth the fruits which it was the end and design of Christianity to produce. They confirmed the souls of the disciples during

this visit, by deepening the impressions of Divine truth, instructing them more fully in the way of God, guarding them against temptation, and fortifying them against the impression of fear. *Exhorting them, &c.* They persuaded them, by all possible arguments, to adhere to the doctrine of Christianity, to hold it fast, to cleave to it with persevering faith, to yield themselves up fully to its influence. Men may hold Christianity to be true, and yet never be under its proper influence, never continue in the faith. *And that we must through much tribulation, &c.* The Apostles guarded the disciples from being turned away from the profession and practice of Christianity by tribulation trials, various worldly discouragements and persecutions. It was a new thing to these converts to suffer for Christ: the Saviour had only just begun to put His cup into their hands. All Christians must suffer, though not in the same degree or under similar circumstances, with those of the first age. Through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom of God. There is a kingdom before them, and only one way to enter it, and that is by tribulation, and not by tribulation thinly scattered in the midst of flowery paths, but "much tribulation," thickly sown and continually returning.

23. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

*When they had ordained them elders*, literally, "chosen by show of hands." On this the *Rev. David Brown, D. D.*, observes: "But as that would imply that this was done by the Apostles' own hands, many render the word, as in our own version, 'ordained.' Still, as there is no evidence in the New Testament that the word had then lost its proper meaning, as this is beyond doubt its meaning in 2 Cor. viii. 19, and as there is indisputable evidence that the concurrence of the people was required in all elections to sacred office in the earliest ages of the Church, it is perhaps better to understand the words to mean, 'when they had made a choice of elders,' *i.e.*, superintended such choice on the part of the disciples: *and had prayed with fasting*, literally, 'fastings;' thus set-

ting them solemnly apart. This last clause confirms our interpretation of the former. For if 'ordination' was by prayer and fasting (see chap. xiii. 3), why should it be said they first 'ordained elders,' and after that 'prayed with fasting?' Whereas, if the first clause refers to the *choice* and the second to the *ordination*, all is natural. *They commended* ('committed') *them, i. e.*, all those Churches, *to the Lord—Jesus."*

24. And after they had passed throughout Pisidia they came to Pamphylia. 25. And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26. And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God, for the work which they fulfilled.

<sup>1</sup>Chap. xiii. 1, 3. <sup>2</sup>Chap. xv. 40.

We have already indicated the sites and circumstances of Pisidia, Pamphylia and Perga. All these places, with the exception of Attalia, they had visited before on their way out. At Perga, however, they had only time to land on that occasion (see chap. xiii. 13); now in returning they "preached the word" there. *Attalia* was a city of Pamphylia, at the mouth of the river Catarrhactes, built by Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamus, and is still a seaport of considerable size and commerce, under a slightly altered name. *And thence sailed to Antioch.* Not, of course, the Antioch of verse 21, which was in Pisidia, but the city of this name in Syria (chap. xiii. 1.) They had been absent, according to the computations of some, about three years on this first Apostolic journey; during which time they had visited Salamis and Paphos, on the island of Cyprus, and Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Attalia, and other places, in three of the provinces of Asia Minor, *viz.*: Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia. *From whence they had been recommended, &c.* Whence, having been committed to the favor of God, they were sent forth. (See xiii. 3.) *For the work of missions, which work they (now) fulfilled*, completed, brought to a conclusion, by returning to the point from which they had set out. Such honor attended Jesus, when He went to the Father: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." (John xvii. 4.) And nothing but such a faithful performance of the work assigned to us, can bear honorable testimony in our behalf, when we depart from the world.



27. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed <sup>all</sup> that God had done with them, and how he had opened <sup>the</sup> door of faith unto the Gentiles.

<sup>1</sup>Chap. xv. 4; <sup>2</sup>1 Cor. xvi. 9; <sup>2</sup>2 Cor. ii. 12; Rev. iii. 8.

*Rehearsed, &c.* Having called the Church together, they declared the great things which God had done with them and by them, with the intention, no doubt, that the Church might join with them in their praises and thanksgivings, who had before assisted them with their prayers and supplications. They desired that God might have the entire praise and glory from them. We should not observe silence respecting the works and wonders which God has wrought, but, in sincere humility, proclaim them aloud, so that others, besides ourselves, may praise the goodness and almighty power of God. *And how he had opened the door of faith, i. e.,* had given them access to the Gospel, participation in its blessings, as well as to the Jews; not

that he had opened to the Apostles a door of access to the heathen. This metaphor is a favorite one with Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 9, 2 Cor. ii. 12, Col. iv. 3), and may have become familiar to Luke in his intercourse with him. God opens three doors, when any work that leads to the salvation of men is performed—the door of the teacher's mouth, the door of the hearer's ear, and that of his heart. Utterly insufficient are all external means, how excellent soever in themselves, to operate savingly upon men's minds, unless the Holy Spirit opens the understanding as well as the minister opens the Scriptures.

28. And there they abode long time with the disciples.

*Long time*, literally, not a little time. How long is uncertain, depending on the time occupied by the missionary journey, but probably two or three years (A. D. 49, 50).

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1. What is said of the preaching in Iconium? 2. What course did the unbelieving Jews pursue? 3. What is said of "the multitude of the city?" 4. Describe the "certain man at Lystra." 5. What did Paul say to him? 6. Why did he say it? 7. What was the result? 8. What did the people say? 9. What did the Apostles do and say? 10. What is recorded of certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium? 11. What is said of Paul after being stoned? 12. Where did the Apostles then go? 13. To what places did they return? 14. For what purposes? 15. State the subsequent course of the Apostles. 16. Where did they abide long with the disciples?

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## CHAPTER XV.

1 *Great dissension ariseth touching circumcision.* 6 *The apostles consult about it, 22 and send their determination by letters to the churches.* 30 *Paul and Barnabas, thinking to visit the brethren together, fall at strife, and depart asunder.*

AND certain men which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.—Gal. ii. 12. <sup>1</sup>John vii. 22. <sup>c</sup>Lev. xii. 3.

Some persons from Judea taught the brethren in Antioch, that "unless they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved." The law of Moses was virtually abolished by the death of Christ, in which its design was accomplished, but few among the Jewish believers were apprised of the expiration of its authority. The simple observance of its rites, however, was not yet unlawful, if it proceeded from a principle of conscience, mistaken, indeed, but re-

vering what was still supposed to be obligatory, or from a charitable intention to avoid giving offense to the weak. But those men taught, that obedience to the law of Moses was indispensably necessary to salvation, or that circumcision, and the other duties, ceremonial and moral, which it enjoined, were the express condition of our acceptance with God.

2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that "Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question.—Gal. ii. 1.

As the doctrine these men taught was subversive of the Gospel, Paul and Barnabas opposed them, and much contention ensued. It was found impossible to settle the controversy, even by the authority of Paul, to whom the false teachers refused

to submit, and it was therefore determined to refer it to the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem. Besides, it was not a local controversy, arising from the peculiar circumstances of the place, but might be agitated in any other city or district where the Jews resided, and for this reason prudence required that it should be finally decided in a higher assembly than that of the rulers of Antioch, an assembly which would command the respect and obedience of all the churches in the world. There is no doubt that it might have been determined in Antioch, in which, besides Paul and Barnabas, both men of high rank in the Church, there were prophets and teachers competent to manage such affairs but the opposing party was refractory, and there was no hope of reducing them to silence except by the sentence of a court from which there was no appeal. *Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, &c.* Whether these were delegates from the other churches of Syria, and from those of Cilicia, in which this controversy was agitated does not appear. *About this question.* It is evident that, in this case, there was not merely a reference for advice, but submission to a sentence.

3. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.  
†Rom. xv. 24; 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 11; 3 John 6. †Chap. xiv. 27. †Luke xv. 7, 10.

*Being brought on their way, &c.* When the Apostles traveled as ministers of Jesus, the Church helped them on their way. This help may refer to pecuniary aid (see Acts xviii. 3, xx. 34; 1 Cor. ix. 1-15; 2 Cor. xi. 9; Acts xxviii. 10), to the deputation of suitable companions (see 1 Cor. ix. 5; Acts xxviii. 25), and to the prayers of the Church (see 2 Thes. iii. 1; Acts xiii. 5). *Passed through Phenice and Samaria.* (See on chap. xi. 19.) As Galilee is not mentioned, they traveled probably along the coast as far south as Ptolemais (xxi. 7), and then crossed the plain of Esdraelon into Samaria. *Declaring the conversion, &c.* The Gentiles had been in great darkness, but were turned round to the light of the Lord. (Eph. v. 8.) They had been slaves to sin and Satan, but had turned to God as their rightful governor. (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.) And they had worshiped dumb idols, but

were turned round, and adored the only living and true God. In short, they turned to God in their hearts and lives, and became new creatures in Christ Jesus. (2 Cor. v. 17.) *Great joy* was caused by these reports *unto all the brethren* in the various towns on their way. Men of different nations, while they remain in a state of nature, are at enmity with each other, Christianity promotes a spirit of love to all mankind, and this spirit rejoices in the conversion of sinners wherever they are found. The enmity which nations have cherished against each other, has been productive of bloody and long-continued wars, in which myriads of the human race have perished by the sword. And while this diabolical principle is cherished there can be no settled peace; the nations will curse each other with bitterness, and rejoice in each other's calamity. But Christianity plants benevolent principles in the heart of man, and is calculated to unite all the nations of the earth. When our souls are opened to receive its healing influences, we become new men, our love is stretched out to every human being, and we rejoice in the happiness of every child of man.

4. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.—Chap. xxi. 19.

*Were come to Jerusalem.* This was Paul's third visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, and on this occasion took place what is related in Gal. ii. 1-10. *Were received, &c.*, evidently at a meeting formally convened for this purpose: the deputation being one so influential, and from a Church of such note. *They declared all, &c.* (See on chap. xiv. 27.)

5. ¶ But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. 6. And the apostles and elders came together, for to consider of this matter.  
†Verse 1. †Matt. xviii. 20.

*But there rose up . . . . saying, &c.* Some regard this as Luke's own statement of what happened at Jerusalem, after Paul and Barnabas had made their report. Others consider these as a part of the speech of Paul and Barnabas, in which they relate the cause of their coming to Jerusalem. (See verses 1, 2.) *That it was needful, &c.* (See on verse 1.) *And the Apostles and elders came together for to consider of*

*this matter.* To canvass the arguments on both sides, and to pass a final sentence. In the form of procedure, there was nothing different from what may be practiced, and often is practiced, in other assemblies. No person rose and pronounced the dictates of inspiration, by which the rest were overawed, but Apostles and elders consulted together on equal terms, and the decree was the result of their united deliberations. It was founded upon a well-known fact, corroborated by other facts, which were brought forward in the course of the inquiry, and upon an argument drawn from the Scriptures. It appears from the following verses, 12 and 22, that there were other persons present, besides the Apostles and elders, and the commissioners from Antioch, who are called "the multitude," and "the whole Church." Nothing, however, can be plainer, than that they were present to hear, not to deliberate and judge; for, besides that the reference was not made to them, Luke expressly affirms, that none came together to consider this matter but the "Apostles and elders." As the question, however, was of the greatest importance, affecting the interests of the Gentile believers, and prescribing the terms of their admission to the privileges of the Gospel, it could not but excite general attention.

7. ¶ And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe. 8. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9. And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10. Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11. But we believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. xvi. 18, 19; chap. x. 20. <sup>2</sup>Chap. i. 24. <sup>3</sup>Heb. ix. 13, 14; 1 Peter i. 22. <sup>4</sup>Gal. v. 1. <sup>5</sup>Rom. iii. 24; Eph. ii. 8; Titus iii. 4, 5.

*Peter rose up, &c.* How long the "much disputing" continued, and what was said before Peter arose, we are not told. True to his nature, he came first to the front. Nor could any of them indeed have stronger claims to the first speech on this occasion. He was probably the most aged, had been the most accustomed to public speaking, and was, as some think, the first to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. It is noteworthy that in speaking in this assembly there is no assumption of superiority on Peter's part. He does not take

upon himself to sum up the arguments or to pronounce a judgment. He speaks only as one of their number, strongly as he would speak, but with deference to the common judgment. In his speech he shows that Jewish ritualism was unnecessary, inexpedient, and contrary to his faith. *Made choice among us* (the Apostles) *that by my mouth, &c.* The meaning is not necessarily that no heathen had heard or embraced the Gospel till Peter preached it to them, but that it was he whom God appointed to convey the Gospel to them under circumstances which showed it to be manifestly His will that they should be admitted into the Church without circumcision. *Which knoweth the hearts*—who regards the heart, not the flesh. *Bare them witness, giving, &c.* He testified by giving them the Holy Spirit, that pleased him: (Gal. iii. 5.) *And put no difference, &c.* He accepts a Jew as well as a Gentile, and a Gentile as well as a Jew, without difference, makes no difference, purifying their hearts by faith. If they have such an operative faith as shall be accompanied and followed with heart purity, there shall be no difference that one was a Jew, and the other was a Gentile. The heart is the seat of purity. Faith, or obeying the truth, works this purity, but the Holy Ghost works that faith (verse 8.) *Tempt ye God, i. e.,* put Him to the proof, try His patience and forbearance, by requiring further evidence of what He has already made so plain. "The attempt of imposing anything upon the disciples but what was necessary," says *Howe*, "is judged a tempting of God, a bringing the matter to a trial of skill with Him, whether He could keep the Church quiet, when they took so direct a course to distemper and trouble it." *But we believe, &c.* The Apostle here presents still another consideration, namely, that to Jews, as well as to Gentiles, salvation could come only through the unmerited favor of Jesus Christ. No outward obedience of *Jews* could purchase for them salvation. *Jews*, as well as Gentiles, were wholly dependent on the grace of Christ. This is a precious summary of the Gospel, which Peter here gives. It comprehends the confession that Christ is the true God, for Christ can confer saving

grace only in case He is the Lord, to whom all power in heaven and in earth is given. "By grace alone"—this is the badge by which the children of the family recognize each other. Hence Melancthon says, that the doctrine of justification by grace, is "the highest and most important article in the Christian creed, the only key to the whole Bible, without which the troubled conscience can find no true, lasting, and sure consolation." *Even as they.* The fathers and prophets precede the triumphal chariot of Christ—we follow it. Their faith and our own, is the same; the objects of *their* faith belonged to the future—the same objects of *our* faith belong to the past.

12. Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.—Chap. xiv. 27.

*All the multitude.* (See on verse 6.) The speech of Peter had produced such a deep impression that there was a breathless "silence" when he sat down, and when Barnabas and Paul arose. Barnabas is mentioned first, for probably he spoke first, as being better known in Jerusalem than Paul. Their speeches are not recorded; only so much is said about them as to show that they were historic—a recitation of the leading events connected with their missionary tour to the Gentiles. They related "what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them." They did not parade these as their own achievements, but ascribed them all to God.

13. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

14. Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, 16. After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: 17. That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

1 Luke ii. 31, 32. 2 Amos ix. 11, 12.

*James answered.* It seems plain from this that the matter was not determined by any *authority* in Peter. It is very possible that James resided in Jerusalem more constantly than any other of the Twelve, and had special charge of the Church there, not however as an ordinary pastor, much less as a diocesan bishop, but as a resident Apostle. *Hearken unto me*, or simply *hear me*, *i. e.*, me too, or me also, hear what I, as well as they who have

already spoken, have to say upon the subject. This request is very far from favoring the notion that James spoke with superior authority. The discourse of James consists of three parts: *Exordium*, in a form of expression calculated to conciliate the good-will of his auditors (verse 13.) *Narration*, with its confirmation from the prophets; (verses 16, 17, and in verse 18, the *reason*); *Proposition*, which is, The Gentiles are not to be compelled to Judaism, but are only to abstain from certain things (verse 19), since Judaism cannot be entirely abolished all at once. (Verse 20). *Simeon hath declared, &c.*—a recapitulation of the speech of Peter. Simeon is a Hebrew variation of Simon, the Jewish and family name of Peter. *And to this agree the words of the prophets, &c.* There is a considerable difference between this and the original passage in Amos ix. 11, 12. Perhaps we may account for the difference, by saying that James intended to give the sense, not the exact words, of the prophecy, and in respect of the sense, the two passages perfectly harmonize. In both, God promises "to raise up the fallen tabernacle of David," or to raise his family, when sunk into obscurity, to greater glory than ever, by the birth of Jesus Christ, who should ascend the throne of that monarch, and enjoy everlasting dominion. What would be the consequence, or rather, what was the design of this dispensation? It is thus expressed by James, "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called;" in which words, the conversion of the Gentiles is plainly foretold. It is thus expressed by the Prophet: "That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen which are called by my name;" that is, in consequence of its exaltation, the family of David shall "possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen;" an event which was accomplished when, in the words of the Psalmist, "the heathen were given to Christ for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession," and being converted to the faith, they were called by the name of the Lord. The passages, it will be perceived, differ only in sound.

18. Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world. 19. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20. But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. 21. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him; being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day.

Num. xxiii. 19; Isa. xlvi. 10. <sup>v1</sup> Thes. i. 9. <sup>vEx. xx. 4; 5; 1 Cor. viii. 1, &c., x. 24; Rev. iii. 14, 20, ix. 20. <sup>v1</sup> Cor. vi. 9, 18; Col. iii. 5; 1 Thes. iv. 3. <sup>v2</sup> Lev. xvii. 14; Deut. xii. 16, 20. <sup>v3</sup> Chap. xiii. 15, 27.</sup>

*Known unto God, &c.* The calling of the Gentiles is a certain truth founded on the omniscience of God. It is not an unexpected event: it is what He Himself had foretold. The whole train of events, from the creation to the general judgment, was present to the mind of God from eternity. In the shifting scenes of human affairs, He sees only the evolution of His own plan. *Wherefore my sentence is*, literally, *therefore, I judge*, "I give my opinion." *That we trouble not*, by imposing upon them circumcision and the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. *But that we write unto them*, enjoin by an epistle. James proposes, for the sake of peace, the abstinence from certain things on the part of the Gentiles, namely, from these four particulars: the pollution of idols, fornication, things strangled, and blood. *Pollutions*. The Gentiles, after the sacrifices were concluded, and a portion of the consecrated victim (the thing here intended) had been assigned to the priests, used to hold a sacrificial feast in honor of the god, either in the temple or in private houses, and then ate the residue of the flesh: or even from avarice or poverty, salted and laid up the remnant for future use, or even gave it to the butchers to sell in the shambles. *Fornication*. The Gentiles accounted fornication, or whoredom, as a thing lawful or indifferent. So *Terence*. They committed it in their temple, at their festivals, &c. Notorious are their Bacchanalia, Lupercalia, the rites of the Bona Dea, &c., in which the Gentiles indulged with impunity to the honor of Bacchus, the Bona Dea, &c. *Comp. Num. xxv. 1, &c. Things strangled*. The flesh of such animals as were killed in snares, and whose blood was not poured forth, was forbidden to the Israelites. Hence all strangled animals were regarded as unclean. *And from blood*. Nothing was more strictly prohibited to the Jews than blood; because in the blood was the life of the animal, and because it was the blood

that was consecrated to make an atonement. (Lev. xvii. 10-14.) The heathen were accustomed to drink the blood of the animals at their sacrifices. *For Moses of old time, &c.* This verse assigns a reason for the proposed restrictions, and that is, that the Jewish believers, being so accustomed to hear the things in question forbidden, were naturally sensitive in regard to them, and hence it was necessary, for the sake of peace and harmony, that the heathen converts should refrain from such practices. None will dispute that charity toward men, as well as love to God, will dispose believers to regard the precepts contained in this injunction, (which was sanctioned by the Holy Spirit, verse 28), when placed in circumstances any way similar to those in which the disciples were placed when it was first delivered. In regard to abstaining from fornication and pollutions of idols, there can be no dispute, for a fornicator or idolator, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and as to the other prohibitions, they are confessedly, considered in themselves, distinct from Divine authority, of less importance. But there was a Divine propriety in prohibiting them all, for they were, in fact, as already stated, incorporated in that system of idolatry from which the Gentiles had been lately delivered. To renounce these practices, was, in effect, to renounce the whole system of idolatry, of which they made a conspicuous part; to adhere to any part of idolatry was equally inconsistent with the will of God, as it was opposed to Christian fellowship with the Jews, who held the whole system of idolatry in the utmost degree of abhorrence. And when they did so, they acted in perfect consistency with the spirit and sentiment of those Scriptures which were read in their synagogues every Sabbath day. (See on verse 29.)

22. ¶ Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barnabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren.—Chap. i. 23.

*It pleased, or seemed good to*. The apostles and elders, not as independent bodies, nor as one body separate from the Church itself, but acting in harmonious conjunction with the whole church, as there represented, not by human delegation but by

Divine appointment. *The whole church* cannot mean all the members of the Church in Jerusalem, for as we are certain that there were in that city many thousands who believed, it is utterly improbable that so great a multitude should have been permitted to meet in public, by a government ill-affected to them and their cause. *Chosen men*, men selected from among themselves, *i. e.*, members of the mother Church and probably belonging to the number of its elders. *Judas surnamed Barsabas*—therefore not the Apostle “Judas the brother of James” (chap. i. 13), surnamed “Thaddeus” (Matt. x. 3); nor can it be shown that he was a brother of “Joseph called Barsabas.” (Chap. i. 23.) But nothing is known of him beyond what is here said. *And Silas*—the same as “Silvanus” in the Epistles. He became Paul’s companion on his second missionary journey. (Verse 40.) *Chief men among the brethren*—selected purposely as such, to express the honor in which they held the Church at Antioch and the deputies they had sent to the council, and as the matter affected all Gentile converts, to give weight to the written decision of this important assembly. (See on verse 32.)

23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia: 24. Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: 25. It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul 26. Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. 28. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29. That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. 30. So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: 31. Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. 32. And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. 33. And after they had tarried there a space they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. 34. Notwithstanding, it pleased Silas to abide there still 35. Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

<sup>a</sup>Verse 1. <sup>b</sup>Gal. v. 12. <sup>c</sup>Gal. v. 4. <sup>d</sup>Gal. ii. 4. <sup>e</sup>Chap. xiii. 50, xiv 19. <sup>f</sup>Words. <sup>g</sup>Rev. ii. 24. <sup>h</sup>Verse 20. <sup>i</sup>2 Cor. xi. 9; James i. 27. <sup>j</sup>John v. 21; Jude xx. 21. <sup>k</sup>Chap. xiv. 23. <sup>l</sup>Cor. xvi. 11; 2 John 10.

And they wrote letters by them. Greek: “having written.” It does not mean that they wrote more than one epistle. *Send greeting, &c.* The controversy rages principally in the places here mentioned,

though the letter was intended for all in similar circumstances. (See on chap. xvi. 4.) The substance of the letter we have already noticed in the speech of James. (See on verses 13–21.) This circular letter rehearsed the occasion of its promulgation, and directed its readers for further information as to its verbal statements to its bearers. *The apostles and elders and brethren* concurred in it. In it, 1. The persons (verse 1) who started this controversy are sharply reproved. 2. Paul and Barnabas, for their courage and constancy, are highly commended. 3. Judas and Silas (see on verse 22) are mentioned to testify that this decree was not forced or counterfeited. 4. It is stated that it would conduce much to their advantage to have this injunction duly observed. 5. The Divine authority of the decree is affirmed: *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, &c., i. e.*, it seemed good unto us, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, whose direction and dictation we have followed, not to impose unnecessary things upon you. *Necessary things*. Two of them, *viz.*, abstaining from fornication and from things offered to idols, were of a simple and absolute necessity; the other two, namely, abstaining from things strangled, and from blood, were of an accidental and temporary necessity, for the present time, and to avoid giving scandal to the weak Jews, till they should be better informed, and better understand their liberty in Christ. (See 1 Tim. iv. 4; Titus i. 15; also on verses 19 and 20.) *Ye shall do well*, what is right and commendable. (See x. 33; 3 John v. 6.) Even when they mention those few points which they deem necessary, they employ very moderate terms (“Ye shall do well”), as compared with the violent threats of the others (“Ye cannot be saved,” verse 1). How tenderly we should deal with the consciences of men! *Fare ye well*, literally, *be ye strong* (or healthy), corresponding to the Latin word *valete*. They could, with great propriety, say “Fare ye well,” to brethren who had found eternal life by faith in the Lord Jesus, and whose fraternal love was the rule of their conduct in all the affairs of this life. “Fare ye well,” be faithful to Jesus. *When they were dismissed . . . They therefore*, being dismissed. Probably there

was a solemn and formal dismissal, as when Paul and Barnabas were sent forth on their missionary journey. (Chap. xiii. 3.) *When they had gathered the multitude*—the whole mass or body of believers, called *the church*, in chap. xiv. 27. Paul and Barnabas, Bar-sabas and Silas, enter the assembly, and deliver the *letter*. This yielded "*consolation*." They approved of what had been done, they rejoiced at the prospect of so happy a termination of the dispute. *Bar-sabas and Silas* (see on verse 22), who were religious teachers, being the greater strangers, address the assembly. They instructed the brethren, both in Christian doctrine generally, and respecting the directions which they had brought from Jerusalem in regard to the law of Moses. The epistle from Jerusalem was brief, and there would be room for explanations. The opportunity was a favorable one, too, for confirming the brethren in their attachment to Christ, and in their mutual Christian affection. Such was the method of settling this first discussion in the Christian Church. How simple, wise and successful! Had the example been imitated in after times, how much persecution would have been avoided! how much disgrace would have been spared the Christian name! This ecclesiastical assembly at Jerusalem is a model for all times. It brought forth a spirit which frees from the yoke of the ritualist, the prejudices of the bigot, the arrogance of the self-righteous. *Let go in peace*, probably a reference to the form of dismissal. (See James ii. 16.) It would appear that both Judas and Silas returned to Jerusalem, to give in their report to the Church, but that Silas came back to Antioch. *Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch*. Critics are in general agreed that it was at this time that the dispute between Paul and Peter, mentioned in Gal. ii. 11-16, occurred. *With many others also*. There was a flourishing Church at Antioch. At this time it contained more Christians than any other city in the world except Jerusalem. We do not know who the other teachers were, but among them were Mark and Silas.

26. And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. —Chap. xiii. 4, &c.

It was upon this occasion that one of those incidents occurred which even in the lives of the best and holiest of men, too plainly evidence that the old Adam still remains, partially uprooted, partially overcome, but still continually struggling for the pre-eminence, and sometimes, alas! obtaining it. *And visit our brethren*. Observe the manner in which Paul speaks of the persons referred to: "*our brethren*." He does not avail himself of his office, talents or success, to lord it over God's heritage. He exercised no dominion over their faith, but was a helper of their joy. Christians are new creatures, they are born again, but they are born of the same Spirit, redeemed by the same blood, justified by the same righteousness, heirs of the same glory, and while partaking of "the common salvation," a communion subsists between them, unaffected by any difference of opinion, or distinction of circumstances. *See how they do*. This was natural. The persons Paul now wished to see were known to him and Barnabas. They had been blessed under their former ministry. What wonder, then, that they should wish to water what they had planted, or, that having sown the seed, they wished to see the blade, the ear, and full corn in the ear. Besides, wherever the good seed was sown the enemy was sure to sow tares. It was, therefore, also necessary that Paul should be concerned to visit "every city" where he and Barnabas had labored, to know their estate, to refute any error in doctrine, to oppose any corruption in practice, to warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to uphold the weak, and to help them much who had believed through grace. "Let us go again," &c. Paul was never weary in well-doing. He made the end of one good work the beginning of another, and considered nothing done while anything remained to be done. "Let us go," &c. He did not wish to go alone, but to take Barnabas with him as before. He knew that two were better than one. If one fell, the other would lift him up again. If one was tempted, the other could warn him. If one was distressed, the other could comfort him. If one was perplexed, the other could counsel him. Besides, he remembered that his Lord and Master in

the mission of the Seventy, had "sent them forth two by two," &c.

37. And Barnabas determined to take with them John whose surname was Mark.—Chap. xii. 12, 25.

*John, whose surname, &c.* (See on chap. xii. 12, 25.) Barnabas probably believed that in "departing from them from Pamphylia" (see on chap. xiii. 13), John Mark had withdrawn only for a time for the purpose of visiting his pious and widowed mother at Jerusalem, or, that if there was any blame, the second excursion would wipe off the disgrace of the first; but as Mark was "sister's son to Barnabas," it is not improbable that the feelings of relationship might a little influence the Apostle, and induce him to look with a more favorable eye upon the desertion of his nephew, than he would have done upon that of a stranger, or than could be expected from Paul.

38. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.—Chap. xiii. 13.

Paul was unwilling. (See on xiii. 13.) He reflected on our Lord's words, "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." He felt a very different spirit in himself, and deemed it right to notice a misconduct which, if tolerated in a public character, might be injurious by example. Perhaps both these good men erred a little; the one being too partial, and the other too severe. There is here an instance of the imperfection of good men, which the word of God does not conceal.

39. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; 40. And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. (Chap. xiv. 26, xx. 32.)

*Sharp contention, an angry dispute.* It would appear that sharp words passed between them. *That they departed asunder, or, separated, one from the other.* Since they could not agree about Mark. And this separation was highly conducive to the progress of the Gospel. The Lord can make the wrath of man to praise Him. "The one stream of missionary labor thus became divided into two parts, and the more regions were in consequence supplied with the water of life." But although Barnabas and Paul separated, yet we are not to suppose that they did so in anger. Paul, in his epistles, speaks of Barnabas

with the greatest respect and affection. (1 Cor. ix. 6; Gal. ii. 9.) And he was afterward not only fully reconciled to Mark, but employed him as a companion in his labors. He recommends him to the favorable regard of the Church of Colosse (Col. iv. 10), mentions him among the number of his fellow-laborers (Phile. 24), and in the last epistle which he wrote directs Timothy to bring Mark with him, because he was profitable for the ministry. (2 Tim. iv. 11.) And doubtless also this dissension resulted in good to Mark himself; the severity of Paul would lead him to repentance and renewed activity, whilst the mildness of Barnabas would preserve him from despondency, and strengthen the good which was in him. There is no reason to doubt that this is the same Mark whose praise is now in all the Churches as the author of the second Gospel, and who has thus so nobly made amends for the fault committed in his youth. *So Barnabas took Mark, &c.* The breach between Paul and Barnabas did not take them off from their work, or relax their zeal in the noble cause to which they were pledged. Only it is observable, not only that they moved widely different from each other, but that each repaired to his native country, Barnabas sailing for Cyprus, and Paul traveling through Syria and Cilicia. Were they, in taking these directions, guided by the Holy Ghost, or did they follow their own prudence and inclination? The latter might not have been inconsistent with the former. The Spirit of inspiration often availed itself of common occurrences, and fell in with the natural views and feelings of the individual favored with it. Partial affections are not incompatible with general benevolence, but may be the very means of aiding it. A peculiar regard for a land in which we were born and trained up, among all the endearments of life, is natural and unavoidable, and deserving of encouragement; and it is certain that we cannot show our love to it in any way so nobly and importantly, as by endeavoring to promote the spread and success of the Gospel in it. *Being recommended, &c.*—being commended to the favor of God for providential protection, and for the aid of the Holy Spirit. Luke mentions only the



dismissal and recommendation of Paul, because it was *his* history he was engaged to write. But we have every reason to believe that they did the same for Barnabas when he left them, as they did for Paul. They would be alive to the excellences of both these men of God; they would be tender toward both, they would pray for both. Let us not fail to imitate the interest which the brethren in Antioch took in the Evangelical tours of Paul and Barnabas. Let us, in like manner, perpetually commend to the Divine favor the faithful missionaries who have gone forth from among us to the regions of spiritual death. (Comp. 3 John, verses 5-8.)

41. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.—aChap. xvi. 5.

The disciples in Syria and Cilicia seem to have been disturbed by the doctrines of the Judaizers; to them the decree from the council at Jerusalem was specially directed (chap. xv. 23), and hence Paul's work would be to quiet these disturbances, and to establish the Gentile Christians in their freedom from Jewish observances. By these means he would confirm the Churches, and as formerly, at Antioch, the reading of the letter caused great joy among the brethren, the same would be the case in Syria and Cilicia.

How painful it is to find in tracing the history of these men of God, as well as that of Abraham, or Jacob, or David, or Peter, to find in each and all, the same remnants of the old and carnal nature raising its hydra heads through all the opposing influences of Divine grace, and proving that endowed as these good men unquestion-

ably were with the largest outpouring of the Spirit of God, they were still the same poor, fallible mortals as ourselves, still carrying about with them a body of sin and death, still having the same need of daily application to the atoning blood of Christ, still the same necessity for the daily renewing of His good Spirit. Let us, however far we may have advanced in the Christian life, lay this seriously to heart, that the greatest knowledge, the highest spirituality of thoughts and views, will not justify the smallest deviation from Christian conduct or Christian tempers. It was a serious blot in the character of these Apostles, it cannot be an unimportant one in our own, if hastiness or sullenness, if unkindness or uncharitableness, be permitted to get the better of us, and to expose not only ourselves, but the religion which we profess, to the animadversions of the ungodly or profane. Many who dwelt at Antioch, probably, had heard but little of the devotedness and piety of Paul and Barnabas, but *all*, we may well believe, heard of their dissension, their violence, and their separation. So will it be with us, while many, even of our nearest friends, will have little knowledge of the greater enlightening of our mind, the increased spirituality of our devotions, and of our more frequent and more profitable communion with God; all will know if we are less amiable, less kind, less charitable, in the hourly intercourse of life. It should, therefore, be our constant prayer that we may never be led by the allowance of any unholy temper, to injure the cause which we really desire to serve.

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1. With whom had Paul and Barnabas discussion? 2. Who were sent to Jerusalem touching the question in dispute? 3. Through what places did the Apostles pass? 4. What did the Apostles and elders come together to consider? 5. What did Peter say on the occasion? 6. What is said of the multitude in reference to Barnabas and Paul? 7. What did James say? 8. Who were sent to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas? 9. Repeat what was said in the letters sent by them. 10. What proposition did Paul make to Barnabas? 11. Why did not Paul think it good to take Mark with them? 12. What was the result of this difference of opinion? 13. To what place did Barnabas and Mark go? 14. What is said of Paul and Silas?

## CHAPTER XVI.

1 Paul having circumcised Timothy, 7 and being called by the Spirit from one country to another, 14 converteth Lydia, 16 casteth out a spirit of divination, 19 for which cause he and Silas are whipped and imprisoned, 26 The prison doors are opened, 31 The jailor is converted, 37 and they are delivered.

WHEN came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 2. Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

xiv. 6. b xix. 22; Rom. xvi. 21; 1 Cor. iv. 17. c 2 Tim. 1. 5. d vi. 3; 1 Titus v. 10; Heb. xi. 2.

*Derbe and Lystra.* (See on xiv. 6.) We have Derbe first, as lying nearest to the pass from Cilicia into Lycaonia and Capadocia. Paul probably traveled by the ordinary road through the "Cilician gates," a rent or fissure in the mountain chain of Taurus, extending from north to south through a distance of eighty miles. *Timotheus*, whose name is sometimes written in our Bible with an English termination, *Timothy*. He seems to have been a native of Lystra. Timotheus was already a *disciple*, when Paul, in the course of the present journey, came to this region; it may therefore be assumed that he had been converted during the first missionary journey, through the agency of Paul, who calls him his *son in the Lord* (1 Cor. iv. 17; 1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2), perhaps in Antioch in Pisidia. (See 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.) *Son of a certain woman, &c.* We learn elsewhere (2 Tim. i. 5) that his mother's name was Eunice, and his grandmother's name Lois, both eminent for faith. His father was a Greek and a heathen, for the word "*believed*" is not added to his name as it is to his wife's. Though it was contrary to the Jewish institution to contract matrimonial alliances with heathen nations (Ezra ix. 12), it was sometimes done, and was regarded as less heinous for females to marry Gentile husbands than for males to marry Gentile wives. *Which was well reported of, &c.* His reputation for Christian principle and for consistency was exalted and perhaps wide-spread. This testimony corresponds to his general character, as portrayed in both the epistles which Paul addressed to him (Philip ii. 19-23; 1 Cor. iv. 17, xvi. 10, 11; 1 Thes. iii. 1-6).

2. Him would Paul have to go forth with him, and took and circumcised him, because of the Jews (which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.—Gal. ii. 3-8, v. 1-3. 1 Cor. ix. 20.

*Him would Paul, &c.* He purposed to employ him in the ministry. *Circumcised him.* Known, says an able commentator, to be of a Gentile father, and probably uncircumcised by that father's authority, Timothy would not have been admitted to the synagogues of the Jews as a religious teacher had he been uncircumcised, nor Paul as his companion. As by this act Paul conceded, not the necessity of circumcision to salvation, but only removed a bodily hindrance to Timothy's acceptance among the Jews in various localities, he transgressed no principle he ever asserted. Yet at Jerusalem, when the Judaists made the necessity of circumcision an absolute requisite in the Christian system, he refused to allow Titus to be circumcised. (Gal. ii. 3.) This circumcision of Timothy, and that demanded circumcision of Titus, involved two very different questions. So nice, and yet so accurate, a line did this wise Apostle draw between the closely connected right and wrong. For peace and acceptance he would yield up to the very hairbreadth that divided right from wrong; but not all the world could compel him of that hairbreadth to sacrifice one half. It is a very difficult point, one greatly needing the enlightening power of God's grace to determine it, when to conform to the prejudices of those around us, and when to oppose them, resisting, if it be needful, even "unto blood." If we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, with a determination to follow it in all godly simplicity and sincerity, we will seldom be left in doubt upon any point affecting the welfare of our souls, or the glory of our God, we will never be left to mistake the dictates of a carnal, time-serving policy, for the inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

4. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. Chap. xv. 28, 29.

*Delivered them the decrees for to keep.* They indoctrinated them with the spirit of the letter entrusted to them. The sentence of the Council is called a *decree*, to signify that it was not merely an advice, or a simple declaration of their judgment, but an authoritative decision, to which the dis-

ciples were bound to submit, if they would remain in the fellowship of the Church. Although there was only one general decree embracing the several subjects of discussion, yet the historian speaks of it in the plural number, because it related to more points than one, declaring that circumcision and obedience to the law of Moses were not necessary to salvation, exempting the Gentiles from any obligation to observe it, and at the same time prescribing some limitation to the exercise of their liberty. As the decree was delivered to the Churches in other countries as well as to those of Syria and Cilicia, who had sent deputies to Jerusalem, the council which met there, must be considered as a general one, exercising jurisdiction over the catholic Church. (See on preceding verse, and on chap. xv. 23, &c.)

5. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.—Chap. xv. 41.

The result was two-fold: 1. Spiritual increase—"established in the faith." Their views became clearer, their principles struck a deeper root, their attachment to Christ attained a greater strength. Their religion passed from the region of theories and feelings into their heart and life. 2. Numerical increase—"increased in number daily." Let Christians improve in character, and converts will multiply daily. A spiritually improved Church will swell the number of converts. This confirmatory work, this work of improving the character of Christians, is pre-eminently the work of Christians in this age and land of ours.

6. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia; 7. After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not. 8. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

<sup>1</sup>Gal. i. 2; <sup>2</sup>1 Peter i. 1. <sup>3</sup>Amos viii. 11, 12; <sup>4</sup>1 Cor. xii. 11. <sup>5</sup>Rev. i. 4, 11. <sup>6</sup>2 Cor. ii. 12; <sup>7</sup>2 Tim. iv. 13.

*Phrygia.* (See on ii. 10.) To reach Phrygia from Iconium or Antioch, they would direct their way to the north-east. *Galatia* was bounded on the north by Paphlagonia and Bithynia, on the east by Pontus and Cappadocia (separated from them by the river Halys), on the south by Cappadocia and Phrygia, and on the west by Phrygia and Bithynia. Among the principal cities were Ancyra, made the metropolis by Augustus, and Pessinus. *And were forbidden*

*of the Holy Ghost, &c.* The Spirit spoke to them either through one of the prophets, or by an internal impression. By *Asia* here, is meant, *proconsular Asia*, a province in Asia Minor. (See on chap. ii. 9.) A similar prohibition was given by the Holy Spirit concerning *Bithynia*. (Verse 7.) The reason of this we cannot positively ascertain. It was perhaps, the design of Providence, that while the Churches in the neighboring provinces of Asia Minor might sound out the word into these regions, Paul and his companions might hasten to Europe—to the very center of heathenism. By this means the Gospel would in a given time be more widely spread than, other things being equal, it would have been, had they taken in all the adjacent places in their way. It is, however, certain, that in those places, now seemingly overlooked, the Gospel was afterward preached with success. (1 Peter i. 1.) Nor ought we to forget that the word of truth visits every country at the precise time and in the manner which Jehovah prescribes according to His good pleasure, who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. The Sun of Righteousness shall illuminate every part of the world the moment determined by the Supreme Lord of all. *Mysia*, the north-west province of Asia Minor. *Assayed*, endeavored, tried. *Bithynia*, a province on the northern coast of Asia Minor, to the east of Mysia. *But the Spirit suffered them not.* (See on verse 6.) *Came down to Troas*—a city on the north-east coast of the Ægean Sea, the boundary of Asia Minor on the west, the region of which was the scene of the Trojan war.

9. <sup>1</sup>And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man <sup>2</sup>of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. <sup>3</sup>Chap. x. 30.

*And a vision, &c.* The expression does not necessarily suppose that the revelation was imparted to Paul in a dream, for if so, it would have been more definitely stated. (Matt. ii. 22.) *A man of Macedonia.* We are not to suppose anything real, but merely a representation to the mind. Paul recognized his country from the words of the vision. *A man*, not Lydia nor the Philippian gaoler, but a representative man—"help us." *Macedonia*, a large region of

Europe, north of ancient Greece. Macedonia was the original kingdom of Philip, and of Alexander the Great, his son. It became universally distinguished by the victories of Alexander. In process of time, the country fell into the power of the Romans, and in the time of the Apostles it was a part of the Roman empire. *Prayed*, earnestly entreated him. *Come over unto Macedonia*. A glance at the map shows that from Troas, Paul would have to *pass over*, or cross the *Ægean Sea*, to enter Macedonia. *Help us*. The Macedonian spirit once, as a proud conqueror, crossed the Hellespont, and filled Asia with his glory, but now he stands as a suppliant before a man who has no other weapon than the sword of the Spirit. This, it has been well remarked, was a cry not of conscious *desire* for the Gospel, but of deep *need* of it and unconscious *preparedness* to receive it, not only in that region, but, we may well say, throughout all that western empire which Macedonia might be said to represent. It was a virtual confession that the highest splendor of heathendom, which we must recognize in the arts of Greece and in the polity and imperial power of Rome, had arrived at the end of all its resources. God had left the Gentile world to walk in their own ways. (Chap. xiv. 2.) They had sought to gain salvation for themselves, but those who had carried it furthest along the paths of natural development were now pervaded by the feeling that all had indeed been vanity.

10. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.—2 Cor. ii. 13.

*He had seen*—Paul alone saw it: yet all are guided thereby. *We endeavored*—Having sought out a ship. Here the language begins in the first person, plural number. From this some suppose Luke was present. *Assuredly gathering*—They were as certain from this vision as was necessary for undertaking the journey. *Called us*, literally, *called to us*. *To preach the Gospel unto them*, literally, *to evangelize them*. “Never,” says an eminent English minister, “in this world was there a ship equal to that in which these men sailed to Macedonia! One of our distinguished

writers, *Thomas Carlyle*, refers to the little ship *Mayflower*, which sailed from Southampton in 1620, having on board the Pilgrim Fathers—men of strong hearts, with religious faith in them, having an intense love of liberty, and determined to go where they could have freedom to worship God. In that little ship were the seeds and elements of the intelligence, civilization, literature, religion, which were one day to be developed in a new national life beyond the sea. But was there ever a *Mayflower* like this? When these men went down to the quay to look for a vessel, how little the world thought, how little those who saw them thought, how little they themselves knew, what history they were making! What effects were to flow from this movement of theirs! What an influence it was to have on the future character of dominant races! And yet in appearance, it was one of the most ordinary things that could possibly take place. These four men go on board a vessel—Paul, with his fervent soul and strong intellect; Silas, with his zeal and his prophetic gifts; Luke, with his scholarly culture and professional accomplishments, and Timothy, with his youthful earnestness, and as yet undeveloped powers for work. These four men, guided by the Divine Spirit, *came to Europe*, and that ship in which they sailed has in it the seeds of all that is to be developed in the religion and learning, the philosophy, legislation, art, science, and everything else that has given European nations the prominent place they occupy among the nations of the world.”

11. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; 12. And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony. And we were in that city abiding certain days.

•Phil. i. 1. Or, the first.

*We came with (or by) a straight course*: a nautical expression, referring to the favorable nature of the voyage—“we sailed before the wind.” Two days were occupied in sailing from Troas to Neapolis; whereas five days were consumed in sailing in a contrary direction from Neapolis to Troas (Acts xx. 6). *Samothracia*. A small island, eight miles long, and six broad, in the *Ægean Sea*, so-called because it lay off the coast of Thrace, and to distinguish it from the island of Samos, off the coast of Ionia

(Acts xx. 15). In ancient times it was celebrated for its religious mysteries—a mixture of Grecian and Oriental mythology. Its modern name is Samotraki. *Neapolis*, a seaport of Thrace, situated on the Strymonic gulf, the modern name of which is Kavalla. As they were aware that duty called them to Macedonia, they continued their journey without delay, until they reached the Macedonian city of *Philippi*. This city, built by Philip, the father of Alexander, was on a steep acclivity of the Thracian Hermus, where this range slopes toward the sea, on a small stream called Gangas, or Gangitas. It was at some distance east of the Strymon, and not on that river, as some have said. The adjacent plains are memorable in Roman history as the places where Julius Cæsar vanquished Pompey, and the battle was fought between the Republicans under Brutus, and the followers of Antony and Augustus. "*Chief*" designates it as one of the first places there, and "*colony*" explains the ground of the epithet. Augustus had sent a colony thither, which had conferred upon it new importance. The church at Philippi was the first church in Europe which the Apostle established. *Certain days* denotes apparently the few days which they spent there before the arrival of the Sabbath.

13. And on the sabbath, we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made: and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.—Sabbath day. xxxi. 3.

*The Sabbath*—the first after their arrival, as the words imply. The Sabbath is peculiarly "the accepted time, and the day of salvation." It is commonly the day in which the sinner is awakened, and brought to "seek those things that are above," and the people of God, by "waiting upon Him," have "their strength renewed." A river side, viz., the Gangas. (See on verse 12.) *Where prayer was wont to made.* The Jews, besides their synagogues, had small houses in retired situations, where, free from noise and disturbance, they could enjoy occasional devotion, either alone, or with any of their connections. Because of the use to which they were appropriated, they were called *Proseuchæ*, or places of prayer. Nothing renders a people dear to God but their conformity to Him, and nothing

makes a place of worship sacred but the Divine Presence.

"Where'er we seek Him He is found,  
And every place is hallowed ground."

*The women which resorted thither.* It appears that the whole company assembled for the hallowed purpose of prayer were women. Thus, even from the earliest ages of the Church of Christ, has the weaker sex put to shame the stronger. In the days of Christ Himself they were the last who left His cross, they were the first who sought His tomb. In the times of the greatest spiritual deadness, when an almost universal worldliness has overspread the Church of Christ, religion, true, vital religion, has been found still lingering in the female bosom, and in the times of the greatest spiritual revival, it has always been observed that women have been foremost in the holy cause.

14. † And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.  
\*Luke xxiv. 45.

*Lydia* was a common female name among the Greeks and Romans. *A seller of purple.* The guild of *dyers* at Thyatira have left inscriptions, still existing, showing the accuracy of our narrative. The celebrity of the purple dyeing of the neighborhood is as old as Homer. Thyatira was a city of the province of Asia. Thus, although forbidden to preach the word in *Asia*, their first convert at Philippi is an *Asiatic*. *Which worshipped God, i. e.*, was a proselyte to the Jewish faith, and as such present at this meeting. She was a moral but not a changed character, piously inclined, but not a possessor of piety, she worshiped God according to the light she had, and was thereby ready for further discoveries of Christ and salvation. *Heard us.* "Faith cometh by hearing." It is a privilege to have the sound of salvation in the ear, but a far greater one to experience the power of salvation in the heart. Lydia heard with attention, and no doubt with prayer, we are quite sure she heard with pleasure, because she heard with profit. "*Whose heart the Lord opened.*" What does this imply, but that her heart was shut?—shut, as ice shuts up the water that it cannot flow—shut, as the miser shuts up his bowels of compassion from

the poor—shut, as a door is shut to keep the house from the entrance of the owner. This is our Saviour's own image: "Behold, I stand at the door," &c. (Rev. iii. 20.) "The Lord opened." The work is ascribed to Him whose power enables, and whose pity constrains Him to do it. Ministers may open their Divine commission, but they cannot open the hearts of their hearers to receive it. We could as easily create a world as convert a soul. "Whose heart," &c. Grace opens the heart. This gives us a delightful and interesting view of conversion. Its seat is the heart—and its extent is intimated by the opening of the heart. *That she attended*, &c. If some are called without the direct and obvious instrumentality of the Word of God, they always evince the divinity of their calling by their attraction and attention.

15. And when she was baptized, and her household she brought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.—Heb. xii. 2.

*She was baptized*, &c. A profession of religion, without the reality is nothing, but we are not only to be Christians, but to appear such. "With the heart," indeed, "man believeth unto righteousness," but "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Lydia, by her submission to the ordinance of baptism, proclaimed herself a Christian. And, let it be observed, she did this *immediately*, without consulting with flesh and blood, and also without reserve *relatively*, as well as *personally*, devoting her whole family to the sacred rite. In view of the many instances of household baptism following forth with upon the faith of the householder (see x. 2, 44—48, xvi. 15, 30—33, xviii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 16, xvi. 15), it is not easy to doubt that it was just such a consequence in the family as circumcision would have been in case of an induction into Judaism. Even admitting however that no inference for infant baptism is hence deducible, it should be remembered that the practice does not rest on inference, but on the continuity and identity of the covenant of grace to Jew and Christian, the sign only of admission being altered. The Apostles, as Jews, would have proposed to administer baptism to the children, and Jewish or proselyte converts would, as matter of course, have acceded to the pro-

posal, and that the practice thus by universal consent, tacitly (because at first unquestioned) pervaded the universal Church, can hardly with any reason be doubted. *She brought us*, &c.—as an expression of her desire to gain more spiritual improvement from them, and of her liberality. She was willing to "minister to the necessities of the saints," and "given to hospitality."

16. And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain: by sooth-saying:—1 Sam. xxviii. 7. \*xix. 24.

Never does our spiritual enemy rage more fiercely than when we are going to prayer. *A certain damsel*—girl, young woman. *A spirit of divination*—a *Pythonic* spirit. Python was the serpent that guarded Delphi, which was slain by Apollo, and hence that god was called Pythias. In the temple of Apollo the organ of the oracle was always a woman, said to be inspired by the god. The heathen inhabitants of Philippi accordingly regarded this woman as inspired by Apollo, and Luke here uses the term in accommodation to their views. *Brought*, yielded or afforded. *Masters*, joint-owners or employers. *Gain*. Fraud supports such gain: true religion does away with it. *Sooth-saying*, divining, telling fortunes, by the aid of the spirit which possessed her. Thus advantage was taken of the public credulity and superstition.

17. The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. \*Gen. xiv. 18, 22. †Chap. xviii. 26; 1leb. x. 20.

*These men are*, &c. It is unnecessary to suppose that she merely uttered what she had heard spoken by others, but the case is similar to the testimonies of evil spirits in favor of Christ recorded in the Gospels, however such testimonies are to be explained. (Matt. viii. 29; Mark iii. 11; Luke viii. 28.) Either the evil spirits were constrained, against their will, to bear this testimony to Christ and His disciples, or they wished to make it appear that they were confederate with them.

48. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And she came out the same hour. \*Mark. i. 25, 34. †Matt. xvi. 17.

*Many days*. She persevered in this, pursuing them wherever they went. *Paul*,

being grieved, &c. The Apostle felt wounded, as the woman often repeated the act, because he could not accept of any recommendation and support, or any honor from a spirit which was not of God. Hence, he suddenly turned to the woman who was following him, and, *in the name of Jesus Christ*, by His authority, and as His representative, commanded the spirit to come out of her, withdraw the preternatural control now exercised. *The same hour*, or, as the same phrase is rendered elsewhere (Luke ii. 38), *that instant*. All that is intended is, that the miraculous effect, as usual, was instantaneous.

19. † And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the market place, unto <sup>d</sup>the rulers. 20. And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city: 21. And teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. bix. 24-27. †Or, *court*. <sup>d</sup>Matt. x. 18. <sup>e</sup>1 Kings xviii. 17.

*Gains, &c.* An irremediable change had taken place in the girl, showing both power in the Apostle and a previous involuntary condition in her. So impressed was the Apostolic superiority over the infernal or the pagan that we wonder not that a *Church* of intense faith arose in Philippi, as we shall find to have been the fact by reading Paul's most rich and loving EPISTLE to the Philippians. But, alas for these traders in oracles! they are unable to conjure another response from their pythoness. *Trouble our city*. Behold another instance of that accusation, which from the days of Christ Himself to the present hour has been put, by our spiritual enemy, into the mouth of the opponents of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the Apostles troubled the city! Yes, they did trouble it, but it was, as the angel troubled the pool of Bethesda, that he who entered in, might be healed. Blessed is that city, or that family, or that heart, which is so troubled; godly trouble is the first forerunner of that "peace of God which passeth all understanding." *Teach customs, &c.* This second charge evidently pointed to the Gospel which Paul preached, and it was manifestly made to render his punishment certain and condign, as in the eye of the Roman law, there could scarcely be a greater crime, than to make any innovations on the established religion of the empire.

22. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*.

The *multitude* probably cried out tumultuously, as on other occasions (see Luke xxiii. 18; chap. xix. 28, 34, xxi. 30, xxii. 22, 23), and the *magistrates*, without giving the Christians a trial (verse 37), rent off their clothes, viz.: by the lictors, whose distinguishing badge of office was a bundle of small rods tied together, which they carried as the warrant of their authority, and with which they kept themselves in readiness to execute the commands of their superior.

23. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely: 24. Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.—2 Cor. vi. 5, xi. 23, 25; 1 Thes. ii. 2.

After the scourging they were consigned to the care of the jailer. That functionary, supposing from the particular nature of his instructions that the two men were no ordinary criminals, put them in the *inner prison*. This was the farthest interior of the building, in which those accused of heinous crimes were kept for greater security. It was a dark and loathsome dungeon, where the feet often sank in mud—where the entrance, like that of a pit, was so small that the prisoner required to be *thrust* through the narrow openings in the wall that led into it, and where there was not an object to relieve the awful solitude. *In the stocks*. In the original only *the wood*. This was an instrument for torture as well as confinement. It was a heavy piece of wood with holes into which the feet were put, so far apart as to distend the limbs in the most painful manner. *Eusebius* mentions, speaking of the martyrs in Gaul, that their feet were stretched to *the fifth hole in the wood*.

25. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. †Isa. v. 13. †Ps. xxxiv. 1.

At midnight, kind nature's season for sleep, they were sleepless. They could not sleep—their bleeding wounds drove sleep away. Yet, instead of spending those midnight hours of physical torture in bitter imprecations on their enemies, or rebellious murmurings against heaven, they *prayed* and *sang*. Those old prison walls, which were accustomed to echo groans and sighs, resounded now with unearthly strains of joy and praise. There

was midnight without, but sunshine within; their bodies were in chains, but their souls were free. Their religion bore them aloft to regions of unrestricted liberty and unclouded light. "The limb feels nothing in the stocks," says *Tertullian*, "when the mind is in heaven." In what situation can we ever be placed, with such an example as this before us, in which we can consider prayer as hopeless, or praise as inappropriate? How does it condemn many, who, placed in the midst of prosperity and happiness, hardly know what it is from the heart to praise God! Let us be more in praise, as well as prayer, for a thankless Christian is one of the most disgraceful characters upon which the all-seeing eye of God can ever fall. *Prisoners heard them*—God meant this midnight song not only for the sufferers' joy, but for the prisoners' hearing. Let men know how Jesus is glorified in the exaltation of His martyrs.

26. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

iv. 31. *Isa.* xlii. 7; chap. v. 19, xii. 7, 10.

*Suddenly*—before the last accents of their praises had died upon the ear, before the last sentence of their petitions had fallen from their lips, the cry for deliverance was heard and answered. *A great earthquake*—which, of course, was preternatural. Its effects were moderated by the power of God, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, but it was not thrown down. When the doors were opened and all bonds were loosened, the other prisoners felt the power of God, and, deeply impressed by the miracle, remained motionless in their cells.

27. And the keeper of the prison awakening out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

Roused from his slumbers by the crash of the earthquake, and seeing the prison doors thrown wide open, overwhelmed with terror, the keeper of the prison attempts to destroy himself. The sword was at hand. Probably he wore it at his side. The law was, that if a prisoner escaped, the keeper was liable to the intended punishment of the fugitive. Self-destruction was considered by the Romans as not only lawful, but a duty or a virtue

under certain circumstances. Cato's suicide was celebrated as a heroic act; and by a singular historical coincidence, that very city of Philippi, or its neighborhood, had been signalized within a hundred years, not only by the great defeat of Brutus and Cassius, but by the suicide of both, and by a sort of wholesale self-destruction on the part of their adherents, who had been proscribed by Octavius and Anthony. What an awful and impious deed is suicide! How can he expect a welcome in the other world, who rushes into it stained with his own blood? Will the Father and Fountain of Life show mercy to those who indignantly throw His own gift in His face? The self-murderer, intent only upon escaping from his present agony, listens to none of these considerations. His furious spirit breaks from its confinement, and leaps into eternity.

28. But *Paul* cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

<sup>k</sup>*Prov.* xxiv. 11, 12; <sup>l</sup>*1 Thes.* v. 15. <sup>m</sup>*Ecl.* vii. 15—17.

*But Paul.* Master of the situation here as ever. Perceiving in a moment how matters stood, he uttered the noble entreaty here recorded. What kindness did it exhibit on the part of the Apostle toward his cruel keeper! Good men ever have been, and are, men of tender and compassionate dispositions, not so solicitous for their own liberties, as for others' lives. The Apostles might have held their peace, and suffered the jailer to slay himself, and thereby made their own escape, but they preferred the jailer's eternal salvation before their own temporal liberation and happiness. Christianity says, *Do thyself no harm*, to every man who is ruining himself by sin, whether in health, in estate, in body, in intellect, in soul. All sinners are suicides, cruel to themselves, relentless upon their own natures.

29. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas: 30. And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?—*Jer.* v. 22 <sup>n</sup>ii. 37, ix. 6.

*A light*, rather, *lights*, the original word is plural, not singular. *Sprang in*, &c. His conscience is roused, he enters the place where Paul and Silas are confined, he sees them with the chains stricken off, and notwithstanding the uproar of nature and marks of suffering that were on their persons, standing with calm dignity, and



beginning to tremble, he falls down at their feet, then leads them forth from the "inner" to the "outer" prison, which was no doubt a more spacious, light and airy place. *And said*: how has the lion become a lamb! *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* "Tell me of that God to whom your prayers and praises were addressed, and who has wrought for you this wonderful deliverance, tell me of that Being whose name you bear—how can I propitiate His anger, secure His favor, deliver my soul?" How often are the afflictions of God's people productive of good! How soon can the Spirit of God reach the heart, and enter the conscience like a conqueror at the head of an army! The jailer's question expresses, 1. *Conviction*. This is the work of the Holy Spirit on the mind of a sinner, whereby he is convinced that he is a sinner, and is properly affected with it. 2. *Fear*. It is the language of terror and consternation. And have not sinners much to fear? Is it not "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." 3. *Desire*. The awakened soul has new desires, or, rather, all its desires are brought into one, and that one is salvation. 4. *Hope*. The poor jailer, though a heathen, did not say, "There is no mercy for me, I am such a sinner I never can be saved." But his question seems to say, as the repenting Ninevites said, on the preaching of Jonah, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" (Jonah iii. 9.) 5. *A confession of ignorance*. The man wanted to be saved, but he knew not *how*, nor can any man know this aright until he is taught of God. 6. *Legality*. By this is meant, cleaving to the law, or "going about to establish our own righteousness" by the deeds of the law, or our good works. The jailer thought it must be by *doing* something that we must obtain the pardon of our sins and eternal life. 7. *Submission*. Poor man! His heart was humbled for sin, he saw nothing but eternal destruction before him, and would give all the world to avoid it. As if he had said, "Show me my duty, and let it be ever so difficult, I am ready to do it."

31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

32 Hab. ii. 4; John iii. 16, 36, vi. 47; chap. xiii. 39, xiv. 23.

They overlook his injurious treatment of them. They do not take advantage of his present distress to insult him, as the council did Judas, when he cast down the pieces of silver. (Matt. xxvii. 4.) How brief, simple, direct, blessed and soul-satisfying a reply! All that the most despairing sinner could need, all that the most weary and heavy laden sinner could require, all that the most ignorant sinner could ask, is contained in these few but comprehensive words: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* Enough at that moment for the jailer to have his faith directed simply to the Saviour, with the assurance that this would bring his soul the needed and sought salvation—the *how* being a matter for after teaching. Awakened souls are to be led immediately to Christ. "Why should I wait? I want a mediator between me and God, but I do not want a mediator between me and Christ. I *must* come to Him as I am. And I *may* come, with entire confidence of being saved, if I simply and entirely rely upon the finished work of the salvation which Jesus wrought out, and receive Him in the whole of His Mediatorial character into a penitent and renewed heart." *And thy house, or household*. This does not mean that they were to be saved by his faith, but by faith in the same Saviour. The children of believers enjoy great advantages from the prayers, the instructions, and the example of their parents, which are often followed, through the blessing of God, with happy effects.

32. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

31 Rom. i. 14, 16. 32 Luke v. 29. 33 Rom. v. 11.

*And they spake, &c.* They begin at once to proclaim succinctly to him and to all who belong to him, the word concerning Jesus Christ. *The same hour of the night*—unseasonable as it may have seemed *Washed their stripes*. How meek, merciful and compassionate is he now! The grace of God softens the hardest hearts, sweetens the sourest natures, and changes the most barbarous and bloody dispositions. *And was baptized, &c.* This took place during the same night. The rite would appear to have been administered in the court

within the inclosure of the prison. And from verse 33 we may infer that the jailer's baptism occurred in immediate connection with his own act of washing the bloody marks made by the rods on the persons of Paul and Silas. Paul's message to the magistrates (verse 37) clearly implies that he had not left the prison. Here is the first mention of a Christian *household*. Whether it included children, also in that case baptized, is not explicitly stated, but the presumption, as in other cases of households baptized, certainly is that it did. Yet the question of infant baptism must mainly be determined on other grounds, and such incidental allusions form only one part of the historical materials for ascertaining the practice of the Church. *He set meat before them*. Here is another evidence of the entire change as to his religious character the jailer had undergone. *And rejoiced, believing* (*i. e.*, as the expression implies, "rejoiced because he believed") *in God*—as a converted heathen, for the faith of a *Jew* would not be so expressed. That he believed also in Jesus is implied. *With all his house*—the wondrous change on himself and the whole house filling his soul with joy. (See on verse 33.)

35. And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go. 36. And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. 37. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves, and fetch us out. 38. And the sergeants told those words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. 39. And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. 40. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

(xxii. 5. Dan. vi. 18, 19: Matt. x. 16. Ex. xi. 8: Rev. iii. 9. Matt. viii. 34. Verse 14.

*And when it was day*. On the next morning, the duumviri, who had, after further reflection, during the interval, perceived that they had acted with too much precipitation, and who had probably received tidings of the occurrences in the prison during the night, were willing to dispose of the whole matter at once, by dismissing the prisoners. They accordingly sent an order by the lictors to the jailer, directing him to dismiss those people—an order expressed in haughty and contemptuous terms. *Go in peace*. The jailer was, doubtless, happy at receiving the magistrates'

message, and rejoiced that the storm of persecution had passed away. Presuming that Paul and Silas would at once embrace the opportunity of being set at large, he addressed them with affectionate desires for their prosperity, as if he had said, Go and prosper, peace be with you. His language to them seems to have implied a suggestion from the magistrates, that they would depart from the city.

*They have beaten us openly uncondemned, &c.* "Openly" and "privily" are opposed: the *injury* had been *public*: the *reparation* must be *public* also. *Being Romans*. By the Valerian Law, passed in the year of Rome 254, and the Porcian Law in the year of Rome 506, Roman citizens were exempted from stripes and tortures: by the former, till an appeal to the people was decided, by the latter, absolutely. Another irregularity had been committed by the magistrates, in scourging them *uncondemned*. *Let them come themselves, &c.* "Let these magistrates come themselves, and fetch us out, and this will be a practical confession that they were wrong, and a practical vindication of our conduct as citizens." A great soul will repudiate favors offered on mean, unjust, or unworthy grounds. A good man will refuse liberty, social influence, wealth, unless they can be honorably and righteously obtained. *They feared . . . . and came and besought them, &c.* A wholesome fright is thus administered to them as to the want of foresight they have shown in their injustice, and they actually so far humbled themselves, that they come, and now with good words seek to appease these ill-used Roman citizens: they, in fact, personally *brought them out*, and beseech these now free persons, that, for the prevention of further disorder, they will of their own accord leave the city.

From Paul's behavior on this occasion, we may learn that Christian humility is not always to abase itself externally, and to be all-forbearing on every occasion, as the world itself only reckons it as hypocrisy. Any one whom God has put in possession of civil and social rights should mention them, and make use of them, in case of need, for the service of God's kingdom. Certainly only for the service of

God's kingdom, not for his own private benefit. It is perfectly clear that Paul did not desire any vindication of his honor for his own sake. It is also here evident that the Apostle was far from putting a fanatical or rigorous interpretation on our Saviour's principle of non-resistance (Matt. v. 39; Luke vi. 29), which, like many other precepts in the same discourse, teaches us what we should be willing to endure in an extreme case, but without abolishing our right and duty to determine when that case occurs. Thus Paul obeyed it, both in letter and in spirit, by submitting to maltreatment and by afterward resenting it, as either of those courses seemed most likely to do good to men and honor to God.

*Entered into the house of Lydia.* Her dwelling seems to have been their home while they were at Philippi. (See on verse 15.) Happy Lydia, to be honored and favored with such guests as Paul and Silas! But how short, how interrupted were these delightful visits, as brief as they were blessed! We must not expect on earth the joys of heaven. *The brethren*—the companions of their journey, or

those recently converted. *They comforted them, better, exhorted them*, that they should not be offended at adversity. "This assembling of believers in the house of Lydia," says *Baumgarten*, "was the first Church that had been founded in Europe." *And departed.* They wisely complied with the request of the magistrates, that they might not seem to express any degree of obstinacy or revenge, or give suspicion of any design to stir up any kind of sedition. Their course, be it observed, was not a *backward* one, but farther on into Macedonia. How it fared with the other prisoners, and how many of them were subsequently baptized, the narrative, which only follows the chief points in the history, omits to state: it also tells us nothing as to further gathering in of Christian brethren after this remarkable beginning. It is perhaps more than probable that the prisoners remained quiet in the gaol, and that no further disturbance of the usual order of things took place, for miracles sent in favor of the Gospel were not to be misused to effect a carnal liberty, nor was the arrangement of worldly matters to be interfered with more than was right.

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1. What is said of Timotheus? 2. What did Paul do to him? 3. Why did he circumcise him? 4. What "decrees" are referred to? 5. What is said of the Churches? 6. Why were Paul and Timotheus forbidden to preach the word in Asia? 7. What vision appeared to Paul? 8. What is said of Philippi? 9. What is said of the river side? 10. Who was Lydia? 11. What is said of her? 12. What is said of a "certain damsel"? 13. What did her masters do when they saw the hope of their gains was gone? 14. What did the magistrates do to Paul and his colleagues? 15. What occurred at midnight? 16. Describe the scene. 17. What did Paul say to the jailer? 18. What did the jailer do? 19. What did Paul and Silas answer to his question? 20. What followed? 21. What did the magistrates order? 22. How were Paul and Silas brought out of prison? 23. Where did they go?

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## CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Paul preacheth at Thessalonica,* 4 *where some believe, and others persecute him,* 10 *He is sent to Berea, and preacheth there,* 13 *Being persecuted at Thessalonica,* 15 *he cometh to Athens, and disputeth, and preacheth the living God to them unknown,* 34 *whereby many are converted unto Christ.*

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

The place which next invited the labors of Paul and Silas, accompanied by Timotheus, was Thessalonica, about a hundred

miles south-west of Philippi. They traveled thither on the great military road which led from Byzantium to Dyrrachium or Aulona, opposite to Brundisium in Italy. It was the Macedonian extension of the Appian way. They could accomplish the journey in three or four days.

On leaving Philippi, they came first to Amphipolis. This was the chief town in the southern region of Macedonia, and it

was situated on the river Strymon, at no great distance from its entrance into the Ægean Sea. It derived its name, which signified *around the city*, from the circumstance of the river flowing around it, and forming a peninsula, or, as others say, an island. It was originally a colony of the Athenians, and occasioned many difficulties between that nation and the Spartans. In the middle ages it was styled *Chryso-polis*, or the Golden City. A town still exists upon the ancient site, under the name of *Empoli*, or *Yamboli*. *Apollonia*, their next station, was about thirty miles south-west of Amphipolis, but the exact site is not known. *Thessalonica*. No city on the great Egnatian Way surpassed Thessalonica in importance. Under its ancient name of Therma it was the passage way of the great army of Xerxes in his invasion of Greece. It received its new name, Thessalonica, from a sister of Alexander the Great, on being rebuilt by her husband, and this name it still retains in the abbreviated form of Saloniki. The Apostle found it the most populous city of Macedonia, and until the founding of Constantinople it was virtually the capital of northern, if not of entire Greece. This city was, on several accounts, a proper theater on which to display the light of the glorious Gospel. It was the metropolis of all those countries comprehended in the Roman province of Macedonia. Here the proconsul and questor resided, which rendered it the seat of government. Hence it would be the place of resort for all those in the province distinguished for their knowledge of philosophy and the polite arts, and these would not probably, from its vicinity to Greece, be few in number. Many of the inhabitants were therefore well qualified to judge of the evidences adduced by Paul of the truth of the Gospel. It was situated at the bottom of the Thermaic Gulf, and a place of considerable commerce, and, by consequence, admirably fitted for the spread of Divine knowledge. (See 1 Thes. i. 8, 9). The Jews must have established themselves, in large numbers, in this city, their synagogue appears to have been the only one that existed in northern Macedonia.

2. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the

Scriptures. 3. Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. \*Luke iv. 13, chap. ix. 20, xiii. 5, 14. \*Luke xxiv. 26, 46; chap. xviii. 28; Gal. iii. 1. \*Or, whom, said he, I preach.

As his manner (custom) was, of preaching the Gospel first of all in a synagogue, wherever he found one. *Three Sabbath days*. This implies a stay there of at least two weeks, but without forbidding the supposition of a much longer one, which some prefer, as more in keeping with the statements and allusions in the two epistles to the Thessalonians. The word *reasoned* denotes to carry on a discussion in the form of a dialogue. *Out of the Scriptures*, drawing his arguments, not from literature and philosophy, but from the Jewish Scriptures, for on these Scriptures the Jews built their hopes of the Messiah's coming. The right of private judgment in relation to the Scriptures is sacred and inviolable. (1 Thes. v. 21; 1 John iv. 1; 1 Cor. x. 15; 2 Cor. i. 24). *Opening and alleging*, laying open and setting before them, that Christ must needs have suffered. "Let me," says Chalmers, "compare Scriptural things with Scriptural, which is in fact comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Thence I shall gather that there was not only a 'need be' for the sufferings of Christ, in that it was so foretold in Scripture—and all its sayings must be fulfilled—but a 'need be' for an atonement in the deep-laid necessities of heaven's jurisprudence, and of the Divine character." *And risen again from the dead*. This, too, had been foretold in the Old Testament, and it was extremely important to convince the Jews on this point from their own Scriptures, that they might correctly understand the nature of the Messiah's office, and be led to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. *This Jesus . . . . is Christ*, this Jesus is the Messiah.

4. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. \*xxviii. 24. \*2 Cor. viii. 5; 1 Thes. i. 5, 8.

*Consorted with, i. e.*, adhered to. The *devout Greeks* were those who renounced heathenism, had become proselytes to the Jewish religion, and worshipped at the synagogue. They were called by the Jews "proselytes of the gate." The *chief women* were females of influence, members of

families of high rank. The converts were, 1. Numerous: "a great multitude." 2. Influential: "chief women." 3. Thoroughly united: they "consorted with Paul and Silas." Common beliefs awaken common sympathies. Christ gathers men of different types of character and grades of life together

5. † But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also: 7. Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus." 8. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9. And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

†Rom. xvi. 21. †Luke xxiii. 5: chap. xvi. 20. †Luke xxiii. 2 John xix. 12. †Matt. ii. 3; John xi. 43.

*Moved with envy*—at the numerous conversions which followed Paul's preaching. This passion has been the inspiration of all persecutions. *Lewd fellows*, idle loungers, the low rabble of the market, were gathered together to constitute a mob, and to create a riot. *Jason*, with whom (verse 7) Paul and Silas lodged. *To the people*—more probably, to the *demus*, public assembly, or town meeting. Thus does the Almighty sometimes overrule the hatred of Satan, by obliging him to make use of such instruments as shall, to the mind of every unprejudiced inquirer into Divine truth, convey an antidote with the poison, for what reflecting man can be for a moment misled by the arguments of those opponents to the truth of God's Word, who have so obvious a motive as an unholy life supplies, for desiring to find the tremendous revelations of the Gospel, its day of righteous judgment, and its eternity of wo to the unrepentant sinner, a "cunningly devised fable?"

*Found them not.* Paul and his companions, anticipating the mob, had probably withdrawn to some other house. *Certain brethren.* Some disciples or believers, converts to Christianity since Paul's arrival. *Rulers of the city*, in Greek one compound word, *politarchs*, the proper designation of the elective magistrates of this free city, as distinguished from the prætors or duumviri of a Roman colony. *Crying shouting, bawling, vociferating.* *These that have turned the world upside down, &c.* The complaint was, that the Apostles, by

their doctrine, had caused disturbance and disorder wherever it was preached, and would produce the same effects if they were permitted to remain in Thessalonica. In a certain sense it was true that the Apostles "did turn the world upside down." The Gospel professed an intention to change the face of human affairs, to overthrow all the religions which existed in the earth, to abolish idolatry, and withdraw the worshippers of the gods from the temples, to put an end to barbarous shows and licentious festivals, to make the slaves of vice sober, chaste, just and merciful, to call off the thoughts and affections of men from the vanities of time, and to raise them to eternal and invisible objects. This is the grand revolution which it proposes to accomplish, and which it did actually effect in many regions of the earth. Instead of shrinking from a similar accusation to that preferred against the Apostles, most earnestly do all true ministers desire and labor that the love of the world, and the fear of the world, and the ways of the world, may be so completely eradicated from the hearts of their hearers, that their enemies might again declare with truth, "These men have turned the world upside down," have emptied the assemblies of the worldly, the haunts of the profligate, the dens of the drunkard, the theaters of the ungodly, as their predecessors did the temples of the devil, until the love of God in Christ Jesus, and the delights of His service, and the blessedness of a close and intimate companionship with Him, shall, in the heart of every true believer, take the place of that system of idolatry and alienation from God, which is sealing up the world for the day of its final and irrevocable judgments.

*These all.* Not merely Jason and his guests, but the whole sect or party which they represent. *Do contrary.* They covered their envy under the garb of patriotism. It is one of the falsest, and yet one of the commonest prejudices that the world has always entertained against true religion, that it is an enemy to civil power and government. *Saying that there is another king, one Jesus.* This false charge seems to have been founded on Paul's preaching much at Thessalonica

concerning the triumphant coming and kingdom of Christ. This appears again and again in his two epistles. (See 1 Thes. i. 10, ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 13-18, v. 1, 2; 2 Thes. i. 5, 7-10, ii. 1-12), and particularly 2 Thes. ii. 5, where he refers to having often told them of *these things*, viz.: the course and destruction of Antichrist, by whom these Jews might perhaps misrepresent Paul as designating Cæsar.) *Had taken security of Jason and of the other* ("the others")—probably making them deposit a money-pledge that the preachers should not again endanger the public peace. What a warm friend the Gospel had won for Paul in Jason, in the course of a few days! It is a noble act to become surety for persecuted Christians, for the whole world is ashamed of them.

10. † And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews.—ix. 25: verse 14.

Those who had received the Gospel at Thessalonica, acted now as one man, and were zealous in their efforts to rescue the lives of the Apostles from the perils that threatened them. *Berea*, now *Verria*, was about forty-five miles south-west of Thessalonica, on the Astræus, a small tributary of the Haliacmon. The modern town has six thousand inhabitants, of whom two hundred are Jews, ten to fifteen hundred Turks, and the rest Greeks. *Went into the synagogue*, &c. Persecution had not cooled their zeal nor weakened their determination. The flight of a servant of God, is merely a change of place, but not of his work, of his mind, of his zeal, or of his love for the cross.

11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

xxPs. cxix. 99, 100. †James i. 21; 1 Peter ii. 2. †Isa. xxxiv. 16; Luke xvi. 29; xxiv 44; John v. 39.

*More noble*—of nobler disposition—stirred up, not to envy, but to inquiry. *Received the word with all readiness of mind*. Heard it, not only without prejudice, but with eager interest. (See Luke viii. 15; John vii. 17.) *Searched the Scriptures*, in order to ascertain whether the claims of Jesus, so zealously alleged and enforced by His Apostle, were well founded or not. They compared the prophecy with the event, the figure with the reality, the anticipation with the history and the fact.

Note, 1. We must search the *Scriptures*. Talk of Reason as a sufficient guide to the race! She has no just claim to any such character, and the individual who should venture to follow her direction, would be like a man carrying a little glimmering taper in his hand at noonday, with his back turned to the sun, as though his taper gave more light than that glorious luminary.

"Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars  
To lonely, weary, wandering travelers,  
Is Reason to the soul; and as on high  
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,  
Nor light us here; so Reason's glimmering ray  
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,  
But guide us upward to a better day,  
And as those nightly tapers disappear,  
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,  
So, pale grows Reason, at Religion's sight,  
So dies, and so dissolves, in supernatural light.

2. We must *search* the Scriptures. The Bible is so constituted as to develop constantly something new. It cannot be disposed of at one reading. It demands a vigorous and persevering exercise of the understanding.

3. We should search the Scriptures *with a teachable mind*. The state of the heart has the chief influence in the search after truth: humility, contrition, simplicity, sanctity, these are the handmaids of the understanding in the investigation of religion.

4. We should read the Scriptures *frequently*. A portion of every day should be set apart for this important work, and no business be allowed to interfere with the appointed duty, connected, as it is, with an interest vast as eternity. And we must read, not merely to *learn* the Divine will, but to *obey* it. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

5. We must examine the Scriptures for *ourselves*. The Bereans were not swayed by the authority of others. They took the old Scriptures in their own hands, unrolled the parchment, and sought the meaning. This is what all should do. There is much talk about the *right* of private judgment, we want more about the *duty*. It is the duty of *every man* to search the Scriptures, and none can neglect to do so, or be prevented from doing so, without fearful guilt. Every man has an understanding to be informed, a heart to be sanctified, a conscience to be quickened, and a soul to be saved, and therefore all

should peruse God's blessed word for themselves. (See Luke xix. 22, 23.)

12. Therefore many of them believed: also of honourable women, which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

They bowed to the force of evidence. It is childish to believe without evidence. It is wicked to resist evidence. It is noble to surrender to its force. 1. Their faith was *intelligent*. It came as the result of investigation. It was not a blind prejudice, a traditional idea, it was a living conviction. 2. Their faith was *general*: "Many believed." Influential women and men not a few. It may be that the women are mentioned before the men, because, as it frequently occurs, they were the first who received the faith, and the men were influenced by them. The growth of the kingdom of God depends, indeed, on the house and family, in which woman, unquestionably, finds an appropriate sphere.

13. ¶ But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. 14. And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea; but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. 15. And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus prior to come to him with all speed, they departed.

<sup>a</sup>Luke xii. 51. <sup>b</sup>Matt. x. 23. <sup>c</sup>Chap. xviii. 5.

*They came thither also.* "As Christ sends all His ministers," says an old commentator, "so the devil sends his messengers from place to place, and as the ministers of Christ are never weary of His service for the good of souls, so persecutors are restless; they will compass sea and land to harass and drive the faithful ambassadors of Christ from city to city, and, if it were in their power, to banish them out of the world. Lord! help all thy faithful ministers to execute this piece of holy revenge upon Satan, that we may be even with him for all his malice and spite against us. O, let us endeavor to do all the possible service, and the utmost good we can, wherever we come." *To go as it were, &c.* These words do not mean that they pretended to go the sea, but that they went actually in the direction of the sea. Pydna was the nearest seaport running up from the Ægean Sea. That Paul actually went by sea, although not absolutely certain, is made highly probable, not only by its being easier and usually shorter than the land route, but also by Luke's silence

as to any of the places through which he must have passed if he had gone by land. *Silas and Timotheus abode there still*—"to build it up in its holy faith, to be a comfort and support in its trials and persecutions, and to give it such organization as might be necessary."

*Athens*, the chief city of ancient Greece, and so named in honor of the heathen deity Minerva, whose name, in Greek, was *Athene*. *They departed*. Paul, on his arrival at Athens, sends (by his conductors, who returned) this message to Silas and Timotheus, to come to him as soon as possible.

16. ¶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, this spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.—Ps. cxix. 136: 2 Peter ii. 8.

Athens was the chief seat of heathen art and wisdom, and the very center of the glories of idolatry. Not content with the deities which the native superstition had established, the ancient Athenians opened their ports with boundless hospitality to the gods and goddesses of foreign countries, although by the law of the land no new object of worship could be admitted. The number of deities who had a local habitation and a name in Athens, increased in process of time to so prodigious an extent, that it became one of the distinguishing features of the city, and the progress of the inhabitants in demon worship was frequently made a subject for the sarcastic wit and satire of the poets and orators of classical antiquity. One writer, for instance, says that it was easier to find a god than a man in it. Another complains that the city was but "one immense altar," and the name by which it came afterward to be proverbially known was "the country and shop of the gods." *His spirit was stirred, &c.* He was thrown into an agony of grief at what he beheld. He had a standard of character unknown to any Athenian sage. He looked upon humanity with a new eye—an eye that peered through all its surroundings into its moral heart. Paul was not dead to the *æsthetic*, but he was intensely alive to the *moral*, and he felt that the *æsthetic* glory of Greece was but a gorgeous covering which genius had woven and spread over a vast cemetery of



ATHENS.



moral corruption. Whilst he could admire the skill that chiseled the marble into such exquisite forms, and piled it into magnificent superstructures, and the ingenuity of intellect, and the adroitness of logic, that propounded and discussed philosophical hypotheses, he felt that all this power was *perverted*, since it was all on the side of idolatry, and this "*stirred*" his spirit. Genius and intellect *wasted*, nay, worse than that, employed for immoral and impious ends, and immortal interests in danger of being wrecked and ruined. As a cultured and earnest friend of temperance gazes without one thrill of admiration on the æsthetic magnificence of some gin-palace, and feels only the most poignant distress at the thought to what the building is devoted, aye, and the greater the display of genius in the architecture, the greater his agony of soul on account of the immoral purposes for which it is employed, so Paul looked at Athens now. There is nothing in mere material civilization, even in its highest forms, to delight a truly enlightened soul.

17. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them, that met with him. 18. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbling say? Others some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. 19. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest, is? 20. For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. 21. (For all the Athenians, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.) \*viii. 2. \*Col. ii. 8. \*John xiii. 31; 1 John ii. 7, 8. \*Hos. viii. 12.

*Therefore, i. e.*, being aroused by the sight of so much idolatry. The spectacle around him urges him to commence preaching simultaneously to Jews and Greeks. The *market-place* was a place of public resort. *Met with him*, not that there was any formal meeting or previous appointment; the phrase denotes such as happened to be there. The *Epicureans*, or the disciples of Epicurus, who was born at Athens, about A. M. 3603, B. C. 341, were in reality atheists. Although in words they acknowledged God, yet they denied His Providence, and His active superintendence over the world. The soul, according to their notions, was material, and annihilated at death. Pleasure was regarded as the chief good, and although it

is said that their founder meant only that pleasure was the inseparable attendant of virtue, yet his disciples in the days of the Apostle, made sensual pleasure the great end of their existence. The *Stoics* were another sect of Grecian philosophers, who derived their name from *stoa*, "a porch," because Zeno their founder in the fourth century before Christ, and succeeding leaders, as Cleanthes and Chryssippus, used to teach in the painted porch or colonnade at Athens. In their physical doctrines they maintained two first principles, the active and the passive; the passive was matter; the active was God, who was one, though called by many names. Of Him they pantheistically believed that all souls were emanations. They held the entire independence of man, the truly-wise being sufficient in himself, but subject equally with the Deity to inexorable fate. Each person was to live according to the nature of things in general; while as to a future life their notions varied. Some held that all souls were re-absorbed into the Deity; others held the separate existence of all, or of only the good, till the general conflagration. The humbling doctrines of the cross, the preaching of Jesus and the resurrection world, it is clear, be distasteful to such philosophers. Epictetus and the emperor Marcus Aurelius were Stoics.

*What.* The pride of self-satisfied and scornful reason. *Babbling.* They treated him as a contemptible prating fool, who would speak while he was completely ignorant and destitute of common sense. *Setteth forth.* This word Paul retorts upon them, verse 23. *Strange.* Which the Athenians heretofore had not had. *The resurrection*, not only of Christ, but of all the dead, by Christ. Those philosophers thought, doubtless, that some such a hero, or inferior god (as they expressed by *daimons*, or *daimonia*, sometimes distinguished as the *dei minores*), was preached by Paul, when they heard him teaching that Jesus was the Son of God, the Saviour of men, who had been a mighty benefactor to the human race, and after death had been received up into heaven.

*Brought him.* Conducted him. *Areopagus.* A court consisting of the greatest and most accomplished men of Athens, which

was held on the Hill of Mars, an insulated rock in the midst of the city, and whose peculiar province it was to take cognizance of all matters of religion, such as the introduction of new gods, and the dedication of altars. *New doctrine.* The word signifies *newer*: the new imagination, or system, of the preceding year, month or week, soon became, like an almanac, out of date; it was the taste of the age and place to discard and antiquate every hypothesis as soon as it became vulgar, and to substitute some *newer* scheme in its place, and lively, ingenious students, especially in metaphysics, commonly run into this humor. If Paul, therefore, could start some *newer* speculation than the *newest* fashion of philosophy among them, his doctrine would at least gratify and amuse them. *All the Athenians . . . . spent their time . . . . but to tell or hear some new thing*, literally, "newer thing," as if what was new, becoming presently stale, they craved something still more new. This lively description of the Athenian character is abundantly attested by their own writers.

22. ¶ Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. 23. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you, 24. ¶ God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands: 25. Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things: 26. And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation: 27. That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being: as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are his offspring. 29. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the God-head is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. 30. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: 31. Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

¶ *For the court of the Aropanites.* Jer. 1. 38. ¶ *Or gods that ye worship.* Gal. iv. 8. xiv. 15. Matt. xi. 25. Avii. 48. Ps. 1. 8. Joh. xii. 10; Zech. xii. 1. Rom. xi. 36. Mal. ii. 10. Ps. xxxi. 15. Jxlv. 21. kviv. 17. Col. i. 17. Titus i. 12. Isa. xl. 18, &c. Rom. iii. 25. Luke xxiv. 47; Titus ii. 11, 12. Rom. ii. 16.

In these few words does Paul instruct the ignorance and refute the errors of these heathens.

*Ye men of Athens.* A style in which Demosthenes and their great orators used to address them. "Men of Athens," not to mere human beings, but to men. I speak not to men indiscriminately, but to

"you men of Athens," men of the most exalted city in the world. He is appreciative. He does not parade their evils; he recognizes their excellencies, and gives them full credit for the good he had seen.

*I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.* The Apostle referred to this familiar inscription as a text, from which to discourse to them on the being and character of the true and living God. It was a dexterous accommodation to a Christian purpose, of one of the favorite customs of that heathen people, for we are not to suppose that by the Deity described as the unknown god, the Athenians meant the pure and spiritual Being whom the Apostle proclaimed. "It was a custom," says Dr. Ellis, "among the ancients, to engrave on the altar the name of the god to whom it was dedicated, which, at Athens, in particular, was necessary to distinguish them amidst a conflux of the most remote and strange ones from all parts of the world."

Was the world made, or has it existed forever? This was one of the questions of the Athenians. *God made the world, and all things therein.* How is He to be worshipped? Will He inhabit the temples built in His honor? Will His favor be conciliated by the precious gifts which are offered at His altar? *He dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, and giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.* "They who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Does it concern men that there is a God? Are they bound to reverence Him, to consult His will? This the Epicureans denied. He has made men for this very purpose, and determined the bounds of their habitation that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him. Does He notice men's conduct? Are their ways seen by Him, and regarded by Him? *He is not far from every one of us.* Your own writers acknowledge this, for they say, *We are his offspring.* If, then, we are His offspring, he is not like unto gold or stone; He is a living God: and in him we live, and move, and have our being. These words must have made a deep impression upon

his hearers. The most splendid images of the gods stood before them—the masterpieces of ancient sculpture—and in sight of them Paul asserts the contrast which there must be between them and God. It is true that the thinkers among the Greeks had risen above such a degraded view of the gods as to suppose that they resembled their images, but anthropomorphism was very prevalent among the people, and in all probability Paul's audience was not entirely composed of philosophers.

Thus does the Apostle lay the foundation. He sweeps away the errors, that he may establish the truth. And then he proceeds to the more immediate subject of his ministry. *And the times of this ignorance God winked at.* The Apostle speaks of the Divine forbearance toward the heathen during the preceding ages, neither cutting them off, nor yet applying the effectual remedy. (Comp. xiv. 16, 17.) God had not seen fit to interpose, and make Himself manifest to those who “did not like to retain Him in their knowledge,” who gave no sign that they were really seeking after Him, and desiring to find Him. Now, however, the time of ignorance was past. *God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.* They are no longer to walk after their own desires; they are no longer to make to themselves gods which are no gods; or think by an outward formal worship to pay that reverence which the Divine majesty requires. Genuine repentance includes the conviction of the conscience, the contrition of the heart, the confession of the mouth, and the conversion of the life. *Because, &c.* Here is a motive presented to the Athenians, suited, if rightly apprehended, to lead them to renounce their unworthy opinions and their sinful practices. Repentance is, of course, indispensable to a preparation for the judgment day. *Appointed a day.* The period is fixed. That day who shall describe? No mortal can. The Judge Himself alone can describe it. He has done so. (See Matt. xxv. 31–46.) Who knows when the day will dawn? No one. It will come, perhaps, as the flood came—whilst men are eating and drinking, &c.; or as Christ came—in the deep hush of darkness, when men were

all asleep. We know not *when*, but we know it is *fixed*. It is registered in His unfulfilled plans. His providence is getting nearer to it every hour. It is “appointed,” it *must* come. *By that man, &c., i. e., the Lord Jesus.* The Father, and Spirit, and His authority, are all one, for they are all one God and one Judge, but judgment shall be particularly exercised and pronounced by our Saviour, God-man, *Jesus Christ.* By that eternal Word, by whom all things were made, all shall be judged, and so, He shall be *THE WORD* in that last act of time, as in the first. The powers of the world and of hell are combined against His throne, therefore, they shall be His foot-stool sitting on that throne. (Comp. Matt. xxv. 31, &c.; John v. 22, 27; Acts x. 42; 2 Cor. v. 10.) *Ordained*—“designated,” pointed out, as well as chosen and appointed. *The world.* Such language, taken in connection with the expression “a day,” beyond doubt teaches that the judgment will, in its essence, be a solemn judicial assize held upon all mankind *at once.* *In righteousness,* not merely righteously or justly, as an epithet of quality or manner, but in the actual and active exercise of righteousness or justice as a moral attribute or trait of character. The judgment here predicted will not only be a just one, but a grand display of God's essential justice. (Comp. Rom. i. 17, iii. 25.) *Hath given assurance,* sure evidence. Though Christ was put to death by the Jews, and thus became a victim for sin, yet God raised Him from the dead. By raising Him from the dead, God has set His seal to the doctrines He has taught; one of these doctrines is, that *He shall judge the world.* (See Matt. xxv. 31, &c.; John v. 25.) His resurrection established by the most incontrovertible evidence is therefore proof, an incontestible proof, that He will judge the world, according to His own declaration. It must be an exceeding joy and comfort to all that have believed on Jesus, that their Redeemer shall be their Judge. He who was judged for them, shall judge them, and pass sentence according to that covenant of grace which holds in Him, pronouncing them free from the wrath which He Himself endured for them, and heirs of that life

which he bought with His dearest blood. And it gives no less accession to the misery of the wicked, that the same Jesus whom they opposed and despised, so many of them as heard anything of Him, shall sit upon their final judgment, and pronounce sentence against them, not partially avenging His own quarrel on them, but most justly returning them the reward of their ungodliness and unbelief.

32. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. 33. So Paul departed from among them. 34. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

\*xxvi. 8. †Luke xiv. 18; chap. xxiv. 25.

The idea of existence beyond this present world was not altogether strange to the heathens. Vague notions floated amongst them that the soul might survive and continue to live in some new and different state. But what Paul meant by *the resurrection of the dead*, the resurrection of the whole man, with a body restored to him, with a consciousness of the same being which had lived, and thought, and felt, and acted, in this present world: this was entirely new to them, and when they heard of it, *some mocked*, and thought, no doubt, that it was enough to ask, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? And yet, had they inquired, instead of mocking, they might have found reason to see that it was not incredible that God should raise the dead. If man has been once formed—formed by the hand of a Creator—he may be formed again. God, who gave the first body, can restore "to every man his own body." But the seed fell by the wayside, and "the fowls of the air devoured it." In other cases, when the seed is sown, the surface is less hard, but the event is still the same. So it proved with another class of these

Athenian hearers. *Others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.* It was not so with the Ethiopian, who exclaimed, "Sir, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" It was not so with the gaoler at Philippi, who saw death on the one side and life on the other, and "at the same hour of the night was baptized, he and all his household, straightway." These Athenians put off the subject to a distance. *We will hear thee again of this matter.* Thou hast told an interesting tale. "When we have a convenient season, we will send for thee," and attend to it again. Nay, "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." The voice which, if ye had listened to it, might have been life from the dead; if ye now prove deaf to its summons, ye may hear no more forever.

Notwithstanding the rejection of the Gospel by the multitude at Athens, some received it in its saving power. They joined themselves to the Apostle for further instruction, and so they "believed." Among these was *Dionysius*, one eminent man, and one *woman* sufficiently notable to be named, with a few others nameless. Of any further labors of the Apostle at Athens, and how long he staid, we are not informed. Certainly he was not driven away. But "it is a serious and instructive fact that the mercantile population of Thessalonica and Corinth received the message of God with greater readiness than the highly educated and polished Athenians. Two letters to the Thessalonians, and two to the Corinthians, remain to attest the flourishing state of those Churches. But we possess no letter written by Paul to the Athenians, and we do not read that he was ever in Athens again."

1. What is said of Paul at Thessalonica? 2. What was the effect of his reasoning out of the Scriptures? 3. What did the unbelieving Jews do? 4. What charge did they bring against Jason and certain brethren? 5. To what place were Paul and Silas sent? 6. What is said of the Bereans? 7. What course did the Jews of Thessalonica pursue? 8. To what city was Paul conducted? 9. What effect had the idolatry of Athens upon Paul? 10. What philosophers encountered him? 11. What request was made of him? 12. From what place did he address the men of Athens? 13. Repeat his address. 14. What does God now command all men everywhere to do? 15. What is repentance? 16. What is said of the final judgment? 17. What was said of Paul after he preached the resurrection of the dead? 18. What did he do? 19. Who are mentioned among those that "clave unto him?"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

3 Paul laboreth with his hands, and preacheth at Corinth to the Gentiles. 9 The Lord encourageth him in a vision. 12 He is accused before Gallio the deputy, but is dismissed. 18. Afterwards passing from city to city he strengtheneth the disciples. 21 Apollos, being more perfectly instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, 25 preacheth Christ with great efficacy.

**A**FTER these things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth:

The wealthy commercial city of *Corinth*, situated on the isthmus between the waters of the Ionian and Ægean seas, was at that time also the political capital of Greece, inasmuch as it was the residence of the Roman proconsul. It was celebrated for its wealth and magnificence, as well as for the external refinement of its inhabitants. Cicero calls it "the light of all Greece," and Florus "the glory of Greece." It was populous, and noted for literature. It was, however, infamous for its licentiousness: Venus, the goddess of licentiousness, was worshiped publicly in the city, and a thousand prostitutes were devoted to her service. The inhabitants were addicted to the practice of every vice. "To live like a Corinthian," was a proverbial expression designating a dissipated, profligate life. Corinth is now a miserable village, still bearing the ancient name.

2. And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla: (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome,) and came unto them.

\*Rom. xvi. 3.

*Aquila*—A Roman name assumed according to custom, signifying eagle, in fact, both *aquila* and *eagle* are different shapes of the same primitive word. *Pontus*—the north-eastern province of Asia Minor. *Priscilla*—Also a Roman name, which was strictly *Prisca* (2 Tim. iv. 19), signifying *antique*. As in our day it is the fancy to use in feminine names the pet termination *ie* (as Lizzie for Elizabeth, and Carrie for Caroline), the Romans used the more euphonious termination *illa*. So Terentia, Prima, Prisca, became Terentilla, Primilla, Priscilla. *Italy*, the country of which Rome was the capital. *Because that Claudius*, &c. The Roman emperor had by an edict expelled all the Jews from the imperial city. Of this Claudius Suetonius, the biographer, narrates the fact, and thus furnishes a strong incidental proof of the

veracity and fidelity of Luke as the chronicler of the events of the Apostolic history. Probably Aquila and his wife thought hard of the Imperial decree that had banished them. But in consequence of this trial they became acquainted with Paul, and had him for their guest, their friend, and companion. And what a companion must a man of his talents and grace have been! And what an advantage must they have derived from his morning and evening devotions, and his example, and his constant conversations! Surely, they would acknowledge, It is good for us that we have been afflicted. *Came unto them, i. e.*, to their house or dwelling, for he had already found them or become acquainted with them. His coming to them seems to imply that they were Christians, although some take *Jew* and *Jews* in the distinctive sense, and suppose that Aquila and Priscilla were among Paul's converts.

3. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tent-makers.—xx. 34.

*Same craft*—trade. *Wrought*. The Jews, whatever the rank or circumstances of their family, uniformly bred up their children to the knowledge and practice of some trade, not so much as a source of employment to secure them from the evils of idleness, as to put them in the way of obtaining a livelihood, should they ever be reduced by misfortune to the necessity of laboring for the day passing over them. Paul was really poor. Mark his disinterestedness! (See xx. 34; 1 Cor. ix. 12; 2 Cor. vii. 2; 1 Thes. ii. 9; 2 Thes. iii. 8.) It was suspected by many that the holy men entrusted with the first promulgation of the Gospel, were seeking their own advantage and promotion. How could Paul remove such an unhappy and unfounded construction of his measures and motives? Here was reason and room for betaking himself to a secular vocation for a livelihood. The general opinion now is that he was a maker of tents from the "Cilicium" or hair-cloth of Cilician goods. The Church owes her ministers a competent support. This is not a gratuity—but a *debt*. (See 1 Cor. ix. 4, &c.) This Paul well understood. But he waived his right

to remuneration for his services, lest, through the peculiarity of the people among whom he labored, and the age in which he lived, the Word of God might not have free course. As God's people, we must not be so strenuous and rigid in the maintenance even of our rights, as to imperil the cause of our Redeemer, or to bring discredit upon our holy profession, or exhibit even "the appearance of evil." *Tent-makers*—a business which, owing to tents being in great requisition by all classes in the hot season, was generally a lucrative one.

From Paul at tent-making, we learn, 1. That holy men may to all outward eyes, appear exactly like other people. 2. That true holiness is not made up of extraordinary acts. 3. That a busy life is not incompatible with a life of devotion. We need not turn our backs on the world to save our souls:

"We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,  
Our neighbor and our work farewell,  
The trivial round, the common task,  
May furnish all we ought to ask,  
Room to deny ourselves, a road  
To bring us, daily, nearer God."

4. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 6. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. <sup>a</sup>Chap. xvii. 2. <sup>b</sup>Chap. xvii. 14, 15. <sup>c</sup>Or, is the Christ. <sup>d</sup>Tim. ii. 25. <sup>e</sup>Neh. v. 13. <sup>f</sup>Ezek. xxxiii. 4.

*Reasoned in the synagogue.* (See on chap. xvii. 2). When Silas and Timotheus. They were left at Berea, and directed to follow Paul (chap. xvii. 14, 15) and Timothy joined him at Athens, and thence was sent back to Thessalonica (1 Thes. iii. 2, 5, 6), he now appears to have returned with Silas from Macedonia. *Pressed in the spirit.* The tidings brought by them of the great proficiency and piety of the Macedonian Churches (1 Thes. iii. 6) appears to have incited Paul, and made him more earnest to gain the Jews at Corinth. *When they opposed*—systematically opposed, put themselves in warlike order against him, so the word implies. *And blasphemed.* "This," says Dr. A. Clark, "is precisely the way in which they still act. They have no argument against Jesus being the Messiah, but, having made a covenant with unbelief, as soon as they are pressed on this point, they rail and

blaspheme." *He shook his raiment.* He shook the dust out of his garments, as (chap. xiii. 51) he shook off the dust of his feet. This was an expressive act of shaking off the guilt of their condemnation, and indicating that he would have nothing more to do with them. *Your blood, &c.* The guilt of your destruction is your own, an allusion perhaps to Ezek. iii. 4-9. *I will go unto the Gentiles.* This does not mean an entire renunciation of the Jews, but only that he would no longer preach to the Jews of that place. Thus he avowed his intention to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia (chap. xiii. 46), yet in the next adjoining city of Iconium he entered into the synagogue, and preached. (Chap. xiii. 51, xiv. 1.) Such Divine severity on the part of Paul, was due, not only to the dignity of the preached Gospel, but also to these obstinate souls themselves; it might possibly make a salutary impression on them. But a carnal zeal cannot justify itself by this example. Let him who desires to say with a clear conviction, like the Apostle, that he is not stained with the blood of the lost, previously examine whether he has performed all that the Apostle did in the case of these hardened men.

7. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized. <sup>a</sup>1 Cor. i. 14.

*Justus* is called a worshiper of God, that is, a Jewish proselyte, to intimate that he was a Gentile by birth. Paul entered his house, and it joined hard to the synagogue. The nearer the church, the proverb is, the farther from God. This is founded on the observation, that what men can easily reach, and enjoy, they often neglect. It was a trial of principle in this man to open his house to Paul. It would create him inconvenience, trouble, and expense, and it would draw upon him anger and reproach, as it was an open avowal of his adherence to the cause, and he knew that the sect was everywhere spoken against. How many professors of religion, yielding to their selfish and dastardly reasonings, would have refused. *Bunyan*, with as much truth as genius, places all the pil-

grims under the conduct of Mr. Great-Heart. It is to intimate that we shall need courage every step of the way to the Shining City. Let us not consult with flesh and blood, but only with conviction, and go forth to the Saviour without the camp, bearing His reproach. *The chief ruler, &c.* The definite form of the expression may merely designate him as a person of some note, "Crispus, the (well-known) ruler of the synagogue," just as we say, "the Apostle Paul," "the Prophet Daniel," although there were many other prophets and apostles. *Believed on the Lord, &c.* There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. But here a man of some rank and influence, believes—nor is this all, his *house* too is added to the Lord, yea, and many of the Corinthians *hearing* of Crispus' conversion, and Paul's word, *believed, and were baptized.* "Rulers and great men (says one) are looking-glasses, in the places where they live, by which many dress themselves."

9. Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10. For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Mat. xviii. 20

*Be not afraid.* The Apostle was not a timid man. Of a firm and ardent temper, he engaged with earnestness in any enterprise, and was prepared to abide by his purpose, in the face of opposition. But the most courageous are but men, who may experience moments of weakness, and disappoint the expectations of others by a cowardly flight from danger. Jesus Christ, therefore, appeared to His faithful servant, to assure him of His assistance and protection. There were other trials awaiting him, besides those which he had already undergone. *Speak, and hold not thy peace.* The policy of worldly men seeks by flattery to gain the heart, and thus to make sure of the object of its arts, who will suffer himself to be led in the chains of vanity and self love, a captive at its pleasure. What is agreeable and soothing is readily told, but if anything would wound the pride of others, or offend their prejudices, the salutary truth is buried in silence. The Apostles of Jesus Christ renounced the artifices of dishonesty. Their

aim was not the praise of men, but their salvation, not their own private interests, but the honor of their Master, and to accomplish these important ends they did not "hold their peace," although they foresaw that their words should excite the ridicule or the indignation of their audience. In the present case, Paul was assured, not that his doctrine should be applauded, and his person held in admiration, nor that he should escape without reproach, and suffer no sort of molestation, but solely that *no man should set on him, to hurt him.* He might be persecuted, but he should not be destroyed. *For I have much people in this city.* This expression takes in all who should, according to the gracious purpose of Christ, be converted to Christianity. "Here are many souls whom I design effectually to call and bring home by thy ministry." What encouragement to Paul to go forth among them as the minister of reconciliation—what encouragement for every Christian minister as regards the people among whom he labors! *Continued, &c.* Continued prayer, much patience, great confidence in God, fervent zeal—are the means by which the interests of the cause of God are promoted.

12. ¶ And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat. 13. Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. 14. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should hear with you: 15. But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters. 16. And he drave them from the judgment-seat. 17. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

James ii. 6. \*Rom. xviii. 3. †John xviii. 31; chap. xxii. 29; xxv. 11, 19. †1 Cor. i. 1.

*Gallio.* His original name was Marcus Annæus Novatus; but, having been adopted into the family of the rhetorician Lucius Junius Gallio, he took the name of Junius Annæus Gallio. He was brother of Lucius Annæus Seneca, the philosopher. *Deputy.* Here is disclosed another instance of Luke's minute accuracy. Gallio was deputed by the Senate during the reign of Claudius, and was, therefore, a proconsul, as Luke says. But under the preceding reigns the ruler was sent by the emperor, and so was not a *proconsul*, but a *legatus*. There is historical evidence that Gallio was in Achaia about the time of

Paul's visit, and he appears to have resigned his office on account of ill health, proclaiming that it was "a disease not of the body, but of the climate." *Made insurrection*, or, rose up against. The *judgment seat* is mentioned three times in the course of this narrative. (See verses 16, 17.) It was of two kinds: (1.) fixed in some public and open place; (2.) movable, and taken by the Roman magistrates to be placed wherever they might sit in a judicial character. Probably here as in the case of Pilate (John xix. 13), the former kind of seat is intended.

*Saying, This fellow.* Fellow is not expressed in Greek, it is supplied by our translators. *Contrary to the law*, not the Jewish, but the Roman law, for Gallio, as a Roman magistrate, would concern himself only with the latter. *Matter of wrong*, literally, an injustice. *Or wicked lewdness*—reckless immorality, as distinguished from a legal act. *Reason would that I should bear with you.* A Roman magistrate could take cognizance of injustice and gross immorality. *Words.* So far as the doctrines were concerned, Gallio would consider them only as so many *words*. *Names*—of persons, as *Moses* and *Jesus*, which probably occurred in the statement of the prosecutors, and which Gallio would consider as mere *names*. *I will be no judge, &c.* It was out of his province to take cognizance of such questions. The Roman laws allowed the Jews to regulate their religious affairs in their own way. The magistrate who dares to interfere with the religious opinions of the people, incurs an amount of responsibility too great for any man to bear. He who dares to legislate for conscience, not only insults his Maker, but perpetrates an injury upon himself. Religion is not to be settled in courts of law but in courts of conscience.

"Let Caesar's due be ever paid,  
To Caesar and his throne;  
But consciences and souls were made  
To be the Lord's alone."

*And he drave them from the judgment seat*, he dispersed them. The verb shows that they left reluctantly, but not that any violence was used. A peremptory refusal, a decisive manner would be sufficient for the purpose. *Then all the Greeks, &c.* The meaning seems to be, that when the pro-

consul so cavalierly sent them off, the Greeks who had been looking on expressed their indignation, and gave vent to their long cherished hatred of the Jews, by beating their official representative. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Society often gives back to a man what he has given it. The persecutor is often persecuted. *Sosthenes, the chief ruler, &c.* It is not necessary to assume that Sosthenes was the successor of Crispus, or the ruler of another synagogue, as the office probably was not elective, and was held by a plurality of persons. *And beat him, &c.* Probably just as Sosthenes came out of the court, the mob laid hold of him, in a riotous manner, and beat him, probably with their fists.

*And Gallio cared for none of those things.* This means something more than *magisterial* unconcernedness to the religious disputes which the Jews now brought under his notice. There is reference, we think, to his *personal* indifference concerning religious questions themselves. As an educated, moral and high-minded Roman, he regarded the religion of Paul as *beneath his notice*. Gibbon tells us that the various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world, "were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosophers as equally false, and by the magistrates as equally useful." Gallio, therefore, we take as a type of this prevailing *religious indifference*. This is one of the greatest and most prevalent evils of this age too, and it is infidelity in its worst form. Mere theoretical infidelity can be put down by argument. But *this* is beyond the reach of all logic. When ministers endeavor to convince the ignorant, or to rouse the unthinking, they feel some hope, but as for those who have heard the Gospel from their infancy, or who have sat under it long enough to learn distinctly and familiarly all the truths it contains, and rest satisfied, regardless of the influence of these things in their hearts and lives, *these* are the most likely to drive ministers to despair, and to be summoned to meet God, unprepared for the solemn interview.

18. † And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila, having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.



19. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. 20. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not: 21. But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. 22. And when he had landed at Cesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23. And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples. 24. And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord: and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. 26. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace. 28. For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

1 Num. vi. 18; chap. xxi. 24. 2 Rom. xvi. 1. xvii. 2. xix. 21, xx. 16. 3 Cor. iv. 19; James iv. 15. 4 Gal. i. 2. xv. 22, xv. 32, 41. 5 1 Cor. i. 12, iii. 5, 6; Titus iii. 13. 6 Rom. xii. 11; James v. 16. 7 xix. 3. 8 Heb. vi. 1; 2 Peter ii. 18. 9 1 Cor. iii. 6. 10 Eph. ii. 8. 11 John v. 39. 12 Or, is the Christ, verse 5.

*The brethren.* The converts who composed the infant Church. *Sailed thence, for Antioch, in Syria.* Having shorn his head in Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, distant about ten miles. A Church had been gathered here. (Rom. xvi. 1.) The modern name is Kirkries, a little south of Kalamaki, and under the traveler's eye, therefore, who crosses the isthmus. *For he (Paul) had a vow.* That it was the Nazarite vow (Num. vi.) is not likely. It was probably one made in one of his seasons of difficulty or danger, in prosecution of which he cuts off his hair and hastens to Jerusalem to offer the requisite sacrifice within the prescribed thirty days. (*Josephus, Jewish War, ii. 15, 1.*) This explains the haste with which he leaves Ephesus (verse 21), and the subsequent observance, on the recommendation of the brethren, of a similar vow. (Chap. xxi. 24.) This one at Corinth was voluntary, and shows that even in heathen countries he systematically studied the prejudices of his Jewish brethren. *Ephesus* was the ancient capital of Ionia, and at this time, of the Roman proconsular province of Asia, on the Cayster, near the coast, between Smyrna and Miletus. It was famed for its commerce, but even more for its magnificent temple of Artemis (Diana). See xix. 24, 27, and notes. *I must by all means keep this feast.* It must have been one of the principal feasts, which Paul was so anxious to keep at Jerusalem, in all probability the Passover or Pentecost. In either case we dis-

cover here that the Apostle left the journey in the spring of the year.

*Landed at Cesarea.* This city was formerly called Strato's Tower. It is situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, at the mouth of a small river, and has a fine harbor. It is 36 miles south of Acre, about 62 miles north-west of Jerusalem, and about the same distance north-east of Azotus. This city is supposed by some to be the Hazor mentioned in Joshua xi. 1. It was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and named Cesarea in honor of Augustus Cæsar. The city was dedicated to him. The seaport was called Sebaste, the Greek word for Augustus. It was adorned with most splendid houses, and the temple of Cæsar was erected by Herod over against the mouth of the haven, in which was placed the statue of the Roman emperor. It became the seat of the Roman governor while Judea was a Roman province.

*And gone up, i. e., to Jerusalem. And saluted the church, i. e., the mother-Church there, the only one that would be absolutely so-called, he went down* (from Jerusalem again) *to Antioch*, thus returning to his point of departure, as he did at the close of his first mission. (See on chap. xiv. 23.) Here observe, 1. No hostile hatred restrains Paul, where the Lord sends him (verse 19). 2. No brotherly love retains him when the Lord calls him away (verse 20.) 3. No place is too distant to him; he hastens when the Spirit draws him thither (verse 21). 4. No place is too pleasant to him; he takes his leave when the Lord cannot use him there (verse 22).

*After he had spent some time, &c.* This was the commencement of Paul's third missionary journey. It is probable that his residence at Antioch at this time was short, and that he left it in the year A. D. 54 or 55. He visited those churches in Galatia and Phrygia which he had already established. *Strengthening all the disciples*, confirming them in the faith of the Gospel. The direction the Apostle now took was the reverse of his former journey: then, "he went through Phrygia and the region of Galatia;" (Acts xvi. 6), but now he goes first to Galatia, and then to Phrygia, and the reason was, because he

had proconsular Asia, adjoining to Phrygia, and especially Ephesus, in view. "Lord," says *Burkitt*, "what a pattern is here of ministerial diligence and faithfulness! What pains did Paul take! What hazards did he run, in planting and propagating the Gospel of Christ! In labors more abundant, in sufferings above measure! Well might he say, *I am able to do all things through Christ that strengthens me*. And, blessed be God, the same power that assisted him, stands ready to succor us, and if ever He calls us to extraordinary service, He will come in with more than extraordinary strength."

*And a certain Jew, &c.* The historian here breaks away for a moment from the narrative of the third missionary tour of the Apostle to introduce the name, character, and doings of a celebrated Jew, named "Apollos," which is contracted for Apollonios, as Artemas for Artemonius. This episode is so interesting and instructive, that we have reason to be thankful for the momentary interruption of the narrative concerning Paul. *Born at Alexandria.* A distinguished city in the north of Egypt, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It was founded by Alexander the Great, three hundred and thirty years before Christ, and became the center of commercial intercourse between the eastern and the western world. It was an exceedingly prosperous city, and numbered, at one time, six hundred thousand inhabitants. In the year of our Lord 26, it fell into the power of the Romans. Large numbers of Jews had their abode there. *Neander* thinks that Apollos, as a native of Alexandria, had received probably the Jewish-Grecian education, peculiar to the learned among the Jews of that city, and had acquired also great facility in the use of the Greek language. *Eloquent, or learned.* The first sense is the best, because "mighty in the Scriptures" ascribes to him then a different talent, and because his superior faculty as a speaker appears to have been the reason why some of the Corinthians preferred him to Paul. (See 1 Cor. i. 12, ii. 4; 2 Cor. x. 10.) Eloquence is a noble gift of God, when it is properly employed, whether in ecclesiastical or in secular

affairs, but when it is abused, it is like a sword in the hand of a madman.

*Mighty in the Scriptures.* He possessed an intimate and accurate knowledge of the Old Testament, and an extraordinary ability to explain and apply it. *Ephesus.* (See on verse 19.) It is not the mere knowledge of the literal sense of the Scriptures, but a blessed experience of the power of Divine truth in the heart, by which a teacher becomes mighty in the Scriptures.

*This man was instructed.* With regard to the Christian knowledge of Apollos, Luke describes him as a man acquainted, to a certain extent, *with the way of the Lord*, that is, with the Divine plan of salvation, or the Divine purpose to enlighten and redeem Israel, and, indeed, all mankind, through the Messiah. Still, he needed more precise explanations and instructions respecting the way of God. (Verse 26.) *Being fervent in the spirit*, literally means boiling, and is a phrase used by the Apostle in another place. (Rom. xii. 11.) *Diligently.* This is not the meaning of the Greek word, but accurately, exactly, or correctly. *Knowing only the baptism of John.* He was instructed, probably, by some disciple of the Baptist, in the whole circle of John's teaching concerning Jesus, but no more: he had yet to learn the new light which the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost had thrown upon the Redeemer's death and resurrection, as appears from chap. xix. 2, 3. It is well to see a man using the light he has. It shows that he is sincere and in earnest.

*Began.* Opened his ministry in Ephesus after he came. *Had heard.* They discerned what he needed. *Expounded.* By private instruction. *More perfectly*, rather, *more accurately.* *Into Achaia*, of which Corinth was the capital. *The brethren wrote, &c.* Gave him letters of recommendation. *Helped them, &c.* He contributed greatly by his prayers, preaching, and example, to the spiritual benefit of those who, through the grace or favor of God, had become Christians. *Mightily convinced.* "Confuted the Jews." *Publicly.* Preaching in the synagogues and elsewhere, in public controversies. *Shewing by the Scrip-*

tures. Proving from the predictions of the Old Testament: that Jesus was Christ—that the Messiah was Jesus, none other than He. (Comp. verse 5.)

1. To what place did Paul go from Athens? 2. What is said of Aquila and Priscilla? 3. What is recorded of Paul in relation to the synagogue? 4. What did he do to them that opposed themselves and blasphemed? 5. What is said of Justus? 6. What of Crispus? 7. What did the Lord say to Paul by a vision? 8. When did the Jews make insurrection against Paul? 9. What did Gallio say to the Jews? 10. What did he do? 11. What was done to Sosthenes? 12. Where did Paul next go? 13. Why was his head shorn? 14. What did he do at Ephesus? 15. What is said of Apollos? 16. What did Aquila and Priscilla do to him? 17. What is said of him when he was disposed to pass into Achaia?

## CHAPTER XIX.

6 *The Holy Ghost is given by Paul's hands.* 9 *The Jews blaspheme his doctrine, which is confirmed by miracles.* 13 *The Jewish exorcists are beaten by the devil.* 19 *Conjuring books are burnt.* 24 *Demetrius, for love of gain, raiseth an uproar against Paul,* 35 *which is appeased by the town-clerk.*

AND it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, 2. He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.—1 Cor. iii. 5, 6. <sup>b</sup>viii. 16; 1 Sam. iii. 7.

While Apollos was at Corinth. This notice apprises us that Paul did not arrive at Ephesus till after the departure of Apollos. *The upper coasts* here may refer to Phrygia and Galatia, or the country between them and Ephesus. *Ephesus*. (See on xviii. 19). *The certain disciples* whom Paul found at Ephesus, seem to have been disciples of John, who, having acquired some knowledge of Jesus, and of the evidences of His Divine mission, believed in Him as the Messiah whose approach their Master had proclaimed. But, from circumstances of which we are not informed, the distance, perhaps, at which they lived from Judea, or the want of an opportunity to hear the Apostles, or to converse with any of the Christians, they entertained a very imperfect idea of the nature and privileges of the new dispensation, for when Paul asked them whether they had received the Holy Ghost, they answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." In the New Testament, this name sometimes signifies the operations of the Spirit, and in several passages, not His sanctifying, but His miraculous

influences. In the latter sense it must, at present, be understood, for Paul did not inquire whether those disciples had been regenerated, but whether the extraordinary gifts, which were then common, had been communicated to them. When they did receive the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands, we read, that "they spake with tongues, and prophesied." (Verse 6).

*We have not so much as heard, &c.* They were not apprised of the miraculous dispensation which had commenced on the day of Pentecost. They had not heard that the Holy Ghost was restored to Israel, who, according to the saying of the Rabbis, departed from it, after the death of Zechariah and Malachi. In like manner, it is said, on a certain occasion, of Samuel, who had been trained up in the fear of God from his infancy, and was then ministering in the tabernacle, that "he did not yet know the Lord," that is, as we learn from the words which immediately follow, that he had not yet been favored with any vision, or revelation.

3. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them: and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7. And all the men were about twelve. <sup>c</sup>xviii. 25. <sup>d</sup>Matt. iii. 11. <sup>e</sup>John i. 15, 27, 30. <sup>f</sup>viii. 16; 1 Cor. i. 13. <sup>g</sup>viii. 17. <sup>h</sup>ii. 4, x, 46. <sup>i</sup>1 Cor. xiv. 1, &c.

Paul was surprised at their answer, and said unto them, *Unto what then were ye baptized?* From their answer it is evident that they had been baptized by John him-

self, or by his disciples, and had received no other baptism. Although they believed in Christ, therefore they were not properly members of the visible Church, into which converts were received by that sacred rite. *John verily baptized with the baptism of (water unto) repentance.* (See on Matt. iii. 11). John baptized his disciples into the faith of the Messiah *as to come*, we are baptized into the faith of Him *as actually come*. The baptism of John was evidently designed to serve a temporary purpose, in common with all the other parts of his ministry; the baptism of Christ is to continue to the end of the world. The one did not properly belong to the Christian dispensation, but was preparatory to it, the other is an ordinance given by our Saviour to His Church, to supply the place of circumcision. Christian baptism is administered in the name of the persons of the Trinity, whereas we have no evidence that the Divine Persons were explicitly recognized in the baptism of John. From these considerations it appears that the two ordinances differ so much in their form, in their design, and in their relation to the present dispensation, that they may be regarded as perfectly distinct, and consequently, that a person who had been baptized by John might have been baptized again by an Apostle.

*Laid his hands, &c.* (See on viii. 17.) *The Holy Ghost came on them.* They received the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. (See on verse 2). *Spake with tongues, and prophesied*—they spake with other, and to them, strange and foreign tongues, and sustained the character of prophets and inspired teachers. *About.* It was unnecessary to state the precise number. The expression may have been intended to preclude the false impression, that all the brethren in Ephesus were in this infantile state of ignorance and backwardness. *All* may then be understood to mean *all told*, or at the most.

9. ¶ And he went into the synagogue, and spake bold 17 for the space of three months, disputing, and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. 10. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwell in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. 11. And God wrought special

miracles by the hands of Paul. 12. So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. 13. ¶ Rom. xi. 7; Heb. iii. 13. ¶ 2 Tim. i. 15; 2 Peter ii. 22; Jude 10. ¶ Verse 23. ¶ 1 Tim. vi. 5. ¶ xx. 31. ¶ xxx. 18. ¶ Matt. xvi. 20. ¶ verse 15.

*Synagogue . . . . Spake boldly . . . . three months.* We have often remarked that Paul, in every place, made his first offers of salvation to the *Jews*, and it was only when they rejected it that he turned to the *Gentiles*. (See xviii. 6). *Disputing, and persuading*, holding conversations with them, in order to convince them of the truth of the doctrine of Christ. He gave them reasons to sustain his propositions. He plied them with motives. *When divers were hardened, &c.* The same sun that softens the wax, hardens the clay: the same doctrine of the Gospel becomes the savour of death unto death unto some, which is the savour of life unto others. Woe be to that people, who by their habitual hardness, through their actual resisting the impressions of God's Word, provoke the Almighty to superadd judicial hardness of heart to them, making their sin to become their punishment. *School of one Tyrannus*—Ephesus was a Greek city; literature, philosophy, poetry, and rhetoric flourished here. Driven from the synagogue, therefore, the Apostle took to the *school*; doubtless a school of a Greek rhetorician. Here he found a roomy apartment and full congregations.

*This continued, &c., i. e.,* this lecture room was open to Paul, not only on the Sabbath, but also at other times, and was used by him for two years (A. D. 55-57); this period is undoubtedly to be understood as exclusive of the three months mentioned in verse 8. *All, &c.* The meaning is that the Gospel spread far and wide through Asia Minor. It is probable that at this time the seven Churches addressed in the Book of Revelation were planted. During these two years and three months likewise it is supposed Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians and the first to the Corinthians. It should be observed that the preaching of Paul and the other Apostles was not in secret and obscure places, but in the greatest cities of the known world, abounding with learning, talents, and philosophy—such as Antioch, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus, Rome. And it was not

merely to the ignorant multitude they addressed themselves in those places, but to all indiscriminately, rich and poor, great and small, learned and illiterate: that while they instructed every one, they might not seem to shrink from the most sagacious and even malicious inquiry. We have seen what stay Paul made at some of the cities now mentioned. An immense number of people resorted to Ephesus, which was the capital and emporium of Asia Minor, on all kinds of business, religious, political, and commercial. No scene therefore could have been more fit for this active Apostle.

*Special* (no ordinary) *miracles*. Paul's supernatural ministry was, 1. *Derived*. Unlike Christ he had not the power of working miracles natural in himself. *God wrought them by his hands*. 2. *Beneficent*. It was put forth, not to wound or to injure men, but to heal and to bless them. 3. *Strikingly manifest*. The mere *handkerchiefs or aprons* which touched his body carried with them virtue to heal the diseased and to expel the devil from the possessed. "The rationalists, and semi-rationalists," says an eminent commentator, "are much troubled to clear the fact related, that such handkerchiefs and aprons were *instrumental in working the cures*, from participation in what they are pleased to call a popular notion founded in superstition and error. But in this and similar narratives (see verse 15 note) Christian faith finds no difficulty whatever. All miraculous working is an exertion of the direct power of the All-powerful; a suspension *by Him* of His ordinary laws, and whether he will use *any instrument* in doing this, or *what instrument*, must depend altogether on His own purpose in the miracle—the effect to be produced on the recipients, beholders, or hearers. Without His special selection and enabling, *all instruments were vain*, with these, *all are capable*. In the present case, as before (in verse 15), it was His purpose to exalt His Apostle as the Herald of His Gospel, and to lay in Ephesus the strong foundation of His Church. And He therefore endues him with this extraordinary power. But to argue by analogy from such a case—to suppose that our Lord was able, and Peter, and Paul, and in Old Testament

times Elisha, were enabled to exert this peculiar power, therefore the same will be possessed by the body or relics of every real or supposed saint, is the height of folly and fanaticism. The true analogy tends directly the other way. In *no cases but these* do we find the power, even in the Apostolic days: and the general cessation of all extraordinary gifts of the Spirit would lead us to the inference that *à fortiori these*, which were even then the rarest, have ceased also."

13. ¶ Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, we adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth.  
\*Matt. ix. 38. \*Josh. vi. 26 \*Luke ix. 49.

It was a righteous judgment of God, that the people to whose care the true Word of God had been previously intrusted, should now, when they forsook the truth, addict themselves to the most degrading magic arts. There were many impostors who attempted to imitate the Apostles. But what was their aim? Not to teach the truth, nor to aid in the work of converting men; such a thought never occurred to them. They attempted to imitate the miracles and deeds which had raised the Apostles to so high an eminence, and thus acquire similar distinction. False teachers still adopt the same course. It is not their object to impart a knowledge of the truth to others, and lead them in the way of salvation, but rather to gain power and influence; hence they adopt the color and plumes of the true servants of God.

14. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? 16. And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus, and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.  
\*Luke viii. 29. \*Luke i. 65 chap. ii. 43. \*Matt. iii. 6. v. 5, 11; Rom. x. 10.

*Seven*. On this very number the exorcists seem to have relied. In our day superstition ascribes a power to cure diseases to seven sons, or a seventh son. Nothing is known of this *Sceva* but what is mentioned here. It is possible that the designation of him here has reference to the worship of Diana, and that he was a renegade or apostate Jew. This is the less improbable because the Greek word here rendered "chief of the priests" was not

only in general use among the heathen, but occurs repeatedly on coins and in other inscriptions relating to the worship of Diana at Ephesus. *The evil spirit answered*—speaking from within the man and using his organs. *The Jesus* (whom you invoke) *I know, i. e.*, His authority and power, and *the Paul* (whom you name) *I know well* as the servant, messenger of God. (Comp. xvi. 17). The question—*Who are ye?* is expressive both of indignation and contempt, in which sense it is familiar to the dialect of common life. It is here equivalent to saying, What right have you to use this venerable name, at which the very devils tremble? (See James ii. 19.)

*And the man in whom the evil spirit was.* Mark the clear line of demarcation here between “*the evil spirit* which answered and said,” and “*the man in whom the evil spirit was.*” The reality of such possessions could not be more clearly expressed. *Leaped on them . . . . so that they fled naked and wounded.* This was so appalling a testimony at once against those profane impostors and in favor of Paul and the Master whom he preached, that we wonder not it spread to “all the Jews and Greeks at Ephesus, that fear fell on them all, and that the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.” Heaven employs evil to punish evil. The evil spirit, by the Divine permission, acts the office of justice and wreaks vengeance on the heads of these religious pretenders. As a rule, God punishes wickedness by wickedness. The sinner is the tormentor of the sinner here and everywhere, now and forever. Providence, the Divine handmaid of truth, often permits, and often creates, events in a community that startle them like the blast of a thousand trumpets, and force them into new strains of thought. Sometimes, as in the case before us, the abominations of a spurious Christianity have so broken forth upon the public mind as to startle it from its slumbers, and to excite it into earnest inquiry after truth. *Their deeds*, the evil deeds in which they had been engaged before they became believers. They became more deeply impressed with the necessity of an ample confession of their former evil courses of life, and of an honest avowal of a deter-

mination to forsake such practices. The defeat of the sons of Sceva, and the evidence of the invincible power of Jesus, quickened the consciences of some who had professed to believe, but who had, perhaps, retained some secret evil practices.

19. Many of them also which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.—xvii. 24.

*Many*—Even magicians may be converted. (viii. 13.) *Curious arts*—magic arts, in great variety. *Brought . . . together*—with great unanimity. Here is a remarkable illustration of the force of conscience. The events struck the moral chords of the soul into thunder. Conscience rose from serfdom to sovereignty. There is no better evidence of the truth of a person's conversion, than cheerfully to part with a very profitable and pleasing lust. *Their books*—True religion abolishes bad books. Ephesus burned up curious and bad books as accursed, when the Word of the Lord began to prevail. Burning such books was better than to sell them, even though the money had been spent upon the poor. *Fifty thousand* (literally, *five myriads*) of silver, but of what denomination is not mentioned, although commonly supposed to be the Attic drachma, varying in value from fifteen to seventeen cents of our money, making a total of at least seven or eight thousand dollars. Like these magicians, we, if our repentance of sin be genuine, will not be able to rest till we have not merely confessed and deplored, but *put away* from us the accursed thing, till we have relinquished every unholy profit, and given up every unlawful or questionable enjoyment. *This* may fairly be assumed, indeed, as a test by which to determine the strength with which the Gospel of Christ has been brought to bear upon ourselves. Has it ever influenced us thus? Has it operated thus powerfully to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin, even though the sacrifice be costly and self-denying? Has everything displeasing to God been relinquished—everything contrary to His will and His commands been given up? Or, if this be saying too much, have we at least good reason to hope that there is no profit, and no plea-

sure, and no pursuit, which we are not anxious to sacrifice to the will and the honor of our God? Happy are they whose religion abounds in such unquestionable fruits as these; they proclaim at once the tree of the Lord's planting, whose leaf shall not wither, whose root is imbedded deep in the Rock of Ages, and whose head has risen above the mists and damps of this world of sin, and is bearing much fruit in the perpetual sunshine which lies beyond them. *Grew the word.* As all these dark superstitions flowed from the one great Ephesian idolatry, so their exposure disgraced the system, and wrought a sense in men's minds of the true Divinity of Christianity. "This one word 'So,'" remarks a distinguished scholar, "is truly a Divine *Amen*, a testimony coming from heaven: This is my beloved congregation in which I am well pleased." Lord! Grant Thy grace, so that Thou mayest hear such testimony in favor of every congregation which confesses Thy name, and that the earnest efforts of Thy people to free themselves even from the most secret cursed thing (Dent. vii. 26) may be made manifest, so that the world may have no other reproach to make except this—that they zealously follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. (1 Heb. xii. 14).

21. ¶ After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

Gal. ii. 1. Rom. xv. 23, 28.

*These things,* the occurrences of verses 19, 20. *In the Spirit,* that is, in mind, an expression mostly used by Paul (see Rom. i. 9, viii. 16, xii. 11; 1 Cor. ii. 4, v. 3, 4, xiv. 14, and other places). He proposed to visit again Macedonia and Achaia, through which provinces he had passed on his former tour. (xvi. 10, xvii. 15, xviii. 1). *I must also see Rome.* Jerusalem and Rome, the two metropolitan cities, the one ecclesiastically, the other politically. The same purpose is expressed in his epistle to the Romans, xv. 28, 29. The perfect and unstudied agreement of these passages with that before us, is one of the incidental evidences in favor of the genuineness of the inspired record. Paul's object in seeing Rome, was not mainly, if indeed at all, in order to gratify curiosity, study the in-

stitutions and habits of a wonderful people, enrich his experience of life, and increase his acquaintance with men and things—but to carry the Gospel into the heart of the imperial city. And his purpose to visit Rome indicates his *belief* in three things: 1. That Christianity could stand the scrutiny of the most enlightened people. 2. That no intellectual or social advancement can supersede the necessity of the Gospel. 3. That the work of evangelization should have a special regard to the most influential centers of population.

22. So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Rom. xvi. 23; 2 Tim. iv. 20.

*He sent into Macedonia, i. e.,* probably to Thessalonica and Philippi. *That ministered to him,* both as personal attendants and as fellow-laborers in the Gospel. *Erastus* may be the person of that name in 2 Tim. iv. 20, but as he traveled with Paul, the best critics distinguish him from the Erastus in Rom. xvi. 23. The office of the latter as "treasurer of the city" would demand his more constant presence at Corinth. Timothy and Erastus were probably sent before to set on foot the collections mentioned in 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 10. *But he himself, &c.* In the first epistle to the Corinthians, written shortly after he had sent away Timothy, the Apostle writes, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." (1 Cor. xvi. 8). He remained in Ephesus, the capital of Asia, some time, for the good of Asia.

23. And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. 24. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25. Whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. 26. Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods which are made with hands. 27. So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia, and the world worshippeth. 28. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! 29. And the whole city was filled with confusion; and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theater. 30. And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

2 Cor. i. 8, vi. 9. Chap. xvi. 16, 19. Rev. xviii. 11; Ps. cxv. 1; Isa. xlii. 10-20. Zep. ii. 11. 1 John v. 19. Rev. xiii. 8. Jer. l. 33. Rom. xvi. 23; 1 Cor. i. 14. Col. iv. 10.

*That way* is Christianity. Christianity is a way to a certain kind of thinking, believing, loving and living. The cause of the *stir* about that way is revealed below.

*Demetrius*, the author of the disturbance, was a worker in silver, and, without doubt, the proprietor of a large manufacturing establishment, devoted to the preparation of articles of only one kind, namely silver temples of *Artemis*, that is, small models of the renowned temple of *Diana*, together with the statue. *Diana* was one of the twelve superior divinities, of which the Roman poet *Ennius* gave a list in the following couplet:—

“*Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars, Mercurius, Jovis, Neptunus, Vulcanus, Apollo.*”

She was adored as *Luna*, or the moon in heaven, *Diana* on the earth, and *Hecate* or *Proserpine* in *Ilades*. She was the goddess of hunting, of traveling, of chastity, of childbirth, of enchantment, &c., and was worshiped in different countries under different names, and different qualities were ascribed to her. But, at *Ephesus*, she was represented with a great number of breasts, and regarded as *Nature*, the mother of mankind. Thus, one of the inscriptions on an image of *Diana* was “*Nature, full of varied creatures, and mother of all things.*” Now, the temple of this goddess was so vast and beautiful as to be ranked among the seven wonders of the world. “*Pliny* tells us that it was 425 feet long and 220 in breadth, and that it was adorned with 100 columns each 60 feet high, 27 of which were curiously carved, and the rest polished. It occupied 220 years in building. All *Asia* contributed to its erection, and 127 magnificent columns were bestowed on it by as many kings. Its altar was furnished by the famous *Praxiteles*, and *Apelles* contributed a portrait of *Alexander the Great*. Little silver models of the temple, with a goddess enshrined in them, were made for sale, and sold in such quantity as to afford profitable work for many hands.

A correspondent of the *London Times*, at *Smyrna*, under date of January 27th, 1872, says:

“Most people have heard of those famous Seven Sleepers of *Ephesus*, who, taking refuge from the persecutions of *Diocletian* at the close of the third century, fell asleep there and woke up two centuries afterward to find a new world and a Christian empire. Scarcely less romantic have been the fortunes of the famous temple of *Diana*

of *Ephesus*, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Destroyed by an earthquake, and plundered by the *Goths* in the third century of the Christian era, it served as a quarry for the architects of the *Byzantine* city built at *Ephesus*, probably in the time of *Justinian*, till the appetite for plunder being exhausted, the remnant of its ruins was allowed to sit up silently, under the slow but sure action of alluvial deposit. Thus the very site of the world-famous temple was obliterated, till British enterprise, piercing through 22' feet of alluvial deposit, came suddenly on the marble pavement, still strewed with broken columns, capitals and fragments of sculpture. This discovery, one of the happiest efforts of archæology in our time, is due to the persevering energy and sagacity of *Mr. Wood*, who, after having searched for the site of the temple since 1863, first at his own expense, and subsequently with funds supplied by the trustees of the *British Museum*, has been rewarded, after long years of toil, by the discovery of the site, which was finally ascertained about this time last year. During the last twelvemonth a large area of the temple has been cleared to the pavement, and various architectural marbles have been found, more or less mutilated, lying as they had been left by the barbarous despoilers in *Byzantine* times. The diameter of these columns of the temple being six feet, the scale of the architecture is, of course, colossal, exceeding, it is believed, in proportions the celebrated Temple of *Jupiter Olympus*, at *Athens*, the temple at *Branchidæ* and all extant examples of *Greek* architecture.

“The great weight of the marbles discovered rendered it necessary for *Mr. Wood* to apply for naval aid, which was supplied by the *British* government with that alacrity which has distinguished the admiralty in the history of our recent archæological expeditions, and which can alone insure the complete success of such arduous enterprises. Her Majesty's ship *Caledonia*, a grand old iron-clad three-decker, was at once sent to *Mr. Wood's* assistance, and has been engaged since the beginning of this month at *Ephesus* and *Smyrna* in hauling, packing and shipping the marbles of the temple selected by *Mr. Wood* for the



British Museum. I have been favored with a sight of these huge masses before they were packed. The largest, weighing upward of eleven tons, is part of a drum of one of the *calate columnæ* mentioned by Pliny—*i. e.*, columns with figures sculptured on them, of which the temple had thirty-six. Of this bold, striking innovation in Greek architecture there exists, it is believed, no other example except at Ephesus. The relief on this drum appears to represent an assemblage of deities, of whom the only one who can be positively identified is Mercury, the rest being draped female figures. On a stone from a pilaster, corresponding in dimensions to the sculptured drum, is a relief representing Hercules struggling with a draped female figure, and on another fragment of a drum are the lower halves of some seated and standing female figures. This sculpture is very bold and effective in decoration, but wants the ineffable charm and freshness of the frieze of the Parthenon, while in masterly vigor of execution and dramatic force it falls far short of the frieze of the Mausoleum. It is careless and inexact in execution, and has the characteristics which we might expect to find in the Greek sculpture of the Macedonian period, when work was executed rapidly to gratify the vanity of kings, and when an Oriental love for mere mass rather than beauty of design had begun to affect both sculpture and architecture. Allowing for this first disappointment, I own that I gazed with a peculiar interest on these relics of those famous columns on which St. Paul must have gazed when he preached against them, but which local fanaticism, aided by local vested interests, preserved in all their splendor for three centuries after his coming.

"The architecture of the Temple of Diana is Ionic. Mr. Wood has very properly selected such fragments as will show what the base, the capital, and the order generally were like. Once housed in the British Museum, they will furnish materials out of which, not, perhaps, a complete restoration of the temple, but a new chapter in the history of Greek architecture can be constructed, just as out of the fossil bones of the *Megatherium* an Owen re-

constructs lost types in the animal kingdom."

*Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.* As they all derived profit from the established religion, they would the more readily concur in any measure for supporting it. *Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, &c.* Such was, indeed, the doctrine of Paul, who publicly taught that there was but one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, that the gods of the Gentiles existed only in the imagination of their worshipers, or were dead men and women, or unclean spirits, and that their images, in which they were supposed to be present, were alike unworthy of Divine honors, as gold and silver, wood and stone, in the rudest and most unshapely forms. If this doctrine should prevail, as there was reason to fear, from the great number who had already embraced it, those craftsmen would starve for want of employment. The Ephesians would no longer purchase models of a temple which they considered as profane, and images of a goddess, whom they had learned to despise.

*They heard . . . . full of wrath.* The oratory of Demetrius takes full effect. Having a common interest, these pagan brethren have a common wrath, and their wrath has a common object. *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.* This is not a mere doxology or panegyric, but an assertion of their grand religious tenet, namely that the goddess whom they worshiped was, in the strictest and the highest sense, entitled to be called THE GREAT. *Gaius* is the Greek form of the Latin *Caius*, one of the most common names among the Romans. This *Gaius*, otherwise unknown to us, is distinguished, by his being a Macedonian, from three persons of the same name mentioned in Scripture. (See Acts xx. 4: 1 Cor. i. 14 and Rom. xvi. 23; 3 John 1.) *Aristarchus*, on the other hand, is elsewhere mentioned in Scripture. He accompanied Paul on his memorable journey to Jerusalem (Acts xx. 4), and sailed with him, either as a fellow-prisoner or a volunteer, from *Cesarea* to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 2). In one of his epistles, Paul speaks of him as his "fellow-prisoner" (Col. iv. 10), and in another as his "fellow-worker." (Phile. 24.)

*One accord into the theater.* As the ancient theater was a place not merely of dramatic gatherings, but for public assemblies of all sorts, especially for city affairs, this mob spontaneously, without very well knowing what it is about, moves to the theater. This was all the more readily done, as the temple where the first assemblage seems to have taken place and the theater were in sight of each other. "Of the site of the theater, the scene of the tumult raised by Demetrius," says *Fellows*, "there can be no doubt, its ruins being a wreck of immense grandeur. I think it must have been larger than the one at Miletus, and that exceeds any I have elsewhere seen. . . . Its form alone can now be spoken of, for every seat is removed, and the proscenium is a heap of ruins."

On the above narrative let the following things be observed: 1. Demetrius is a type of all those dishonest religious zealots, who pretend that they are governed by zeal for sound doctrine, the honor of God, and the preservation of truth and order, while their real object is solely to retain their income, ease and honors. 2. The Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot possibly maintain peace with the dead idols which the people of the world worship, and it rebukes the sinful lusts and evil works which give pleasure to them. Is it a wonder that such preaching should arouse the hatred, envy and jealousy of men who will not abandon their gods? 3. There are certain sins peculiar to trade and business in general, which long hinder the conversion of persons who are so occupied. Many tradesmen adopt it as a principle that usury, fraud, and unrighteous gains, are, as it were, allowable in their business. It is by the influence of this delusion that Satan retains such men in his service. A wise teacher will regard it as his duty to endeavor to expose and destroy all hidden snares of this character.

31. And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theater. 32. Some wherefore cried one thing, and some another, for the assembly was confused: and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defense unto the people. 34. But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice, about the space of two hours, cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!

<sup>1</sup>Chap. xxi. 12    <sup>2</sup>Chap. xxi. 34.    <sup>3</sup>1 Tim. i. 20 · 2 Tim. iv. 14.

*The chief of Asia.* These were the Asiarchs, "men of noble birth and an affluent fortune. These patrician superintendents of the temples, of whom there were ten, were chosen annually by the cities of Asia, in common, and so great honor was attached to the office, that those who held it were universally looked up to as "the chief of Asia." These high functionaries were then occupied in the duties of their office, and some of them, who were friendly to the Apostle, sent a secret message apprising him of the perilous consequences that might result from his venturing into the theater. And perilous they would have been, for, among the most popular of the games which the Asiarchs had to provide for the public entertainment were combats with wild beasts, to which mortal encounters were generally appointed only the lowest criminals. But, in the fearfully excited state of the citizens, if the populace had insisted on Paul being consigned to the arena, not all the authority and influence of the Asiarchs might have been sufficient to protect him. It is thought to have been with a view to throw them to the wild beasts that were usually kept there, that the mob dragged Gaius and Aristarchus (verse 29), who owed their rescue from that dreadful fate only to the fierce and discordant views that distracted the meeting. *Alexander* (who is, without any valid reason, supposed by some interpreters to be the person mentioned in 1 Tim. i. 20, 2 Tim. iv. 14) was thrust forward by the Jews, while others of the multitude made room for him in order that he might come forward and address the people. He seems to have been an unconverted Jew. It may be that the Jews wished Alexander, who was perhaps an experienced public orator, to speak in their behalf, and thus transfer the blame from themselves to the Christians. But when he attempted to speak, the people observed that he was a Jew, and would not permit him to utter a word; on the contrary, the fanaticism which was now aroused, burst forth in the united and incessant outcry which the workmen of Demetrius had already commenced.

35. And when the town-clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there

that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?—Eph. ii. 12.

The speech of the *town-clerk*, whose calm and prudent behavior on this occasion merits the highest praise, is marked by *conciliation, conscience, counsel, and caution*. At the start it refers to two things universally known. 1. *The city of the Ephesians, &c.* The word translated “worshiper” signifies properly an attendant who took charge of a temple, but it came afterward to be applied to those cities in which there were situated any magnificent or celebrated temples of a deity, whose worship was the source of their grandeur, and the object of their pride. The inhabitants, proud of the distinction, considered themselves as attendants or guardians of the temple, and the honor of their patron deity, and hence the Ephesians, who were the first to assume this vain-glorious title, although their example met with general imitation, are called worshipers of the great goddess Diana. 2. *The image which fell down from Jupiter.* So it was fabled of several other idols; and among the first idols we read of are the black stones which, falling from heaven, (aerolites) were naturally venerated, and supposed to have inherent divinity. Perhaps some had a rude likeness to an image. In countries where such falsehoods are likely to be believed (not, at present, in others), parts, at least, of the Romish Church show pictures of the Virgin, which they tell the people *came down from heaven!*

36. Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. —Prov. xiv. 29.

*Cannot be spoken against, &c.* Like a truly legal man, he urges that such was notoriously the constitution and fixed character of the city, with which its very existence was all but bound up. Did they suppose that all this was going to be overturned by a set of itinerant orators? Ridiculous! What did they mean, then, by raising such a stir?

37. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.—Chap. xxv. 8.

*Ye have brought.* Hastily into the theater, as if to a tribunal, or to punishment. *These.* (Verse 29.) *Neither.* That is, they have neither by deed injured the temple,

nor by word injured Diana. *Nor yet blasphemers of.* The Apostles did not collect many of the absurdities from their mythology, but propounded God’s truth, and the vanity of idols in general. (Verse 26.) They who believed, afterward of themselves rejected false gods.

38. Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. 39. But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. —Or, ordinary.

“If Demetrius, &c., have suffered in their property, and have a charge of any private injury to offer against any one, the civil courts are held in which they may have justice done them; or if they have any crime relating to the State to allege against any, the law directs them how they should proceed, and there are the Roman proconsuls to whom they may apply, who are the proper judges in such cases. *Let them, then, bring their actions, and implead one another,* and traverse their suit in a legal manner in either of these judicatories. *But if the cause be not properly civil or criminal, and you are inquiring anything concerning other matters,* relating to our common utility, or to religion, which may seem of a special nature, there is no room to doubt but *it shall be determined to the general satisfaction, in a lawful assembly of the Asiatic States,* who will inquire into it impartially, and with a diligence proportioned to its importance.” The regular periods of assembly (called *kuria*, from their regularity) in those Greek cities which exercised, under the Roman empire, a qualified self-government, were three or four times a month, though there were extraordinary ones.

40. For we are in danger to be called in question for this day’s uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

*We are in danger, &c.* The Romans, although they granted freedom to many of the Greek cities, yet were very jealous of their popular assemblies. There was a Roman law which made it capital to raise a riot. *There being no cause, &c.,* such fire, sudden invasion, or some similar emergency, which might justify a concourse of the people.

41. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.—2 Cor. i. 8-10.

*Dismissed, or dissolved, the assembly, and the people quietly dispersed. An important and remarkable effect, but not at all incredible, considering the proverbial mobility from which the mob derives its name, and also the extraordinary force and skill with which the appeal was made to their religious feelings, local pride, municipal usages, and selfish fears. Their wrath, which had been so quickly enkindled, was as quickly extinguished. "Thus," as one has said, "the tumult was suppressed by the wisdom and eloquence of the town-clerk, whom the grace of God*

*employed as an instrument for delivering His servants from danger, and defeating the enemies of the Gospel." But the roots of such enmity cannot be destroyed except by the silent power of the Divine word and by the winning language of the Holy Ghost, who is the true defender of the people of God. O Lord Jesus, whom the winds and the sea obey, assuage Thou the raging of the nations, and of our own flesh and blood against Thee, calm our hearts, and teach them to obey Thy truth, and to enjoy the blessed peace of Thy life!*

1. Who were the "certain disciples" whom Paul found at Ephesus? 2. What did he say to them? 3. State their reply. 4. What did Paul answer? 5. In whose name were they then baptized? 6. What resulted when Paul laid his hands upon them? 7. How long did Paul speak boldly in the synagogue? 8. What is said of the school of Tyrannus? 9. What special miracles did God work by the hands of Paul? 10. What is said of the exorcists? 11. What of them which used curious arts? 12. What reference is made to the Word of God? 13. Whom did Paul send into Macedonia? 14. State what is said of Demetrius. 15. What effect was produced by his appeal? 16. What did the town-clerk say, after he had appeased the people?

## CHAPTER XX.

1 *Paul goeth to Macedonia. 7 He celebrateth the Lord's supper, and preacheth. 9 Eutychus having fallen down dead, 10 is raised to life. 17 At Miletum he callth the elders together, telleth them what shall befall to himself, 23 committeth God's flock to them, 29 warneth them of false teachers, 32 commendeth them to God, 35 prayeth with them, and goeth his way.*

AND after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. <sup>a</sup>xix. 40. <sup>b</sup>1 Cor. xvi. 5; 1 Tim. i. 13.

The clause, *after the uproar was ceased*, shows that Paul left Ephesus soon after the disturbance, but furnishes no evidence, says *Neander*, that his departure was hastened by it. He saluted the disciples with parting expressions of kindness. *Macedonia*. As he promised to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. xvi. 5.)

2. And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. 3. And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia. 4. And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. 5. These going before tarried for us at Troas. 6. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

<sup>c</sup>1 Thes. ii. 3, 11. <sup>d</sup>xxiii. 12; xxv. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 26. <sup>e</sup>ix. 29. <sup>f</sup>xvi. 1. <sup>g</sup>Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 12; Titus iii. 12. <sup>h</sup>xxi. 29; 2 Tim. iv. 20. <sup>i</sup>Ex. xxiii. 15. <sup>j</sup>2 Tim. iv. 13.

*Those parts.* The cities and districts in Macedonia. *Greece.* The country south of Macedonia. It is the same as is elsewhere called Achaia. (xviii. 12, 27; xix. 21.)

Paul always exhibits the same characteristic features. In prisons, in tumults, among the disciples, in the world, in journeys—in short, under all circumstances, he remained a servant of God, and never forgot, even when he walked in paths that were painful, to exhort, to comfort, and to strengthen believers, wherever they could be found.

The *three months* spent here preceded the summer of this year. (See verse 36.) The stay was thus brief because the Apostle was anxious to return to Jerusalem (verse 16.) The Jewish plot was contemporaneous with his leaving, but did not occasion it. It was just before his departure from Corinth, that Paul wrote the epistle to the

Romans. *Laid wait*, &c. What was the nature or occasion of the plot here mentioned, we have no means of determining. As the Apostle was about to embark for Syria, with the intention of going directly to Jerusalem (see chap. xix. 21), the effect of the conspiracy was to change his route, but not to cause him to depart prematurely. *He purposed*, or, it became his purpose, to return through Macedonia. How his journeying by land rather than by sea would enable him to escape the machinations of the Jews is not perfectly clear. It is possible that they intended to assault him on his way to the ship, or else to follow and capture him after having put to sea. Learn hence, that it is high presumption, and a bold tempting of God, to run headlong upon evident and imminent dangers, and not to improve all lawful means we can to prevent and decline them. To trust to means, is to neglect God, but to neglect the means for our own preservation, is to tempt God.

*There accompanied him*, rather, *there followed with him*, an expression which implies both association and subordination. *Asia*. Not strictly into Asia, but, as the original states, *as far as to Asia*. *Sopater*, the same as Sosipater, and probably the same as Paul's kinsman of that name mentioned in Rom. xvi. 21, who was with him at Corinth. *Berea*, a city of Macedonia. *And of the Thessalonians*, *Aristarchus and Secundus*. Aristarchus was already mentioned as a Macedonian (chap. xix. 29, on which see notes), with which his being a native of Thessalonica agrees. *Secundus*, is nowhere again mentioned. *And Gaius of Derbe*. This Gaius was a different person from Gaius the Macedonian formerly mentioned (chap. xix. 29, on which see notes), as Derbe was a city of Lyeonia. *And Timotheus*. Timothy was most probably a native of Lystra. (See xvi. 1.) No local epithet is attached to Timothy, perhaps because his residence was supposed to be well known. *And of Asia*, *Tychicus and Trophimus*. Both are elsewhere alluded to in Scripture. Tychicus was the bearer of the epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians (Col. iv. 7, 8; Eph. vi. 21, 22.) Paul there calls him "a beloved brother and faithful minister of the Lord." In the

epistle to Titus he mentions his intention of sending him to Crete (Titus iii. 12), and in his last epistle he tells Timothy that he had sent Tychicus to Ephesus. (2 Tim. iv. 12.) Trophimus appears on this occasion to have accompanied the Apostle not only to Asia, but to Jerusalem, for his being in Paul's company in that city was the occasion of the Apostle's apprehension. (Chap. xxi. 29.) He is again mentioned in Paul's last epistle. "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." (2 Tim. iv. 20.) From the mention of the places to which each of these companions belonged, and still more the order in which they occur, we are led to conclude that they were deputies from their respective Churches, charged with taking up and bringing on the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, first at Berea, next at Thessalonica, then at Philippi, where we gather that *our historian himself* rejoined the party (from the resumption at verse 5 of the "we" dropt at xvi. 17), by whom the Philippian collection would naturally be brought on.

*These going before*—Perhaps to announce and prepare for the Apostle's coming. *At Troas*—the name of the region and town. *After the days of unleavened bread*, i. e., the week following the Passover. This expression may be regarded as a mere date or chronological specification, like Christmas and Easter in modern parlance, when employed to designate the season, without reference to religious observance. The journey was accomplished in *five days*. Paul, when he crossed it on a former occasion, did it in ten days. (Chap. xvi. 11, 12.) The navigation, however, of the Ægean Sea being uncertain, they were hindered, probably, by contrary winds. *Abode seven days*, better "passed" or "spent." These minute chronological specifications are in perfect keeping with the previous intimation that the writer had again rejoined Paul. (See v. 5, and on v. 4.)

<sup>7</sup> ¶ And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.  
<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 6; Rev. i. 10. <sup>9</sup> ii. 42, 46, 1 Cor. x. 16, xi. 20-24.

*Upon the first day of the week*, which was observed by the Apostles instead of the Jews' Sabbath. (1 Cor. xvi. 2. Rev. i. 10.) *Came together*. This allusion to the observ-

ance of the day here shows that its observance had become customary. It is not said that the disciples were *called together*, as on a special occasion, but that they came together, as it seems, according to their general practice of assembling on the first day of the week for religious purposes, which began immediately after the Resurrection. The Roman philosopher Pliny, in a letter to the Emperor Trajan, from the near province of Bithynia, about fifty years after this period, says: "They (the Christians) are accustomed to meet together *on a stated day (stato die)* before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God, and bind themselves by an oath (*sacramento*) not to the commission of any wickedness, but, on the contrary, not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them." *To break bread*. This does not show that, as some maintain, the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper was a stated part of the worship of the church, and that there is the same evidence for the weekly celebration of it as for the observance of the Christian Sabbath. We acknowledge that the words, "came together to break bread," imply that it was the main purpose, but for this very reason it is evident that it was not the *usual* design of coming together. The Scripture neither says nor insinuates that the Lord's Supper is so much to be preferred to prayer, and praise, and the preaching of the word, as to be the principal cause of holding religious assemblies. Since, then, it is agreed that "to break bread" was the chief intention of the meeting at Troas, we conclude that the intention was special, not common, because it cannot be proved from Scripture or history or the nature of the ordinance, that to eat the Lord's Supper ever was, or ever ought to be, at all times, the principal reason for assembling on the Sabbath. The disciples at Troas probably embraced the opportunity of commemorating the death of Christ while they enjoyed the presence and ministrations of Paul, and hence this ordinance is represented to have been, because it really was, the design of this meeting. (See on chap. ii. 42). *Paul preached*. The preaching of the Gospel ought to accom-

pany the sacraments. What does the seal signify without a writing? The Apostle, in this farewell sermon, had a great deal to say, and knew not that he should ever have another opportunity of preaching to them. We know some that would have reproached Paul for this sermon as a long-winded preacher that tired his hearers, but they were willing to hear him; he saw them so, and therefore *continued his speech until midnight* to the assembly, which perhaps met in the evening for privacy. At the same time it should be remembered that those who would make as long sermons, &c., as Paul here, to the general benefit of a promiscuous congregation on occasions *similar* to this unique case of Paul's, must be such preachers as Paul was, and come as well prepared. In a Christian community, the cases where such a protracted meeting is necessary will be very few.

8. And there were many lights in the supper chamber, where they were gathered together.—*vi. 13.*

*Lights*—lamps. The wick was merely a few twisted threads, drawn through a hole in the upper part of the oil vessel, and there was no glass to give steadiness to the flame; such are still in use around the Mediterranean. Some suppose that the fact that there were many lights is noticed, to show that the fall of the young man could be well observed, others, because many lights are apt to increase drowsiness at such times, and others still, in order that all suspicion might be removed from the assembly.

9. And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

*In a window*. It will be recollected that there were no windows of glass, and the window here mentioned was a lattice of joinery, or a door, which on this occasion was set open on account of the heat from the many lights and the number of persons in the room. *Fell down, &c.* The window projected (according to the side of the room where it was situated) either over the street, or over the interior court, so that in either case he fell from the third story upon the hard earth or pavement below. *And was taken up dead*. This direct assertion concerning the man's state

cannot be evaded by explaining it, "was taken up for dead," or by saying that it expresses the judgment of those who took him up. An accident which occurs during the performance of a lawful and holy act, is no evidence of Divine displeasure. If this sleep at midnight exposed the young man to such danger, how can those be excused who sleep during the sermon in the daytime? And if bodily sleep exposes to danger, what is the situation of him whose soul is asleep in spiritual security, or how can those be excused who never sleep in Church, because they never enter it?

10. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him, said, "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him."—1 Kings xvii. 21, 2 Kings iv. 34. Matt. ix. 24.

*Embracing him.* Compare, in 1 Kings xvii. 21, the account of the prophet Elijah's restoring to life the son of the widow of Zarephath, and in 2 Kings iv. 34, 35, of Elisha's restoring the son of the Shunamite. *Trouble not yourselves.* "Loud demonstrations" says Rieger "should always be avoided, when tokens of the presence of God are observed; this principle specially applies to cases in which a death occurs. We should, at such times, direct the attention of those who are present to the invisible world and to the ministry of the angels, as far as the Scriptures enable us to form conjectures on such subjects." *His life is in him,* is returned to him. For the young man is said to have been taken up dead.

11. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

*Up again,*—to the room in the third story. *Eaten.* "Most interpreters," says Dr. J. A. Alexander "identify this breaking of bread with that mentioned in verse 7, and which had been deferred by Paul's protracted conversation or discourse. It is possible, however, that the love-feast and the eucharist had been observed as soon as they had assembled, and that the eating here described was what we call an early breakfast, preceding the departure of these honored guests." *Talked.* More familiarly after the solemn address spoken of in verse 9. *Break of day,* about five o'clock A. M., at that season. *So.* Without the intervention of any repose. *Departed,* went forth on his journey.

12. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

*They brought, &c.* Literally, *They led the lad alive,* that is, not they brought him home, but they led him into the assembly. *Not a little comforted,* by the fact that he was alive, and also by the evidence which such a wonderful miracle as the restoration to life imparted to the Gospel. God can speak to us through the dead, as well as through those who live.

13. † And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go aloft. 14. And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene, 15. And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus. 16. For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

† Chap. xviii. 21, xxiv. 17. † Chap. ii. 1, 1 Cor. xvi. 8.

*Assos, Trogyllium, and Miletus* were cities of Asia, on the sea-coast. *Mitylene* was a city in the isle of Lesbos, which, with *Chios* and *Samos*, was situated near the coast of Asia, in what is now called the Archipelago. *Miletus*, a city about thirty miles farther to the south from Ephesus. The Apostle seems to have had the direction of the vessel, which he could not have had, if merely a passenger; it is, therefore, probable that it belonged to some of his friends. The historian continues to speak in language which shows that he was one of the company. *Determined*—for Ephesus was behind. He could not refrain from ministering to a church so dear to his heart. *Spend the time.* Not even in Asia would Paul have spent the time fruitlessly; but he considered that he would have wasted it, if he had neglected greater results. *The day*—the accusative of time—of *Pentecost.* (See on chap. ii. 1). Time was pressing. (Verse 6.) At the feast there were great crowds, and therefore a great opportunity for conversions. Notice the indefatigable diligence of the great Apostle, and his unwearied industry in the service of the gospel.

17. † And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church. 18. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons. 19. Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20. And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house. 21. Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

† xix. 1, 10. † 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10. † Phil. iii. 18. † 2 Cor. iv. 7-11. † Verse 8. † Verse 27. † 2 Tim. iv. 2. † Mark 4, 15; Luke xxiv. 47.

In the style of the New Testament, an

“elder” does not signify a person advanced in years, but one invested with authority. The title is given to the rulers of the Jews, who are frequently called the elders of the people and to certain office-bearers in the Christian Church, of whom two classes are pointed out by Paul in one of his epistles, elders who only rule or govern, and elders who both rule, and labor in word and doctrine. Of the latter description, we apprehend, were the elders of Ephesus, for they are exhorted “to feed” the Church, a duty of the pastoral office, which consists in preaching the Gospel for the edification and comfort of the people. It deserves notice that the same persons, who here receive the appellation of elders, are called, in verse 28, overseers or inspectors. *Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, &c.* Happy is he who can begin his discourse in such terms, and to whom the conscience of the hearer bears a favorable testimony! Paul appeals solely to the conscience of his hearers, and asks for no flattering reply. It is not his object to obtain letters of commendation from men; he desires to see the fruit of his labors, and to promote the cause of the truth. *With all, the utmost, humility of mind, lowliness of mind. Many tears.* How beautiful a feature in the character of such a man! So much tenderness united to so much energy, the very softness of a woman to the indomitable spirit of a hero. What a pattern to the Christian minister, that while in his own person he is “enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,” he may, in his conduct to others, imitate the Christ-like spirit of him who could say, “We are gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children, so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us” (1 Thes. ii. 7, 8), that while as the minister of God, he is inflicting, as he is too often called to do, like a wise physician, many a deep and painful wound, he may learn to feel, and even to weep, for those upon whom his prayers and labors have been wasted, and to whom the blessed Gospel of a loving Saviour, has only been the “savor of death unto death.” *Temptations* (or trials)

*which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews.* There is no distinct mention in the Acts of the machinations of the Jews at Ephesus, but we are informed that their disposition was so hostile, that Paul had to separate himself and his disciples from the synagogue, and in the tumult, Alexander, a Jew, came forward, apparently with the intention of accusing the disciples. (See chap. xix. 9, 23.) That the condition of the Apostle in Ephesus was one of great danger, we learn from his epistles to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. xv. 31, 32; 2 Cor. i. 8-10.)

The human mind, it seems, was the same then as now. The hearer might wish some truth to be kept back; the preacher might be tempted to indulge the hearer's wish. The prophet might prophesy falsely, because the people loved to have it so. (See Jer. v. 31.) Paul, however, *kept back nothing that was profitable, but showed and taught them both publicly and from house to house.* The history shows his manner of *teaching publicly.* Wherever there were Jewish synagogues, these he entered, and expounding the law and the prophets, “showed from the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ.” When, as at Ephesus, he could no longer attend the synagogue without danger, or when, as appears to have been the case at Athens, there was no Jewish synagogue, he used the most convenient place of meeting, as the school of Tyrannus, or even disputed in places of public concourse “with them that met with him.” (See xix. 9, xvii. 17) Thus he acted as what he was, a herald, one who has something to announce, and the subject of his announcement was: Man a sinner, and Christ a Saviour; *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

But public preaching must not supersede private instruction. It opens the way for it, but does not supply it. The one draws the bow at a venture, the other carries the arrow home, and lodges it in the heart—not to wound, but to heal; not to destroy, but to save. Therefore he taught *both publicly and from house to house.* He had thus opportunity of pressing his doctrine more closely upon the conscience, and also of explaining it more accurately. He could resolve doubts as well as declare



truths. He could reach the individual case, and prove to every heart, which "knew its own bitterness," the nature of that "grace of God which had appeared unto all men."

Thus Paul fulfilled his mission, *to the Jews, and also to the Greeks*. Both, it seems, required the same. Both required *repentance toward God*. The Jews had offended against the law which God had revealed to them; the Greeks had offended against "the law written in their hearts." So that "there was no difference, for that all had sinned, and come short of the glory of God." All, though in various degrees of guilt, were to come before God in one common attitude as sinners. But as repentant sinners, intending to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking henceforth in His holy ways. And, also, as sinners who sought acceptance with God, through *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*. Repentance toward God was to lead to faith toward Christ Jesus. Sorrow for sin was to produce love of the Saviour. The law, convincing them of sin, was to bring them to Him who takes away sin. They were shown their condemnation in the sight of God, that they might embrace His offer of salvation. And if they were thus taught *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, nothing was kept back which was profitable for them*.

22. And now, behold, I go <sup>a</sup>bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not <sup>b</sup>knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23. Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, <sup>c</sup>that bonds and afflictions abide me.

<sup>a</sup>xix. 21. <sup>b</sup>James iv. 14. <sup>c</sup>ix. 16, xxi. 11. <sup>d</sup>Or, wait for me.

*Bound in the spirit*, that is, constrained by an overpowering sense of duty. He felt himself shut up to the conclusion that he must go up to Jerusalem, and therefore he could neither be terrified by dangers, nor moved by entreaties and remonstrances: he had no choice in the matter: a necessity was laid upon him. *Not knowing the things*, &c. Though Paul sometimes prophesied, he could not command the attribute of foreknowledge when he pleased. The use of it was always a miracle, and limited to a particular subject. He was therefore left uninformed of the ordinary course of life; and had to learn the will of God by events. (See Phil. ii. 23).

It is the same with us. But is this to be lamented? "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." The concealment is wise and kind. We may judge of this by our past feelings. Had we been previously informed of the scenes through which we have passed, our hearts would have failed at the thought; yet when the dispensations came, we were able to bear them, and had been really though unconsciously prepared for them.

But Paul's ignorance was not entire. Though he knew not *what* in particular would befall him at *Jerusalem*, yet the Holy Ghost testified, probably through the prophetic announcement of others, (though Luke has not recorded the instances) that in every place bonds and afflictions awaited him: so that he was sure of one thing—sure of being always a sufferer. And thus it is with us. Though the future is not laid open to our view, yet it is not concealed from us in every respect and degree. We may certainly expect that trials of one kind or another will be our lot. They grow out of our very state and nature. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." This, however, is not all we know; we know also that God will be found to His children the same He always has been—that He will prove Himself the hearer of prayer—and that He will never leave them nor forsake them.

21. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

<sup>a</sup>Chap. xxi. 13; Rom. viii. 35, 37; 2 Cor. iv. 16. <sup>b</sup>2 Tim. iv. 7. <sup>c</sup>2 Cor. iv. 1. <sup>d</sup>Gal. i. 1.

*None of these things move me*, or, *I make account of nothing*, i. e., which I may be called to suffer. (See 2 Cor. xii. 10.) *So that*, with this aim, *I might finish*, &c. That he should shrink from no danger, that he should be willing to offer up his life for the sake of the Gospel, he regarded as due to his office, as essential to his character as an approved minister of Christ. *With joy*. Paul's language expresses great desire and great anxiousness for this result. He deemed nothing too much to do or to suffer for such a privilege. All who have gone before us at death finished their course, but many finished it with joy. How will you finish yours? The Lord

has appointed us bounds which we cannot pass. We have an allotted course of service and suffering; and the end is sure—and the end is nigh. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of *that* man is peace. *He* shall enter into rest, and be forever with the Lord. But how will *you* end? will you be defeated or crowned? will you be clothed with shame, or shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father? O let it be your prayer and care to realize this final blessedness; and endeavor to judge of everything now as it will affect you at last. *The ministry which I have received, &c.* Note, 1. Paul's jealousy for the peculiar character of his mission, as immediately from Christ Himself, on which all the charges against him turned. 2. The burden of that Gospel which he preached—GRACE. It was "the Gospel of the grace of God." "Nothing," says *Leighton*, "begets so generous and undaunted spirits as the fear of God; no other fear, none of those base ones that torment worldly men, dare claim room where that fear lodgeth. The only cause of the fear of Christ's legates is in consideration of their Master. Would they remember Him much, it would ennoble their spirits to encounter the hardest evils of life, and death itself, courageously in His service."

25. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

*I know.* This expresses not absolute certainty, but assured persuasion. *Shall see my face no more.* He was bound on a dangerous journey, and it was probable that he would never see them again. Whether he afterward visited Ephesus or not, is a matter of doubtful inference, though critics have conjectured that he revisited this region. (Phil. i. 25-27; ii. 24; Phile. 22.) Thoughts on death increase the zeal of preachers. He who at all times says to himself: "This is perhaps my last sermon, my hearers will see my face no more," will the more earnestly entreat them: "Be ye reconciled to God."

26. Wherefore, I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.—2 Cor. vii. 2.

*I take you to record.* I call on you to bear witness, or, I solemnly protest unto you. *I am pure, &c.* Those who perish in their

sins cannot charge their unhappy doom on me. I have delivered my soul from the guilt of not warning them. (Comp. Ezek. xxxiii. 4-6.) It is happy when the ministers of God can appeal to the consciences of their people, and summon them in as witnesses to bear record for them at the bar of Christ. Many would gladly imitate the Apostle, and, like him, testify in their farewell sermons, that they are pure from the blood of all men, but that joyful consciousness is the fruit only of long-continued humility, of trials, and of tears. (See verses 20, 18-20, 27.)

27. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.—Eph. i. 11.

*Shunned.* A military word from soldiers who recoil, and leave their standing. "Its proper import in such a connection," says *Doddridge*, "is to *disguise* any important truth, and at least to *decline* its open publication, for fear of displeasing." These words naturally suggest the idea that there had been certain difficulties in the way of his declaring all the counsel of God, difficulties which might have operated to induce a less zealous and less faithful preacher to sink, or to obscure the message he had been commissioned to declare. Considering the mixture there was in the congregations which heard Paul preach, it was probable, if not certain, that by declaring the whole counsel of God he would give some offense, yet he had not shrunk from doing so. God requires his servants who are entrusted with the Gospel to "cry aloud and spare not," to set their face as a flint, to lift up their voice as a trumpet, to keep back nothing which can profit, however painful. Paul knew the character and conduct of Felix and Drusilla, but "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." "It is a poor sermon," says *Whitefield*, "that gives no offense, that neither makes the hearer displeased with himself, nor with the preacher." It was a noble eulogium that Louis XIV. passed on one of his preachers, Massillon: "I don't know how it is, when I hear my other chaplains I admire them, but when I hear Massillon, I always go away displeased with myself." Observe, Paul does not say he *had* declared the whole counsel of God (for who but God himself can do that?),

but he "had not shunned to declare" the whole counsel of God; that is, he had not concealed from them any truth necessary to salvation. It was thus that he kept himself "pure from the blood of all men."

It should be remembered that not only the preacher who declares the counsel of God, but the people who hear that Divine counsel, are responsible to Him for the manner in which they wait on the preaching of the Word. On the great day of reckoning, when the books shall be opened, and the secrets of all hearts shall be made known, the minister shall then answer for his part and the people undoubtedly shall answer for theirs. Those do not value their own souls, or love their ministers, who desire them to "speak smooth things" unto them, to "prophesy deceits," to declare only such things as are palatable such truths as even the natural heart can bear without reluctance or misgiving. (See Ezek. xxxiii. 8, 9.)

28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

<sup>1</sup>Col. iv. 17, <sup>1</sup>Tim. iv. 16, <sup>1</sup>Heb. xiii. 17, <sup>1</sup>Prov. x. 21, <sup>1</sup>Jer. iii. 15, <sup>1</sup>John xxi. 15-17, <sup>1</sup>1 Peter v. 2, 3, <sup>2</sup>Eph. i. 14, <sup>1</sup>Col. i. 14, <sup>1</sup>Heb. ix. 12, 14, <sup>1</sup>1 Peter i. 18, 19. Rev. v. 1.

*Therefore:* As I am innocent, take heed lest the guilt of neglect shall fall on you. (1Tim. iii. 27, iv. 16, vi. 11.) Observe how the personal is put before the pastoral care. They are required first "to take heed to themselves," that they might not be diverted from their duty by the cares and amusements of life, nor through indolence and remissness let slip opportunities of doing good; that they might always perform their functions from pure motives, with a proper sense of their importance, and an ardent desire to accomplish their design, and that their conduct might uniformly serve to illustrate and enforce the doctrines which they taught. The duties of the ministerial office are so various and weighty, the temptations are so great, and the consequences of error and negligence are so fatal, that incessant vigilance is indispensably necessary. *To all the flock.* A common metaphor both in the Old and in the New Testament. The general injunction is limited to the duty of "feeding" the flock, by the preaching of the Word, and the dispensation of the other ordinances of the Gospel, which are the means of

communicating spiritual nourishment to the soul. The design of the ministry is "to perfect the saints, and to edify the body of Christ," to impart instruction and consolation to believers, to assist their progress in faith and piety, and by this holy discipline to train them for eternal life. The care which is requisite for these important purposes must be extended to all the flock, or to all the individuals of which it is composed. *The Holy Ghost.* The Holy Ghost, as the great agent in the selection of ministers, the Lord of the harvest who sends forth the laborers into His harvest. (Acts xiii. 2.) The personality, deity, and sovereignty of the Holy Spirit all are here clearly shown. Bishops is the Anglicised form of the Greek word, which means *overseers, inspectors.* It is here applied to the same persons who were before described as *elders* (verse 17, on which see notes), proving clearly that the titles are convertible in this case; as they are in Titus i. 5-7, a conclusion strengthened by the otherwise inexplicable fact, that both are never named together as distinct classes of church officers. *The Church of God, which he hath purchased with his blood.* The most able critics have shown that the present is the genuine reading of the verse, though a few copies have "the church of the Lord," a phrase not used in the New Testament. The passage is a most decisive testimony to the Deity of Christ. The atonement and ransom of our souls is the blood of Jesus, who is as truly God, as man: and thus in His mysterious Person, as God and man, He "purchased the Church with His own blood." This gave the infinite value to His sacrifice; and it suggests to His ministers the most powerful motives to faithfulness, diligence, patience and fortitude in their work. (See 1 John, i. 7.)

29. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. vii. 15; <sup>2</sup>Peter ii. 1. <sup>1</sup>Jer. xlii. 20, xxiii. 1; Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3; Zech. xi. 17. <sup>1</sup>1 John ii. 19; Jude 4, &c.

Two classes of coming enemies are here announced, the one more external to themselves, the other bred in the bosom of their own community. Both were to be teachers, but the one "grievous wolves not sparing," *i.e.*, making a prey of "the flock,"

the other not only teaching error in the Church, but rending it by schismatical divisions forming schools or parties. Perhaps the one pointed to that subtle poison of Oriental Gnosticism, which we know to have very early infected the Asiatic Churches; the other to such Judaizing tendencies as we know to have troubled nearly all the early Churches. See the epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Timothy, also those to the seven Churches of Asia. (Rev. ii., iii.)

31. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.  
 32 Kings iv. 3. Col. i. 28.

Therefore watch, that is, on account of the impending danger, a watchful oversight becomes the duty of the elders. According to Paul's statement, as here recorded, he had resided three years at Ephesus. According to chap. xix. 8-10, he had taught two years in the school of Tyrannus, three months preceding, he had taught in the Jewish synagogue, and previously (chap. xviii. 19), he had been in Ephesus with Aquila and Priscilla. It was usual among the Jews to reckon a part of a day for a whole one, and so a part of a year might, in a general statement, be reckoned for a whole one, as if the Apostle had said about the space of three years. *I ceased not to warn, &c.* How deep and tender was the Apostle's solicitude for the welfare of the Church! The language which evil-minded men represent as that of self-praise, is not always really of that description. It was love which constrained the humility of Paul to reveal to us his tears.

32. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

33 John xvii. 17. Chap. x. xxvi. 18; Col. i. 12; Heb. ix. 15; 1 Peter i. 4.

The heart and thoughts of all those whom Paul addressed were, at this trying hour, fixed upon *himself*. How happy must he, then, have felt at being thus able, at a moment when he could no longer aid, no more instruct them, to point them to One from whom "neither life, nor death," nor time, nor eternity could ever separate them. "I commend you to *God*, to Him in whom is all fullness of protection, all abundance of power, all infinity of love. *And to the word of his grace*. There may be many, in passing through life, in whose spiritual

welfare we are deeply interested, and yet from whom we are constantly and unnecessarily absent, many, perhaps, so circumstanced that they are unable to partake of the spiritual advantages under which we live. How highly encouraging, then, is it, that in all such cases we are able to commend them not only to God, but to His written Word, which, thanks be to God, in this favored country, cannot be taken from them and which Paul here distinctly declares "is able to build them up" for their future and unfading inheritance. If we are unable to do more for those we love, we ought to urge them by every consideration most awakening and most influential, urge them by the value of that soul within them which is perishing for want of knowledge, and by the Saviour who died for its redemption, to search the Word of God's grace frequently, daily; however small the portion to which their time and opportunities may limit them, if it be accompanied by earnest, fervent prayer, it shall not be lost; it is an omnipotent word, it cannot return void to him who sends it, but is powerful through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of ignorance and sin, and to the building up to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," "all them which are sanctified."

33. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.—1 Sam. xii. 3; 1 Cor. ix. 12; 2 Cor. vii. 2.

Paul concludes his address with an assertion of his disinterestedness, as an example to the Ephesian elders, and as a warning against avarice and covetousness. (See 2 Cor. xii. 14.) *Apparel*. Raiment is here mentioned along with gold and silver, because among the Orientals it was a chief part of their wealth. The Ephesians, we are informed, were celebrated for their luxurious apparel. "Although the preachers of the Gospel do not, like Paul, work at a trade, but 'live of the things of the temple' (1 Cor. ix. 13), these words furnish them with a valuable lesson. They ought to demonstrate by their self-denial and personal efforts (which should comprehend far more than the ordinary official duties), and by their entire freedom from avarice, that the world very unjustly accuses them of performing the least amount of work, and of receiving for

it a disproportionately large amount of wages."

34. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

\*Chap. xviii. 3; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thes. ii. 9; 2 Thes. iii. 8.

*These hands*: no doubt stretching out his hands toward his audience. This refers to the fact that Paul and his companions supported themselves chiefly by their own labor. No mention is made of this fact in the account of Paul's residence at Ephesus. Luke, however, informs us that he labored as a tent-maker at Corinth, and in the first epistle to the Corinthians, written from Ephesus, express mention is made of his still continuing to work with his own hands. (See 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12). Here, then, is another example of the undesigned coincidences between the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul. It is not unlawful for a minister of the Gospel to labor with his hands, for the support of himself and his family, when the poverty of the members of the Church is such that they cannot maintain him without it. Observe, 1. Paul was sometimes reduced to the want of the common supports of life, though so great a favorite of heaven, and so great a blessing to this earth. 2. He did not work at his calling to enrich himself, but to maintain himself—it was to have his *necessities* supplied. 3. He had a head and tongue by which he might have made money, but he earned his bread by a manual occupation. 4. He worked not only for himself, but also for the support of *them that were with him*. "It had better become them," says an old writer, "to have worked for him, to maintain him as their tutor," but so it is; those that are willing to take the laboring oar, will find those about them willing they should have it.

35. I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

\*Rom. xv. 1; Eph. iv. 28; 1 Thes. v. 14. †Luke xiv. 12-14.

The Apostle had shown them, both by precepts and by his own example, how they ought "to support the weak," and he exhorts them to *remember the words of the Lord Jesus, &c.* In referring them to these words for their remembrance, it is to be supposed that he communicated them to those whom he addressed, in the course

of the "three years" during which he exercised his ministry among them. It is remarkable that there is no other passage in which any words of our Lord are recorded, but this solitary one. Except what is written in the four Evangelists, there is no record of the kind, except this one, which mentions the blessedness of giving above that of receiving. This shows us *the great uncertainty of tradition*. We should have known nothing of this saying of Christ, but for the Apostle Paul, which shows us how improper it is for us to depend on tradition for the support of important doctrines, when we cannot know one word of the Saviour's teachings but as it is recorded. The pleasure of giving is superior to that of receiving. It is higher, purer, nobler. It is the pleasure which arises from the testimony of *conscience*, the testimony that we are rightly employing the gifts which God has imparted to us, and without which there cannot be true enjoyment. It is the pleasure of *sympathy*. God has so formed us, as to feel our connection with those around us, and to find delight in beholding the flowers with which we ourselves have decked the moral garden of the world. There is more improvement of character in giving than in receiving. To be insusceptible, to be incapable of gratitude is deemed monstrous, but tender compassion and rich and self-denying liberality are regarded as indications of a higher order of excellence, and they are justly so regarded. In giving we become imitators of God (Matt. v. 45-8), like Christ, who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister" (2 Cor. viii. 9), like the angels, whose nature it is to give. (See Heb. i. 14; Luke xvi. 22.) Giving is surer of a higher reward than receiving. We mean a reward which is not of debt, but of grace. (See James i. 27; John xiii. 34, 35; Matt. xxv. 30, vii. 21-27; 2 Cor. ix. 14; Matt. v. 7; Ps. xli. 1-3; Luke xvi. 9; Gal. vi. 7, 8; 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7; Prov. xix. 17; Matt. vi. 19, 20; 1 Tim. vi. 17-19.)

36. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.—\*Chap. xxi. 5.

*Kneeled down*, or, *having kneeled*. This was the attitude in prayer which prevailed among the early Christians, except on the Sabbath, and during the seven weeks be-

fore Pentecost, when they generally stood. They regarded the latter posture as the more appropriate one for the expression of gratitude, and adopted it, therefore, on joyful occasions. (See on Luke xviii. 11.) *And prayed with them all*, no doubt in the sense attached to the words now, to wit, that of leading the devotions, or praying in the name of all.

37. *And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him;*—Gen. xlvii. 29.

*Wept sore.* Christians are not Stoics, who professed to be unconscious of strong emotions. Their love is a fountain from which tears often flow. "We too," says one, "should fall on Paul's neck, and endeavor to retain him with us, and this is done when we receive his doctrine and believe the Gospel which he preached." (1 Thes. ii. 13.) *Fell on Paul's neck, &c.* Still in the East relatives and friends, on meeting or parting, embrace each other, and kiss each other's hands, face or shoulder. With the Greeks and Romans it was not unusual to kiss the head. How solemn, affecting and tender, is this farewell! It is not possible even for the nearest relatives and friends to give more sincere and lively proofs of concern. Whence could this be derived? Whence but from their common hopes in the Gospel, which had blended their hearts, and made of the disciples as it were, one family? Such admirable effects of harmony and love was the faith of primitive Christians able to produce. How different from the sad apathy and indifference so often shown toward Christian brethren in modern times! While our holy religion teaches charity to all men, it commands it more especially to the household of faith. Let us look back frequently upon the ancient examples of true Christian love and charity, and remember that Christ is our Head, and we ourselves members one of another. These are sacred bonds of affection, and persuasive motives to sympathy.

38. *Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.* And they accompanied him unto the ship.—Verse 25.

*See his face no more.* This assurance struck a tender chord in each heart, and "tears unbidden flow." We cannot but observe again how holy is that tie of spir-

itual interest, that clasping of soul with soul, and heartfelt recognition of human brotherhood, which is here manifested. But a few years before, and what was Paul to the elders of Ephesus, or the elders of Ephesus to Paul? They knew not, cared not, for one another. But they accept Jesus as their Saviour, imbibe His spirit, catch a glimpse of the hallowed ties that unite man to man, and man to God, and lo! they are new creatures, they are born, spiritually born, into a new universe. They look upon each other with different eyes; they are now brethren, they feel that their connection is no coarse or common one, but that it has been formed in heaven, that it is knit by the fingers of God, and will last evermore. *And they accompanied him unto the ship.* Desirous of going as far, and remaining as long with Paul as was permitted them, they went with him even to the water's edge, yet there they were compelled to leave him. As has well been remarked, it is an affecting thought that there is a point at which our dearest bonds must be broken, our closest relationships dissolved, our most attached friends leave us—a point at which husbands and wives, parents and children, ministers and people, must part. We may travel together long, profitably and peacefully, but it cannot be uninterruptedly. A parting hour must arrive, when "one shall be taken and the other left." Both may go together to the water's edge, but we must enter those waters singly and alone—Jordan must be passed, and on its banks all that is earthly must be left behind. Would we so part that we may be reunited, that when that flood is crossed, we may meet again in the celestial city? It is now within our power—the offer, the hope, the certainty, are all within our reach. Instead of separating from those we love with the feeling of those Ephesian Christians, "we shall see his face no more," in all our separations, even the most painful and the last, if we are, indeed, the children of the same Saviour, the possessors of the same hope, anchored within the veil, sure and steadfast, our feelings may rightly be, "Blessed be God, we shall see their face again."

1. What did Paul do after the uproar was ceased? 2. How long did he abide in Greece? 3. Who accompanied him into Asia? 4. Explain the phrase—"the days of unleavened bread." 5. What did the disciples come together upon the first day of the week to do? 6. Who preached to them? 7. What is said of Eutychus? 8. Why would not Paul spend the time in Asia? 9. Whence did he call the elders of the church at Ephesus? 10. Repeat his address to them. 11. What did he do after he had "thus spoken?" 12. What effect was produced upon them all? 13. Why did they sorrow most of all? 14. Where did they accompany him?

## CHAPTER XXI.

1. *Paul will not by any means be dissuaded from going to Jerusalem, 9 Philip's daughters prophesies, 17 Paul cometh to Jerusalem: 17 where he is apprehended, and in great danger, 31 but by the chief captain is rescued, and permitted to speak to the people.*

AND it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

And it came to pass, &c., rather, "When now it came to pass that we set sail." Those who now journeyed with Paul to Jerusalem were Luke, the author of the Acts, Trophimus (xxi. 29), and Aristarchus (xxvii. 2). No mention is made of the others who accompanied him into Asia (xx. 4), so that it is probable they remained behind at Miletus. *Gotten*, literally, *torn from them*; language strongly expressive of the powerful reciprocal affection of these disciples of Christ. *Coos*, or *Cos*, is a small island in the Archipelago, about forty miles directly south of Miletus, opposite the cities of Cnidus (xxvii. 7) and Halicarnassus. It was famous for its wines, its ointments, and its fabrics. We learn from Josephus that many Jews were residents in the island. Its modern name is *Stanchio*, and it is still renowned for its fertility. *Rhodes* was at the entrance of the *Ægean*, on the coast of *Caria*. The celebrated colossus was prostrate at this time, having been overthrown by an earthquake. *Patara* was a coast town of *Lycia*, at some distance from the left bank of the *Xanthus*. "Now its port is an inland marsh, generating poisonous malaria, and the mariner sailing along the coast would never guess that the sand-hills before him blocked up the harbor into which St. Paul sailed of old."

2. And finding a ship sailing over to Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

*Finding a ship* (their former one going no farther, probably). *Unto Phenecia*. (See

on xi. 19). *Went aboard*. One would almost think this extracted from a journal of the voyage, so graphic are its details. (See Is. lx. 9, in which the allusion is doubtless to merchant ships.) The traders in that ship little thought that the freight which their Jewish fellow-travelers brought on board, was more precious than the purple of Tyre, the spices of Arabia, and the amber of the Hyperboreans—the precious pearl of the Gospel that saves men.

3. Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

*Cyprus*. (See on xiii. 4.) *We left it on the left hand*. As will appear by examining the map, they sailed along the southern coast of Cyprus. *Sailed into Syria, i. e.*, completed our voyage to it. *Landed at Tyre*, the chief city of Phenicia (see on chap. xii. 20), where it was foretold that Christians would be. (See Ps. lxxxvii. 4, and compare with it concerning the people of Philistia and Ethiopia, Acts viii. 40, verse 27.) *Her burden*. So frequently does God's kingdom adapt itself to the outward opportunities of the world: but *God* secretly directs worldly things to advance His kingdom.

4. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.—verse 12.

*Finding*—when he had sought them. At one time they were alone, at another with the brethren. *Seven*—So that they also enjoyed a Sabbath there. Paul was in haste, but in a good way. *Said*—the Spirit said that bonds awaited Paul: therefore the disciples begged him not to go.

5. And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way: and they all brought us on our way with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. Chap. xx. 36.

*Those days*—the seven mentioned in the preceding verse. *They all brought us, &c.*

It is not likely that Paul and his companions had either wives or children with them, and it is more natural to suppose that the brethren of Tyre, with *their* wives and children, are those that are meant. These, through affection to Paul and his friends, accompanied them from their homes to the ship, and the coming out of the husbands, wives and children, shows what a general and affectionate interest the preaching and labors of these holy men had excited. It is delightful to discover by such little traits as these, how early and how important was the advancement in civilization produced by the Gospel. In the most polished state of society in the heathen world, what was woman? A mere toy, a gilded bauble to help to while away a vacant hour, but admitted to no partnership in the higher and more elevating relations or feelings of human life. But no sooner did the Gospel, with its lessons of Christian love, find its way into the heart, than woman resumed that place in society to which God in His mercy had originally appointed her. She became the help-meet for man, his ready partner in every sorrow and in every joy, not merely the unintellectual companion of his pleasures, but the true and sympathizing friend, as valuable, perhaps more valuable, in the darker hours of sicknesses and griefs, and trials, and partings, than in those brighter and happier moments in which alone she had, before the introduction of Christianity, been ever heard of. *And prayed, i. e.,* the whole company, though led no doubt by the Apostle, as in xx. 36, on which see notes. Parents ought to conduct their children to those places where they may be encouraged to pray and to do good in general, but not to those where they may be corrupted. The meeting and the parting of Christians should not take place without prayer and good wishes.

6. And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship: and they returned home again.

With the words *taken our leave one of another*, are connected both *we took ship*, and *they returned*, &c.

7. And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

Tyre. (See on verse 3.) *Ptolemais*—a celebrated city south of Tyre, in the tribe of

Asher, anciently called *Acho*, now St Jean d' Acre, or Acre. (Judges i. 31.) It received the name of Ptolemais in honor of Ptolemy the First, king of Egypt, who also acquired dominion in Palestine. He enlarged and adorned it. In modern days it underwent a memorable siege by Napoleon Bonaparte. *Saluted the brethren, and abode, &c.* Disciples gathered probably as at Tyre, on the occasion mentioned chap. xi. 19.

8. And the next day, we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

Chap. viii. 26-40. Eph. iv. 11, 2 Tim. iv. 5. Chap. vi. 5.

From Ptolemais the travelers proceeded by land, as it seems, and at length reached *Cesarea*, which was only thirty-six Roman miles distant, that is, not more than a day's journey. This is the third time that Paul has been at Cesarea. He was there on his journey from Jerusalem to Tarsus, and again on his return to Antioch from his second missionary progress. (ix. 30, xviii. 22, viii. 40, on which see notes.) *Entered into the house of Philip the evangelist* (not the Apostle, but), *one of the seven* (whose appointment is recorded in vi. 5, 6). In the persecution on the death of Stephen, all the Church at Jerusalem were scattered abroad through Judea and Samaria except the Apostles. Among those thus dispersed was Philip, who seems never to have gone back after the re-organization of the Church in which he was ordained a deacon. The term "evangelist" answers apparently very much to our *missionary*. (See on viii. 26-40. See also 1 Tim. iii. 13.)

9. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.—Joel ii. 28.

*Had four daughters, &c.* This remark does not seem to be merely incidentally introduced, but is probably an indication that the daughters of Philip, influenced by the spirit of prophecy, foretold the sufferings which awaited the Apostle at Jerusalem. (See verse 10.) *VIRGINS*. Eusebius gives from Polycrates traditional accounts of them, that two were buried at Hierapolis, and one at Ephesus. From that passage, and one cited from Clement of Alexandria, it would appear that two were afterward married, according to tradition. To find an argument for the so-called "honor of virginity" in this verse, only shows to what resources those will stoop.



who have failed to apprehend the whole spirit and rule of the Gospel in the matter. *Prophecy.* (See xix. 6, xxi. 9; Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, xiii. 2, 8, xiv. 6; 1 Thes. v. 20.)

10. ¶ And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. (Chap. xi. 28. Verse 33; chap. xx. 23.)

Concerning this prediction, the fulfillment of which is afterward related, we remark, that although it is said that the Jews should bind Paul, and deliver him up to the Gentiles, yet he was actually bound by the Gentiles, or by the captain of the Roman garrison, who had rescued him out of the hands of the Jews. There is however, no contradiction between the prophecy and the event, because in the prophetic style, and indeed in the common style of the Scriptures, things are represented to have been done by a person which were done by others at his command, or through his influence, direct or indirect. It was in consequence of the rage which the Jews expressed against Paul, that the Romans seized and bound him. Agabus accompanied the prediction of his sufferings with a symbolical action or an action expressive of their nature. Actions of this kind are frequent among nations in the earlier periods of their history, when the imagination and passions operate with great vivacity, and perhaps the penury of language requires the aid of visible signs, and some of them are retained on particular occasions, after a people is far advanced in civilization. They were common among the ancient prophets. Isaiah walked "naked and barefoot," to signify, that the Egyptians and Ethiopians should be spoiled, and led into captivity by their enemies, and Ezekiel carried out his household stuff in the sight of his countrymen, to intimate that Jerusalem should be plundered by the Chaldeans. In the same manner, Agabus bound his own hands and feet with Paul's girdle, to fore-show that he should suffer bonds and imprisonment. It is probable, that when the prophets first adopted the mode of communicating instruction by appropriate actions, as well as by words, they merely

conformed to the manner of their age. It was calculated to rouse attention, to give a distinct and impressive idea of the subject, and, by interesting the imagination, to fix it in the memory.

12. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus. (Matt. xvi. 22, 23. 2 Tim. iv. 6.)

What a fine mixture of tenderness and fortitude! It is impossible to read this passage with any degree of attention, without sentiments of esteem and veneration. We see a great and good man, whose life and happiness were now at stake, willing to meet every danger, and death itself, for the cause of God and religion. Yet with all his unshaken firmness and resolution in this respect, he is not proof against the tears and sorrows of his friends. His heart melts, and sinks almost to breaking, and he is forced in his turn to have recourse to prayers and entreaties, that they might spare him from witnessing their grief, and their too ardent affection. He forgets all the terrors which await himself, unmoved by everything but their sympathy. Can we imagine a more noble spectacle? Compare him with the unfeeling Stoic, and you will easily discern his superior excellence. With more real fortitude, because sustained by a power above all human strength, he did not divest himself of the amiable sympathies and soft endearments of social life. He did not affect a contempt for pain and suffering, nor a disregard to the sorrows of generous friendship. But while he felt these, like other men, his sense of higher motives kept them within just bounds, nor suffered them to change the firm purpose of discharging his duty. Here is the model of a true Christian, who does not root out his affections, but fixes them on proper objects, and chiefly on things above. All the sweet charities of kindred and acquaintance are allowed their just degree of force; we are only to guard against their excesses, to take care that they may not tempt us to violate or omit any of the Divine commands, or so entirely occupy the mind, as in any manner to prevent our perfect submission to the Divine will. For Christianity not only

instructs us in our several duties, but likewise in the relative order to be observed among them; those which belong to God deservedly governing the rest. It will therefore sometimes happen, that we must make painful sacrifices, where our affections are involved. But let us not for this reason despond, for every such sacrifice cheerfully made shall have its reward: "the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed." Let us "endure hardness," as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, whenever His name, or His honor, or His word, or His people, need our countenance and support.

14. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

<sup>1</sup>Matt. vi. 10, xxvi. 42.

*Would not be persuaded.* One is often moved for the sake of others, who is not moved on his own account. Hence Paul's firmness is perceived. *We ceased*, with pious modesty. *The will, &c.* They refer the event to God's determination, and submit all to His sovereign pleasure. Hence we learn, that it is the duty and desire, and ought to be the care and endeavor, of all the children of God, to be willing to submit themselves and theirs to the dispensations of God's Providence, in whatever befalls either them or theirs. Such is His justice and righteousness, that He can do His children no wrong, and such is His tender mercy and loving-kindness, that He will do them no harm. That which is often against their will is not always against their interest. Afflictions upon us, if we belong to God, are federal dispensations and covenant blessings, and either are good or shall work for good. It is, therefore, both our duty and interest to submit to the wisdom of Providence, and say with these disciples, *The will of the Lord be done.* (See Matt. xxvi. 39; 2 Sam. xv. 26; 1 Sam. i. 18.)

15. And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

*Took up our carriages.* "We placed the baggage on the mules or horses."

16. There went with us also certain of the disciples of Cesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

<sup>1</sup>Prov. xvi. 31.

Three things are indicated of this Mnason: that he was a native of Cyprus; that he had been a convert to Christianity for

some time—he was called "an old disciple;" and that he had a house at Jerusalem, with whom Paul and his friends were to lodge. It is an honorable thing to be an old disciple of Jesus Christ, to have been enabled by the grace of God to continue so long in a course of duty, steadfast in the faith, and growing more and more prudent and experienced, to a good old age. And with these old disciples one would choose to lodge, for "the multitude of their years shall teach wisdom."

17. † And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.—Chap. xv. 4.

*Received us gladly*, consequently cheerfully accepted of his service for the poor saints in Judea. Thus his prayers and those of his Christian friends were answered. (Comp. xv. 31; Rom. xv. 31.)

18. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

<sup>2</sup>Chap. xv. 13, &c.; Gal. i. 19.

*Went in with us, i. e.*, introduced us. *Unto James*, that is, James the Less, the son of Alphaeus, so called to distinguish him from James, the son of Zebedee. (Comp. xii. 2; xv. 13.) The anomalous condition of the Church until the downfall of Jerusalem, sufficiently apparent from this very chapter, required the constant presence of an Apostle, while the others were engaged perhaps on distant missions. This responsible and arduous commission, which was far more than the pastoral care of any single Church, however eminent or important, would not have been assigned to one of less than Apostolic rank, and is therefore a sufficient proof that James was an Apostle.

19. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

<sup>3</sup>Rom. xv. 18, 19. <sup>4</sup>Chap. xx. 24; 2 Cor. xii. 12.

*Declared particularly*, in detail, *what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.* As on previous occasions (chap. xiv. 27, and see Rom. xv. 15), no doubt referring to the insidious and systematic efforts of the Judaizing party in a number of places, to shrive the Church of Christ into a Jewish sect, and his own counter-procedure. With what humility Paul speaks of his own labors! God, he says, has wrought all. He claims nothing for himself save the joy which he experiences on seeing the Divine name glorified.

20. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law; 21. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. 22. What is it, therefore? The multitude must needs come together; for they will hear that thou art come. 23. Do therefore this that we say to thee. We have four men which have a vow on them; 24. Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads; and all may know, that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. 25. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded, that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. 26. Then Paul took the men; and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

<sup>a</sup>Chap. xxii. 3; Rom. x. 2. <sup>b</sup>Gal. v. 3. <sup>c</sup>Chap. xix. 32. <sup>d</sup>Num. vi. 2, 13, 18; chap. xviii. 18. <sup>e</sup>Chap. xv. 20, 29. <sup>f</sup>1 Cor. ix. 20. <sup>g</sup>Chap. xxiv. 18. <sup>h</sup>Num. vi. 13.

Thousands, or myriads of Jews. There were many belonging to Jerusalem, and many more were collected from other countries, to keep the Jewish festival. (Comp. chap. xx. 16.) Believe, and . . . are . . . . zealous of the law, that is, were zealous of the law as binding not on the Gentiles (verse 25), but Jews, and even on them not as a ground of justification. This is plain from James and the elders advising Paul to countenance them as believers, and to bear with their prejudices. That they did not mean Paul to observe the law as a matter of necessity, but expediency, is obvious from their reference to that decree which explicitly declared that salvation was not by the law. And therefore we may conclude that they advised him to do no more in Jerusalem than he would willingly have done anywhere else. To the Jew he became a Jew; while he taught that the law profited not, he complied to observe it, that he might not wound the weak brethren. And in so doing he acted on the same principle as when he says (Rom. xiv. 21), "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumble, or is offended, or made weak." He had, however, been represented in a very different light—as teaching the Jews to forsake Moses. This he had hitherto never done, and to refute the charge, he did not hesitate to comply with the advice of his Jewish brethren.

Them take, &c. It was no uncommon thing among the Jews to assist those who were under the vow of a Nazarite by

bearing expenses with them. Such an action in Paul would be a sufficient evidence that he did not condemn the law of Moses. *Walkest orderly, or regularly.* It is plain that James and his brethren thought it most regular and convenient that the Jewish ritual should be observed by those of the circumcision who believed in Christ. They were taught from their earliest years to consider that ritual as of Divine origin; and to be at once called to treat it with neglect was probably more than they could bear. Such a revolution was wisely accomplished by degrees; first by the Apostolical decree, which declared that the law was of no avail in saving men; next by an epistle addressed to them, which demonstrated that the death of Christ rendered the law void, its end being accomplished, and, lastly, by the destruction of the temple, by which obedience became impossible. Then all genuine believers cheerfully forsook the whole ritual of Moses, convinced that Christ had abolished by His death all distinction between Jew and Gentile. These events fully declared the mind of God, and till their accomplishment the strong were called to bear with the weak, not at the expense of conscience or duty, but on the principles of self-denial and expedience in love; they explicitly declared that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availed anything, while they acknowledged those brethren who could not conscientiously neglect the law of Moses. *Things offered to idols, &c.* (See on xv. 20, 29.) *To signify the accomplishment, &c.* Howson connects this sentence with the words "he entered into the temple," and gives the following translation: "He entered into the temple, giving public notice that the days of purification were fulfilled (and stayed there), until the offering for each one of the Nazarites was brought." According to this view, which is also the view of Wieseler, the period of the Nazarite vow was accomplished, and Paul now made to the priests the official announcement of its fulfillment, and his readiness to pay for the necessary sacrifices which were to be offered on the same day. Most interpreters, however, regard the announcement as having reference to the future; that

Paul here announced to the priest when the days of purification were completed—namely, in seven days (verse 27); and that then, at the close of them, the offering would be made for each of the Nazarites. “Paul is among the Nazarites,” says *Lange*.

1. Not as a slave of human ordinances, but in the light of Evangelical liberty, which had power over all things that promote the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. vi. 12.) 2. Not as a dissembler before the people, but in the ministry of brotherly love, which bears the infirmities of the weak. (Rom. xv. 1.) 3. Not as a fugitive from the cross, but in the power of Apostolic obedience, which knows to deny itself from love to the Lord. (Luke ix. 23; see 1 Cor. ix. 1.)

27. †And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him., †Chap. xxiv. 18. †Chap. xxvi. 21.

Having noticed the treatment which Paul met with at Jerusalem, we have in the narrative which now commences the treatment he met with from the intolerant Jew and the Roman authority. *When the seven days, &c.* (See on verse 27.)

28. Crying out, Men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and further, brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. †Chap. vi. 13, 14, xxiv. 5, 6.

*Men of Israel, help.* A short watchword to rouse the populace. *This is the man.* He is well-known in Jerusalem, his name was a household word in all Israel. The charges of the infuriated mob, that this man spoke everywhere “against the people,” were all false; he had never spoken against the people, never against the law, never against the temple, and never polluted the holy place. This last would have been, according to the Jewish law, a most criminal act, punishable by death. There was a court of the Gentiles, so-called, within the precincts of the temple, into which they were allowed free admittance, but beyond that, into the holy place, or court of the Israelites, they were not suffered to penetrate; and inscriptions were written upon the pillars, in the current languages, forbidding any but a Jew to cross the fatal threshold, as being unclean and tending to desecrate the sanctuary of the Most High. “*This holy place.*” This was an interior court, in which some of the sacred things of the temple—as the altar of in-

ense, golden table and candlesticks—were deposited and used. The Gentiles were not allowed to enter that, nor the *chel* or inclosure before it. *Philo* says that it was certain death for any one who was not a Jew to set his foot within the inner court of the temple.

29. (For they had seen before with him, in the city, Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)—†Chap. xx. 4.

For *Trophimus*, see on xx. 4. He was a foreigner, and not a Jew from Ephesus. *Whom they supposed, &c.* They had seen Trophimus in the city with him, and from that rushed to the conclusion that he had brought Greeks into the temple. When God has appointed a season of suffering for us, the slightest circumstance may introduce it. How closely the servants of Christ are watched by the world, and what reason had they to be circumspect in their walk!

30. And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

*They took Paul.* They tumultuously seized on him, and drew him out of the temple, out of the court of the Israelites, where he was worshiping; and . . . the doors were shut, to guard against any profanation of it by riot or bloodshed.

31. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar: 32. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.—†1 Cor. xi. 23, &c. †Chap. xxiii. 27, xxiv. 7.

*To kill—with blows.* (Verse 32). *Came*—to the Antonian tower, where there was usually a Roman garrison and camp, to overawe the Jews, and to prevent popular tumults. *Tidings*—sudden. *The chief captain of the band.* His name was Claudius Lysias. (Acts xxiii. 26.) *Immediately*—he supposed that delay was dangerous. (Verse 38.) *Soldiers*—the number of soldiers under the command of the Roman tribune varied, according to circumstances, from three hundred to one thousand. God raises up what instruments He pleases to subserve His own gracious ends and designs in the preservation of His people. The barbarous heathen soldiers protect Paul, and keep him from being torn in pieces by the Jews, who professed to worship the same God with him.

33. Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. †Verse 11; chap. xx. 23; Eph. vi. 20.

*Took him.* With great violence, according to chap. xxiv. 7, probably meaning an armed force. *To be bound with two chains.* To be bound between two soldiers, his right hand chained to the left hand of the one, and his left hand to the right of the other. *Demanded*—of the crowd indiscriminately, it being his first approach. (Verse 34.) *Who, what*—two heads of inquiry. Let not the servant of Christ depend with too much confidence on the aid which the world affords. Here the tribune rescues the Apostle from the hands of murderous Jews, but nevertheless commands him, without hearing his plea, to be bound with two chains.

34. And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude; and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle. 35. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers, for the violence of the people.

<sup>1</sup>Chap. xxiii. 10, 16. <sup>2</sup>Ps. lv. 9; Hab. i. 3.

*Some cried one thing, &c.* They had no intelligent account to give. Reason had abdicated the throne; they were the mere creatures of impulse. A sad sight this. A vast multitude of human beings moved not by intelligent motives but by blind impulse. It is this senselessness that makes the opinion of mobs so worthless, their movements so reckless, and their existence so dangerous. *Could not know the certainty, i. e.,* the true state of the case. *For the tumult,* on account of the confusion, noise and uproar. *The castle*—the castle of Antonia, commanded by the tribune. "This castle," says *Josephus*, "had four towers, one of which overlooked the whole temple, and was joined to its porticos, and had a double pair of stairs from it, by which the soldiers of the garrison in the castle were used to come down with their arms on the festival days, and keep the people in quiet. As the temple was a guard to the city, so was this castle to the temple." Paul was conducted thither, probably in order to disperse the multitude, and to allow a further investigation. The soldiers bore him up the stairs on account of the violence of the people.

36. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

<sup>1</sup>Luke xxiii. 18; John xix. 15; chap. xxii. 22; 1 Cor. iv. 13.

The people's violence and impetuosity appear from their cries. Here we see the antagonism of the depraved heart to Christianity. Why was Paul that one

central figure in Jerusalem now against which all that was corrupt in the city pelted its fury and hurled its anathemas? Simply because he embodied and radiated the pure morality, the spiritual worship, and the universal love of the Gospel. Christianity clashes with the corrupt in human nature, stirs it into malice, and makes it rage with fury. Hence it is that its progress is ever a history of battles—battles fought on the arena of the sinner's heart.

37. ¶ And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? 38. Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

*Men that were murderers, or, men of the Sacarii,* an appellation given to a number of persons who carried a small crooked dagger under their garments, with which they committed many murders about this time in Jerusalem. *That Egyptian.* Josephus speaks of this man coming to the city when Felix was procurator. He pretended to be a prophet, and persuaded many to follow him to Mount Olivet, promising that they should see Jerusalem fall down at his command, and that they should have a free entrance into the city over its ruins. The fact that the chief captain made the mistake indicated by this inquiry, plainly indicates that he did not much concern himself with the religious history of the Jews, and felt no interest whatever in the progress of the Christian religion.

39. But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

<sup>1</sup>Chap. ix. 11, xxii. 3. <sup>2</sup>Chap. xxii. 25.

Paul's reply to his question threw new light upon his mind, and no doubt convinced him that his prisoner was no ordinary man. The Apostle did not here exaggerate the importance of his birth-place, for Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia, and was famous for its schools of philosophy, and the high refinement and wealth of its people. Xenophon in his "Anabasis" calls Tarsus "a great and flourishing city," and Josephus says that "it was the metropolis and most renowned city among the Cilicians." (See on chap. ix. 11.)

40. And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people: and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying:

<sup>1</sup>Chap. xii. 17.

The bearing and the spirit of Paul in his answer induced the Roman to grant his request, and he "gave him license." The wonderful advantage of this license to Paul then and there to speak, will appear in the sequel. *And beckoned, &c.* Addressing a crowd, an Oriental would not bawl out "silence!" to affront them, but lifts up his

hand to its extreme height, and moves it backward and forward, and they say to each other *pasathe*, be silent. *In the Hebrew tongue*—the language which was spoken by the Jews in Judea in the time of Christ and the Apostles. It was, properly, a degenerate form of the old Hebrew, though it was still popularly called Hebrew.

1. Who said to Paul that he should not go up to Jerusalem? 2. What great mark of respect did the disciples at Tyre show to Paul? 3. To what place did they who were of Paul's company depart? 4. Into whose house did they enter? 5. What is said of Phillip? 6. What of his daughters? 7. What is recorded of Agabus? 8. What did Paul say to those who would dissuade him from going to Jerusalem? 9. How was Paul received at Jerusalem? 10. What did he say in the presence of James and all the elders present? 11. What was their reply? 12. What did the Jews which were of Asia? 13. What did Paul say as he was led into the castle? 14. How was he "a Jew of Tarsus?" 15. In what tongue did he speak unto them?

## CHAPTER XXII.

<sup>1</sup> Paul declareth at large, how he was converted to the faith, <sup>17</sup> and called to his apostleship. <sup>22</sup> At the very mentioning of the Gentiles, the people claim on him. <sup>24</sup> He should have been scourged, <sup>25</sup> but claiming the privilege of a Roman, he escapeth.

**M**EN, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense <sup>1</sup> which I make now unto you. <sup>2</sup> Chap. vii. 2. <sup>3</sup> Peter iii. 15.

Paul appears before us now in a new condition; he is a prisoner, he was "bound with two chains." (Chap. xxi. 33.) In this condition we shall find him now in every chapter to the close of his memorable life. He closes his connection with the city in which he had encountered such violent persecution, by two defenses of himself—the one addressed to the people, and the other to the great council of the nation. We have now to notice his defense before the people. *Men (and, or, who are) brethren.* To this customary form of address Paul, like Stephen, and perhaps in imitation of him (vii. 2), adds *fathers*, either as a general expression of respect, or, as most interpreters suppose, with reference to such priests or elders as he may have seen or known to be among the multitude. *Hear . . . . now.* Heretofore they had not heard him because of the tumult.

<sup>2</sup> (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith.)

See on xxi. 40.

*They kept the more silence.* It is often the fault of preachers themselves, when men do not listen with attention to their words. They do not express themselves intelligibly, but adopt a style which betrays affectation, or is above the comprehension of the hearers. A teacher who is sincerely desirous of edifying will always endeavor to set forth the truth in the plainest and most intelligible language, and to apply it to the hearts of his hearers. The Saviour's mode of teaching affords a blessed and most perfect example.

<sup>3</sup> I am everily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. <sup>4</sup>xxi. 39, <sup>5</sup>2 Cor. xi. 22. <sup>6</sup>Phil. iii. 5. <sup>7</sup>Chap. v. 34. <sup>8</sup>Chap. xxvi. 5. <sup>9</sup>Gal. i. 14. <sup>10</sup>Chap. xxi. 20; <sup>11</sup>Rom. x. 2.

*A Jew.* This he avers in order to refute the charge on which he was arrested, namely, that of traitorous hostility to the religion of his fathers. *Born in Tarsus.* (See on ix. 11.) *Gamaliel.* This Gamaliel, by general consent, was an eminent Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrim. (See on v. 34.) *At the feet.* In Bible language, the teacher is said to be at the head of his disciples. (2 Kings ii. 3.) The pupil sits at the feet—an intimation of the intimate nearness and subjection to the teacher's authority. *And taught according, &c.*

He was not only a Jew, though born in Tarsus, yet brought up in Jerusalem, and taught by one of the most distinguished Rabbis, but he was taught perfectly—strictly in their law, and he was moreover “*zealous toward God*”—a zealot of God.

4. And I persecuted <sup>b</sup>his way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

<sup>c</sup>Chap. viii. 3, xxvi. 9-13; Phil. iii. 6; 1 Tim. i. 13.

*This way.* (See on ix. 2.) *Unto death,* not the aim merely, but the result of His persecution. The facts in the case justify the strongest sense of the expression. (See v. 20 and xxvi. 10.) Paul utters not a word in vindication of his conduct prior to his conversion. He paints the whole in the dark colors of fact.

5. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to <sup>d</sup>Damascus, to bring them which were there, bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.—<sup>e</sup>Chap. ix. 2, &c.

*Doth bear me witness*—He evidently could bear Paul witness: Paul does not doubt his willingness to do so, hence he speaks kindly. Afterward, in chap. xxvi. 5, more severely. *All the estate of the elders*—the whole Sanhedrim. *Brethren*—Jews. (Chap. ii. 29.) *Went to Damascus, &c.* (See on ix. 2, &c.)

6. And it came to pass, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

See on ix. 3.

7. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

See on ix. 4.

*I fell unto the ground.* We must take off the shoes from our feet, like Moses—fall to the dust, like Isaiah—smite our breast, like the publican, if we would hear what God has to say. (Isa. lxvi. 2.) *And heard a voice saying unto me.* It was the manifestation of Christ in the “light,” the “voice,” the address, which gave the turning-point to Paul’s life. Conversion does not originate with self, nor with the agency of man outside, but always with Christ. “When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me.” &c. Christ, when on earth, said not to His murderers, *Why bind ye me? Why buffet ye me? Why scourge ye me, and crucify me?* But now, when His people suffered, He cries out from heaven, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* He is more tender of His mystical body than He was of His natural body, more sensible of His members’ sufferings, than of His own.

8. And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

*I am Jesus of Nazareth,* or, as it should have been rendered, “I am Jesus, *the Nazarene,* &c. There were three different names, or appellations, by which both Jews and Gentiles were accustomed to express their contempt of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was sometimes contemptuously called, “The Galilean,” at other times, “The Crucified One,” and at other times, “The Nazarene.” These names were very current among the enemies of Christianity in the New Testament times. They were intended to convey the utmost scorn and contempt on the part of those that employed them, and, beyond all question, they must have been often used and applied by Saul, in his frantic zeal against the Church of Christ. (See on ix. 5.) Jesus owned His name from heaven to teach His members not to be ashamed when reproached for it here on earth.

9. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things, which are appointed for thee to do. 11. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.—Dan. x. 7.

See on ix. 7, &c.

*Saw indeed the light . . . . but heard not the voice.* This extraordinary circumstance indicates what is common in the world. Everywhere there are men, hearing the same voice, but receiving different impressions, seeing the same lights, but observing different objects. A “voice” fraught with deep meaning to some, is mere empty sound to others. A “light” revealing the grandest realities to some, discloses nothing to others. *What shall I do, Lord?* “We may,” says an old writer, “sooner find fire without heat, than a true convert without operative grace.”

12. And one <sup>k</sup>Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwell there. 13. Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

<sup>l</sup>Chap. ix. 17. <sup>m</sup>Chap. x. 22; <sup>n</sup>1 Tim. iii. 7; Heb. xi. 2.

See on chap. ix. 10, 17.

*Ananias,* a pious man, according to the law, whose acceptance of the Gospel had by no means destroyed his regard to the Mosaic institutions, and who on that account had an honorable character among all the Jews

who dwelt at Damascus. Thus Paul affirms that he was not introduced to Christianity by an opponent of Judaism.

*Brother Saul.* They were now brethren by faith and profession, owning the same God, united to the same Saviour, animated by the same Spirit, encouraged by the same promises, partakers of the same hope, and heirs of the same glory. As the Scriptures speak of a brotherhood between Christ and believers, *he is not ashamed to call them brethren*, so it speaks of a brotherhood between believers themselves. *Love the brotherhood*, that is, the whole fraternity and society of Christians, who are cemented by the blood of Christ, and united by the bond of love.

14. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth. Chap. iii. 13, v. 30. Chap. ix. 15; Gal. i. 15. Verse 13; 1 Cor. ix. 1, xv. 8. Chap. iii. 14, vii. 52. 1 Cor. xi. 23; Gal. i. 12.

See on ix. 15.

In the address of Ananias there is an accommodation to the views and feelings of the audience. God and Christ are both mentioned by their purely Jewish names. Ananias here asserts that Paul saw Christ, so that we infer that an actual appearance of Christ was granted him, which is not indeed precisely stated either in Luke's account of the transaction, or in either of the accounts given by the Apostle himself. (See on ix. 17.) This appearance was to put him on a level with the other Apostles who had seen the risen Lord. "That Just One." (See iii. 14.) Jesus is thus designated, not merely because, as God, He is absolutely just, the Fountain of eternal rectitude, nor merely because, as man, He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," but as Mediator who has engaged to make unjust men just. His work as Mediator is to make, by His justifying righteousness and sanctifying Spirit, unjust men just to themselves, just to their fellows, just to the universe, just to God. This is His work, and His exclusively.

15. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard. Chap. xxiii. 11, xxvi. 16, &c.

*Unto all men.* The universal ministry of Paul is expressed in these terms: the Gentiles being as yet not directly mentioned, for fear of irritating the Jews,

whereas, on the contrary, in chap. ix. 15, the commission is to bear the name of Jesus before the Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel. *Thou shalt be his witness, &c.* The work of ministers of the Gospel is now to witness for, hereafter to witness against; now they witness for God and His truth, and persuade sinners to believe it, hereafter they will witness against sinners for not believing and obeying the truth of God. With what an heart must a minister study when he considers that every sermon he preaches must be a witness against many, if not most of his hearers!

16. And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Heb. x. 22; 1 Peter iii. 21. Rom. x. 13; 1 Cor. i. 2.

*Arise, and be baptized, &c.* This way of speaking arises from baptism being the visible seal of remission. *Calling on the name of the Lord*, rather, "having called," *i. e.*, after having done so, referring to the confession of Christ, which preceded baptism, as chap. viii. 37.

17. And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18. And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. 19. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed in thee: 20. And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. 21. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence, unto the Gentiles. 22 Cor. xii. 2. Verse 14. Verse 14. Chap. vii. 53. Chap. viii. 1. Chap. xiii. 2, 47. Rom. i. 5, vi. 13, xv. 16, Gal. ii. 7, 8, Eph. iii. 7, 8, 1 Tim. ii. 7.

*While I prayed.* Prayer is an instinct of the soul. Danger seldom fails to rouse this instinct into a passionate supplication even in the most depraved. (See Ps. cvii. 13.) *Volney*, in a storm at sea, was a striking example of this. *I was in a trance.* The trance is the state in which a man has passed out of the usual order of his life, beyond the usual limits of consciousness and volition. To an "ecstasy" in the Apostle Paul we owe the mission which was the starting point of the history of the New Testament Church, the command which bade him "depart far hence unto the Gentiles." It is supposed by some, and with much probability, that it is to this trance Paul refers (2 Cor. xii. 1-5) when he speaks of being caught up to the third heaven. Real, earnest, believing prayer, places the soul under the beams, and breezes, and blessed visions of heaven.



And saw him, the Lord Jesus, mentioned in verse 16. Paul saw Him in his mind. *Saying unto me, &c.* The idea was conveyed in this communication, not only that Paul's testimony would be rejected but that violence would be attempted against his person. *They know that I imprisoned, &c.,—and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen.* (See on chap. vii. 58.) Paul thought that his conversion was so effectual an argument that even the Jews would be moved by it, but the Lord answers, that the Gentiles rather will be moved by it. It often occurs that faithful servants of God imagine that a special blessing would attend their labors in a particular place, rather than elsewhere. But God says: "Nay, thou errest!" and sends them away from the spot where they wished to remain. *Depart, &c.* Paul relates this vision to show that his own inclination and prayer had been that *he might preach the gospel to his own people*, but that it was by the imperative command of the Lord Himself that he went to the Gentiles.

22. † And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.—Chap. xxv. 24.

Notwithstanding the consummate skill with which Paul seemed to have conducted his defense, it was not to prove successful. *Away with such a fellow, &c.* Remarkable instance of pride and prejudice! These Jews heard Paul relate a variety of wonders attending his conversion without the least appearance of displeasure or disbelief; but the moment he cast the slightest reflection upon themselves, although not in his own words, but repeating the command of the Lord, they instantly lose all patience, and are for sweeping him from the face of the earth. The true cause of their infidelity on this occasion, as we see, lay in that part of the account which seemed to reprove their hardness of heart and to represent the Gentiles as directed by God to receive the Gospel. And why is the Gospel rejected by most unbelievers, but because its meek, pure and holy doctrines are inconsistent with the pride and appetites of the world? "Men love darkness rather than light"—why? "because," says the infallible Word of God, "their deeds are evil."

23. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air;

It is the invariable practice throughout Asia, in the present day, for people who apply for justice to be done against a criminal, to crowd in a tumultuous manner to the gate of the governor's palace, and to stand there uttering the most horrid yells, tearing their clothes, and throwing dust in the air, till they succeed in obtaining attention to their demands. These preparations of the mob, as has been well remarked, present even in our own day an image of man, when the madness of passion controls him. He rends his clothes, casts off the last remnant of shame and modesty, and exhibits himself, without disguise, in his brutal nakedness; he throws up dust in order to sully all that is bright and beautiful, to pollute all that is noble, and to delude himself. "It is dangerous to awaken the lion, the tiger's tooth is destructive, but the most terrible of all terrors, is man in his delusion."

24. The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

Scourging was a common method of examination resorted to by the Romans. It was administered by the lictors, and was usually inflicted by rods. The tribune, however, in ordering Paul to be immediately scourged, acted contrary to the Roman law, which enjoined that no examination should commence with scourging. Perhaps, in ordering Paul to be scourged, he designed to appease the wrath of the multitude, as Pilate for this reason scourged Jesus. (John xix. 1.) *That he might know, &c.* As Paul addressed the multitude in Hebrew, the tribune, being ignorant of that language, was not able to understand what he said. But when he saw the result, the rage and violent actions of the Jews, he naturally concluded that he had before him some dangerous criminal.

25. † And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26. When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. 27. Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 28. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. 29. Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him; and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

†Chap. xvi. 37; xxv. 16. †Or, tortured him.

As they bound him, literally, stretched him out, that the Apostle's back might be fully exposed to the stripes. This act is not ascribed to the centurion, who stood by, nor to the chief captain, who was not present even; it refers to those of whom the commencement of verse 22 speaks. *With thongs.* With which they bound him before inflicting the strokes. *Scourging* was threatened. *Thongs* differ from scourging, for they were employed to bind any one who was to be tortured by scourging. *For you.* Emphatic. It was nowhere lawful. *A man that is a Roman.* It was an evil deed, as Cicero tells us, to bind a Roman citizen; it was a heinous crime to scourge one. Paul did not assert his right of citizenship against the bonds (verse 29), for bonds had been foretold: he did assert it against the scourge, that he might defend his body and life, with the object of thereafter preaching the Gospel. *And*—that too. *With a great sum, &c.* The right of Roman citizenship was at first granted only to such foreigners as had conferred distinguished services on the country, or as a mark of honor upon great and good individuals. But, in process of time, it could be purchased for money, and under the corrupt emperors, it was prostituted so low, to fill their treasuries, that it lost its value, and never again recovered its primitive distinction. The tribune, in the present instance, had purchased the privilege with a large sum of money. "But I was free born." This is generally supposed to have been on account of Tarsus being made a free city by Augustus, and its inhabitants thus being admitted to the right of citizenship. *Pliny*, in his "Natural History," says that "Tarsus was a

free city;" *Appian*, that "the people of Tarsus were free, and discharged from paying tribute;" and other expressions are quoted from *Dion Cassius* and *Philo*, bearing upon the same point.

30. ¶ On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.—Chap. xxiii. 28.

*He would have known, &c.* He wished to ascertain the real ground of Paul's being apprehended by the Jews. *He loosed him from his bands.* From the chains which had been put on him the day before. (xxi. 33.) This was only a temporary removal of his bands, for the sake of his appearing before the Sanhedrim, for in the subsequent notices, Paul appears to be still wearing a chain. (xxi. 27; xxv. 27; xxvi. 29.) *Commanded, or required,* no doubt, by virtue of official powers in cases of emergency belonging to the governor when present, but devolving in his absence on the commander of the forces in Jerusalem. The *chief priests* are mentioned as the most important class of counselors, and *all their Sanhedrim*, the pronoun *their* being omitted by the latest critics. *And brought Paul down* from his prison in the castle to the lower place where the Sanhedrim assembled. According to Jewish tradition, that body transferred their sittings at length from Gazith, an apartment in the inner temple, to a room on Mount Zion, near the bridge over the Tyropæon. It was here probably that the council met at this time, for Lysias and his soldiers would not have presumed to enter the sacred part of the temple. The Romans conceded to the Jews the right of putting any foreigner to death who passed the forbidden limits.

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1. How did Paul begin his defense? 2. Of what does it consist? 3. What effect was produced on the audience?
  4. What did the chief captain command? 5. How was Paul bound? 6. What did he say to the centurion? 7. To whom did the centurion report this? 8. What was the result of the conversation between the chief captain and Paul? 9. Why was the chief captain afraid? 10. Why did he loose Paul from his bands?

## CHAPTER XXIII.

1 As Paul pleadeth his cause, 2 Ananias commandeth them to smite him. 7 Dissension among his accusers. 11 God encourageth him. 14 The Jews, laying wait for Paul 20 is declared unto the chief captain. 27 He sendeth him to Felix the governor.

AND Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

<sup>a</sup>Chap. xxiv. 16; 2 Cor. i. 12; Heb. xiii. 18.

We have now the speech of Paul before the Jewish council, commonly known by the name of the Sanhedrim, and the highest court in the nation. The Jewish writers affirm that it subsisted during all the ages of their commonwealth, and was instituted in the wilderness, when seventy elders of Israel were chosen to assist Moses in the government. The Sanhedrim was composed of the same number of members. Some, however, are of opinion that its commencement can be traced no further back than the return from the Babylonian captivity. It was a court to which appeals were made from the sentences of inferior judicatories; but there were some causes of greater difficulty and importance in which it claimed a sole right to judge. The council was now summoned by the chief captain, as it had been called together at the birth of our Saviour by Herod. He brought Paul before it, because he appeared from the clamors of the people to have been guilty of some offense against their laws; and, probably, that court asserted its right to judge him as a blasphemer of Moses, and of their sacred institutions.

*Paul earnestly beholding, &c.* In the presence of this august assembly, Paul was not abashed and intimidated. Alone in the midst of enemies, who had both the inclination and the power to injure him, he surveyed them with an undaunted countenance, supported by consciousness of innocence, and the expectation of that assistance, which Jesus Christ had promised to His disciples, when they should be brought before governors and kings for His sake. Instead of endeavoring to disarm their resentment, and to court their favor by any mean concession, or any retraction of his principles, he dared to assert the purity of his motives and the rectitude of his conduct. *I have lived, &c.* The word has an indirect reference to the

“polity” or “commonwealth of Israel,” of which he would signify that he had been and was to that hour, an honest and God-fearing member.

2. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. <sup>b</sup>John xviii. 22.

Who this *Ananias* is it is not certain. He presided, however, as the high priest on this occasion. The marvelous indignity which he ordered now to be inflicted on Paul, was in accordance with ancient and modern usages. Striking on the mouth was perhaps intended to express on this occasion that the tongue had been unlawfully employed, and that it should cease its utterances.

3. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

<sup>c</sup>Lev. xix. 35; Deut. xxv. 1, 2; John vii. 51.

*Shall smite*, literally, *is* (or *is about*) *to smite*, the first verb denoting simple futurity, without expressing (although it of course implies) intention or determination on the part of God, much less a desire on the part of Paul himself. *Thou whited wall*—alluding to the beautiful outside of some walls, which were constructed with mud and other base materials. This proverbial expression is analogous to our Saviour's words, in which He compares the Pharisees to whited sepulchres—beautiful outside, but within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. (Matt. xxiii. 27.) *Sittest thou to judge, &c.* Dost thou sit here on the seat of justice, in order to judge me according to the law, and commandest thou me to be smitten contrary to the law? Observe the incisive question as to the complete opposition shown by his judges between their office and their conduct.

4. And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? 5. Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is <sup>d</sup>written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. <sup>e</sup>Ex. xxii. 28. Ec. x. 20, 2 Peter ii. 10, Jude 8.

*I wist not, &c.* These words plainly indicate that Paul knew not the dignity of the person whom he addressed, and consequently that he spoke to him simply as sustaining the character and place of judge without regard to any higher office. By this assertion he weakened the force of

the accusation brought against him without acknowledging any guilt. *Ananias* unquestionably was not at this time in the official dress, otherwise he was easily known, and it would have at once appeared absurd in Paul to pretend ignorance of his dignity. But as the Apostle had been absent from Jerusalem, and the office of high priest was frequently changing from one person to another, although Paul had formerly been acquainted with *Ananias*, he might not have known him as at present holding the office of high priest. *Michaelis*, after investigating this subject, says that at this time the office of high priest was vacant, and *Ananias* must have assumed, without authority, the presidency.

*For it is written, Thou shalt not, &c.* Had Paul quoted, as some think, the law to intimate to his accusers, that as he remembered it, he could be charged only with an unintentional transgression of it, it would have been of little service, for ignorance of the dignity of *Ananias* could not acquit him from a breach of the precept which enjoined respect to every ruler of Israel. And indeed the Apostle's principles correspond with the law of love, which forbids speaking evil of any man. His design, we apprehend, was to inform his accusers, that as he could not want respect to the high-priest, of whom he was ignorant, so neither had he spoken inadvertently, for he remembered and regarded the Divine law, with the violation of which they accused him, and that they ought, therefore, to have considered his words in a very different light. He was indeed convinced of his innocence in what he had said. This was calculated at once to vindicate himself, and to fix more impressively the awful and solemn judgment which he had announced on the minds of his hearers.

6. \* When Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, *Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.*  
†Chap. xxvi. 5; Phil. iii. 5. †Chap. xxiv. 15, 21, xxvi. 6, xxviii. 20.

*Sadducees . . . . Pharisees.* The Sanhedrim was at this time divided between these two factions. The Pharisees were the popular party, and were perhaps the more numerous, but Josephus informs us that many of the sect of the Sadducees were high in office. It would almost ap-

pear that the high-priesthood was frequently conferred on those of this party. We are expressly informed that Ananus, afterward high priest, was a Sadducee. (*Joseph Ant.* xx. 9, 1). It was no doubt favorable for the Church that there was at this time this division of parties in the Sanhedrim. The Sadducees were chiefly incensed against the Christians, because they taught the doctrine of the resurrection; whereas the Pharisees, out of opposition to their rival sect, were sometimes inclined to favor them.

7. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. 8. For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection; neither angel nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. 9. And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.  
†Matt. xxii. 23; Mark xii. 18; Luke xx. 27. †Chap. xxv. 25, xxvi. 31. †Chap. xxii. 17, 18. †Chap. v. 39.

*The multitude*—of the associate judges, who favored each of the two sects. *Nor spirit—spirit*, as opposed to angel, means here the spirit of a man who is dead. *Both*—one of these points is the resurrection, the other is, angels and other spirits. *Scribes . . . . strove*, disputed violently. They appear as the champions of their party, because they were the men of learning, and accustomed to such debates. *We find no evil in this man.* Human passions were violently inflamed; nevertheless the wisdom of God accomplished its great design. He rules in the midst of His enemies. (Ps. cx. 2). Some, says Paul (Phil. i. 16, 18), preach Christ, who are influenced by hostile feelings, still, if Christ is preached, whatever the motive may be, I will rejoice. *If a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him.* The Pharisees here recollected the declaration which Paul had made the day before, respecting the supernatural appearance of Jesus to him near Damascus, and in the temple. (xxii. 6–8, 18–21). As such appearances accorded with their belief, and as they were now arrayed against the Sadducees, they would, for consistency's sake, express themselves as believing in the reality of such communications from spiritual beings. Probably they meant not merely to speak of those two instances, but to profess that they held themselves ready candidly to consider any views which had, at any time,

been presented to Paul from above. *Let us not fight against God.* The hostility of the Pharisees to the Sadducees led them to assume the appearance of great candor. Well had it been for them had they acted on the principle they now appeared to defend. We cannot but be struck with the similarity of their declaration to that which Gamaliel made when advising the Sanhedrim not to persecute the Apostles. (See v. 39).

10. ¶ And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him unto the castle. 11. And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. 12. ¶ Ps. xlvii. 1, 7; chap. xviii. 19, xxvii. 23, 24. Chap. xxviii. 30, 31; Rom. i. 15.

As the tumult and quarreling continued to increase, and the person of Paul himself began to be in peril, it was necessary for the chief captain to take care that his prisoner was not torn from him by the frantic judges. What could the astonished man have thought of such conduct on the part of the venerated assembly! He was well aware of the fanaticism of the Jews in matters of belief, and, lest the members of the Sanhedrim might in the tumult do some injury to this man in his (the chief captain's) presence—a man, too, who seemed worthy of respect, and had shown himself to be a Roman citizen—he ordered a detachment of soldiers to come down from the castle and to drag Paul from the midst of them—to take him away by force, and to take him into the barracks. *The Lord stood by him, &c.* The danger was great, but the comfort, too, was great. We may very well imagine, that just at this moment, when, amid all the complications between the chief captain, the Sanhedrim and the people, appearances seemed to point to nothing but a wearisome imprisonment and hostile plots—despondency came over the Apostle, and he who had stood up so boldly before the council now humbly and meekly implored his Lord for fresh strength and new life. *For as thou hast testified, &c.* As certainly as the former event (which was long previously indicated to thee by the Spirit) has now taken place, so surely shall the other come to pass in due time. Thou shalt testify as thou hast before testified, and I will continue to

guide thee. This is the comfort which the Lord affords to His servant, who in all his weakness is still anxious to testify. In the two chief cities of the world at that time—in the city of God and in the city of Cæsar—was this “chosen vessel” to confess and preach the name of Jesus. “If,” says an old writer, “the Lord stand by, and be graciously present with His servants, in a suffering hour, it is no matter how many and how mighty they be that do withstand them, and appear against them. No doubt these words, *Be of good cheer, Paul*, turned the Apostle's prison into a palace, and enabled him to bid a bold defiance to all the devilish designs of the Jews in Jerusalem against him, having got such good security for his safety, even from God Himself, in the faith of which our Apostle holily triumphs, saying, *If God be for us, who can be against us.* (Rom. viii. 31.) That is, *none can be against us, either safely or successfully.*” We may lament, it is difficult not to lament, that such manifestations as that which Paul received, are no longer granted, that in our troubles and difficulties we have no such encouraging presence of “Him whom having not seen we love;” and yet how much more cause have we rather to rejoice than to repine. “Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;” that blessed promise is for us, and for our children, a promise which never has been, and never shall be, broken to any of the believing followers of our Lord, while time remains. And such a promise of spiritual aid and spiritual presence far outweighs in value any promise of a personal presence which our Lord could have vouchsafed.

12. ¶ And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13. And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy. 14. And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. 15. Now therefore ye, with the council, signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him. 16. And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul. 17. Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. 18. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who has something to say unto thee. 19. Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? 20. And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou

wouldst bring down Paul to-morrow into the council as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly. 21. But do thou not yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee. 22. So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

<sup>1</sup> Verses 21, 30; chap. xxv. 3. <sup>2</sup> Or, with an oath of excommunication. <sup>3</sup> Ps. xxxi. 13. <sup>4</sup> Philo. iv. 9. <sup>5</sup> Ps. xxi. 11, xxxvii. 32, 33. <sup>6</sup> 2 Sam. xvii. 17. <sup>7</sup> Prov. xxii. 3; Matt. x. 16. <sup>8</sup> Chap. xxviii. 17; Eph. iii. 1, iv. 1; Philo. 9. <sup>9</sup> Verse 12. <sup>10</sup> Ex. xxiii. 2.

Although Paul, through the firmness and timely interference of the chief captain, was secured from the dangers of the lawless and infuriated council, perils far more to be dreaded than open violence were prepared for the Apostle, by the secret machinations of his enemies. *Certain of the Jews banded together, &c.* This conspiracy, atrocious as it is, was quite conformable to the current maxims of the time. On any one who was found guilty of speaking disrespectfully of their law, or impugning its authority, the traditions of that corrupt and degenerate age authorized every private Jew to inflict any measure of violence he could, whenever he obtained opportunity, without waiting for the tedious forms, and the uncertain issue, of a public trial. An offender of this description being considered a greater criminal than either a thief or a murderer, his removal by death was lauded as a meritorious and patriotic achievement, and we need not wonder, therefore, that at a period when such sentiments were universally entertained, men were found, not only forming the deliberate purpose of assassination, but informing the leading characters in the country, and receiving their approbation and encouragement of the bloody design. This execrable plot was sanctioned by a solemn and inviolable oath of abstinence from meat and drink till the assassins should be released from their vow by the death of their victim. Nor was this either an uncommon, or, on their part, a rash and impracticable condition, the miscreants imposed on themselves. In ancient times, when revenge of insults and injuries was inculcated and practiced as a part of every man's duty, it was common for persons who had such a dark and atrocious design in view, to bind themselves to its performance, by voluntarily abjuring for a time some favorite employment, or submitting to some particular personal privation, such

as resolving not to sleep till their enemy had fallen, if they were within reach of the object of their pursuit, and not to cut their hair, to taste wine, or eat flesh, or some other specified article of food, if they were likely to be engaged for a considerable period in watching the fit opportunity of accomplishing their purpose. Even to this day the Arabs, among whom the practice prevails for the nearest of kin to avenge the death of their murdered relatives, and who will compass sea and land in search of their victim, often bind themselves not to eat salt with any one they meet on their travels, for fear of interposing obstacles to their discharge of this debt of honor. Some deny themselves to one enjoyment, others to another, and whatever be the sacrifice they resolve to make, they consider the vow sacred, and, at whatever hazard or inconvenience, to be scrupulously observed, till the obligation has ceased with the death of the object of their pursuit. It was in the true spirit of Arab revenge that the forty conspirators, who plotted the death of Paul, bound themselves to abstain from food and drink till that obnoxious individual was out of the world, and perhaps, as such infamous vows as those which the accomplices mutually entered into, were far from being uncommon, and as they could form no certain calculations as to the length of time they might take to perpetrate the intended murder, the oath by which they bound themselves, in conformity with Eastern usages, might extend only to abstinence from some particular kinds of food and liquor, although the language of the sacred historian does certainly convey the idea, that they imposed on themselves a vow to abstain from all kinds of refreshment. *When Paul's sister's son, &c.* In the method recorded here, and in the following verses, by which the purposes of evil men were thwarted, we find three things which generally characterize the procedure of Providence. 1. Simplicity. What was the agency employed? "Paul's sister's son." This is all we know of the family of Paul. Here is a young man, probably uninfluential and obscure, who does the work. It has ever been heaven's plan to employ apparently insignificant means for the ac-

complishment of great ends. 2. Unexpectedness. Little did Paul expect deliverance would come from such a quarter. Means often most unlikely are employed to accomplish important results. The waters of heavenly mercy often come to men from rocky fountains. 3. Naturalness. The whole is beautifully natural. It was natural for Paul's nephew, having heard of the malignant plot, to seek access to his uncle, and to warn him of it. It was natural for his uncle to despatch him to the chief captain to impart the intelligence to him. Thus God does, as a rule, in His providential dealings with his people.

23. ¶ And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night: 24. And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor. 25. And he wrote a letter after this manner: 26. Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. 27. This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. 28. And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their councils: 29. Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. 30. And when it was told me, how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell. 31. Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. 32. On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: 33. Who, when they came to Cesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him. 34. And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia: 35. I will hear thee, said he: when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

¶ Chap. xxi. 33, xxiv. 7. ¶ Chap. xxii. 30. ¶ Chap. xviii. 15, xxv. 19. ¶ Chap. xxvi. 31. ¶ Verse 20, 21. ¶ Chap. xxiv. 8, xxv. 6. ¶ Verses 25-30. ¶ Chap. xxi. 39. ¶ Chap. xxiv. 1, &c., xxv. 16. ¶ Matt. xxvii. 27.

*Two centurions.* Though it is not said expressly, the inference is that these officers were to take charge of the expedition. *Soldiers*, who, as they are distinguished from the other two classes named, must be the ordinary heavy-armed legionaries. *Spearmen*, a species of light-armed troops. *The third hour of the night, i. e.,* nine o'clock with us; it being implied that they were to march at that hour as well as be ready. We should read, *that ye may bring him safe*, not *that they may bring him safe*. Who that reads of Paul, attended by his military guard, does not at once think of Luther, his brother in spirit, his successor in office, the partner of his fortunes—how he was taken by armed men, and safely conducted to the castle of Wartburg? *Felix the governor*, or procurator, whose residence was

at Cesarea. Antonius Felix was a freedman of Claudius Cæsar, the Roman emperor, and brother of Pallas, the favorite of Nero. According to the testimony of Tacitus, he governed his people with a servile mind, and indulged in every species of cruelty and lust, and he says that he expected to escape with impunity in the commission of his wicked deeds on account of his great power. He had, at this time, been procurator about five years, and remained in office two years longer (chap. xxiv. 27), when he was succeeded by Porcius Festus. *And he wrote a letter, &c.* The letter addressed by Claudius Lysias to Felix here sets forth the simple facts which had just occurred in connection with Paul's history. The letter extends from the 26th to the 30th verse. *This man was taken of the Jews, &c.* "When we examine this letter," says one, "we perceive that the pagan writes with more honesty and equity than the orthodox Jews speak. And even in our day, Paul fares better with Lysias and Felix than he does with those who profess to adhere to the letter, but who deny the spirit. *Antipatris.* A city built by Herod, and called in honor of his father, *Antipater.* It lay upon the route from Jerusalem to Cesarea, about twenty miles from the latter, in a large fertile plain. Its location was identified by *Robinson*, in his late researches in Palestine and Arabia. The distance was great for one night's travel, but the Roman soldiers were distinguished for their hardihood; the march was a forced one, and the "night" might be used to include a considerable part of the following day. *And on the morrow*, that is, not on the morrow after leaving Jerusalem, as the text would at first sight suggest, but on the morrow after they arrived at Antipatris—having taken, in all, part of three days to accomplish their journey from Jerusalem to Cesarea. *Returned to the castle*, or, barracks. When they reached Antipatris, the foot-soldiers left and returned to Jerusalem, whilst the horsemen proceeded with Paul to Cesarea. The foot-soldiers were no longer necessary to secure Paul's safety, as they were forty miles distant from Jerusalem, and no plot by the way was now to be apprehended. *And when the governor had read,*

&c. This is a participial sentence, being composed of three participles, literally translated, "And after reading the letter, and asking of what province he is, and learning that he was of Cilicia, I shall hear you," he said, &c. Felix does not inquire whether Paul was a Roman, as this was stated in the letter, but of what province he was, concerning which no information was given. *I will hear thee*, or, give a full hearing. *Herod's judgment hall*. The "Prætorium of Herod" was the name which the palace, built by Herod the Great, received only after it was occupied by the Roman governors. The Apostle was, as it here appears, not confined in a public prison, (probably in consequence of the favorable

statement made in the letter), but was placed in an apartment of the same palace in which the procurator resided. He was thus enabled, after escaping the perils of the road, to perceive the evidence of the Divine protection which he enjoyed, and he saw that he was conducted more and more nearly to Rome, his point of destination, and, indeed, to his own happy end. He was strong in faith, and glorified God. He became more and more firm in his resolution to deliver his Apostolical testimony, and he was well prepared for any future event. The pauses which the Lord sometimes allows in our labors and sufferings, are intended to render us similar services.

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1. What did Paul say to the council? 2. What did the high priest Ananias command? 3. What did Paul say to him? 4. How did he answer the charge of reviling God's high priest? 5. What is said of the Pharisees and Sadducees? 6. What did the scribes say? 7. What did the chief captain command? 8. What occurred on "the night following?" 9. For what purpose did certain Jews band together? 10. Who told Paul of this conspiring? 11. What did Paul then do? 12. What did the young man say to the chief captain? 13. What course did the chief captain pursue? 14. Repeat the letter that was sent. 15. What took place when the epistle was delivered to the governor?

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

1 Paul being accused by Tertullus the orator, 10 answereth for his life and doctrine. 24 He preacheth Christ to the governor and his wife. 26 The governor hopeth for a bribe, but in vain. 27 At last, going out of his office, he leaveth Paul in prison.

AND after five days, Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.—Chap. xxiii. 2, xxv. 2. Ps. xi. 2.

*Time*, that is, on the *fifth day* after Paul's departure to Cesarea. *Ananias*. (See on xxiii. 2.) *Orator*. This is the only passage in all Scripture where an *orator*, and the term *orator* occur. *Tertullus*. He seems to have been an Italian. *Informed*, in the forensic or judicial sense, of which we have examples in the English terms—*informer*, *criminal information*, &c. Whether this information was in writing or by word of mouth, is not determined by the narrative, and happily of no importance.

2. And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, 3. We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.—Ps. xii. 2.

*Great quietness*. Except clearing the country of the Sicarii and other robbers, Felix was cruel and unjust in his administration. *Very worthy deeds*, &c. Almost every word of this oration is false—the accusation of Paul, the encomium of the government of Felix, and the declaration of a lawful intention in what they had done and attempted.

4. Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words,

*Of thy clemency*, or in thy moderation and impartiality. *A few words*. The word in the original, thus rendered, is an abbreviated but intelligible phrase for *hear us speak concisely*. This promise, to be brief, might almost seem to have been caused by some appearance of impatience in the procurator, at the prospect of a formal and elaborate harangue.

5. For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: 6. Who also hath gone about to profane the temple:



whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. 7. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, 8. Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom, thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him. 9. And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

<sup>d</sup>Luke xxiii. 2; chap. vi. 13; xvi. 20; xvii. 6; xxi. 8; 1 Peter ii. 12, 19. <sup>e</sup>Chap. xix. 37; xxi. 23. <sup>f</sup>John xviii. 31. <sup>g</sup>Chap. xxi. 33. <sup>h</sup>Chap. xxiii. 30.

*Pestilent fellow*, literally, a *pest*, a dangerous man, spreading discontent and disaffection throughout the body of the Jews. *A mover of sedition*, &c., exciting the Jews to tumults and to rebellion against the government. *Throughout the world*. Paul had been extensively traversing the Roman empire; and though Felix had no jurisdiction out of Judea, yet Tertullus wished to make out a strong case, and to prejudice him as much as possible against Paul. *Nazarenes* occurs here only as a term of reproach. (See on ii. 22.) *To profane the temple*. By this the fawning orator insinuated that as the Romans permitted the Jews to be governed by their own laws, it was Felix's duty to maintain them in the possession of this privilege, which he immediately hinted Lysias had violated—he came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands (see on xxi. 31), when, as Tertullus pretended, they were to judge him according to the ecclesiastical law of their nation. *Of whom*, rather, *him*, for none else was examined. This accusation of Paul, together with the circumstances by which it was aggravated, were all mere fictions, of which Tertullus offered no evidence, except the assent of the high priest and elders, persons who could scarcely be considered as impartial witnesses, and of what consequence, therefore, was their base assertion? What a contrast is here presented to the noble defense of the Apostle!

10. Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself: <sup>i</sup>Felix, made procurator over Judea, A. D. 53. <sup>j</sup>1 Peter iii. 15.

Paul's very preamble stands in remarkable contrast to Tertullus' speech. In it the Apostle aims to convey some covert rebuke to the conscience of the hired orator, and to the Jews who were principally concerned. This rebuke is conveyed with as much plainness as delicacy, and generally in this preamble, so full of

dignity and so superior to the babbling of the speech-maker, an efficient groundwork is laid for the defense which is to follow. Tertullus commenced with deceitful flattery; Paul contents himself with acknowledging the many years' existence of Felix's official position, giving him to understand that he was acquainted both with his person and rule. Tertullus spoke of gratitude for various praiseworthy matters, which in fact had no existence. Paul, on the contrary, by the mention of his long-existing title as *judge*, recalls to his mind the duties and obligation of his office. Tertullus, with courtly affectation, prayed for an indulgent hearing; Paul, without any such request, declares—as before his judge he had a right to do—that he will “answer for himself,” only expressing a kindly expectation of justice, and the more confidently as he is speaking before Felix. Tertullus said much more than he was cognizant of; Paul utters only what he knew, and could express without uncourteousness. Tertullus spoke as the hired servant of others, Paul desires “cheerfully to answer for himself.”

11. Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.—<sup>k</sup>Chap. xxi. 15.

Paul meant that as it was only twelve days since his arrival at Jerusalem, the crime of which he was accused—namely, an attempt to profane the temple—must have been of recent occurrence, and therefore could be easily investigated.

12. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: 13. Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.—<sup>l</sup>Chap. xxv. 8, xxviii. 17. <sup>m</sup>1 Peter iii. 16.

Here is Paul's answer to the charge that he was a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the Roman empire. To this he replies that this was a mere assertion, incapable of proof. Before the words *neither in the synagogues, nor in the city*, are to be supplied, “They found me disputing with any man, or raising up a popular tumult.” So that these acts—disputing and raising up a popular tumult—are denied with reference to these three places—the temple, the synagogues, and the city.

14. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets: 15. And have hope toward

God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

1 Mic. iv. 5 2 Tim. i. 3. Luke xxiv. 27; chap. xxvi. 22, xxviii. 23. Matt. xxii. 40; Luke xvi. 16; John i. 45; chap. xiii. 15; Rom. iii. 21. Chap. xxiii. 6, &c., xxvi. 6, 7, xxviii. 20, &c. Dan. xii. 2; John v. 28, 29; 1 Cor. xv. 12-27, Rev. xx. 6, 13.

Christianity was stigmatized as a heresy. But, with whatever odious name it might be branded by the Jews, it was not an apostacy from the ancient religion of the country, for Paul continued to worship the God of his ancestors; and the doctrines which he had embraced, although they were represented by his accusers as novel and blasphemous, were contained in their own sacred writings. The Law prefigured and the prophets foretold Jesus Christ and redemption through his blood. *And have hope toward God, &c.* The reason for specifying this article of His faith, seems to have been his former avowal of it in the presence of the Sanhedrim, which, having caused much contention among the members of the court, had probably been misrepresented to Felix. "If I have declared my hope of the resurrection of the dead, they cannot consistently blame me, since the same hope is entertained and professed by themselves." The resurrection of the body is not a doctrine peculiar to Christianity, but has always been an article in the creed of the Jews. It was rejected, indeed, by the Sadducees, but while in point of number they were an inconsiderable sect, their naked and comfortless system was at variance with the faith of the nation, founded upon the promises of God, and was regarded with detestation by the devout and sober-minded part of the community. With a greater part even of the orthodox Jews, this hope was nothing more than a speculative opinion, but the life of Paul was an illustration of its practical effects.

16. And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.—Chap. xxiii. 1.

Paul appeals from those who persecuted him to the great God, before whom he had walked in sincerity of heart—from the multitude of those who were his enemies, to all the rest of mankind, before whom his conduct had been irreproachable, and he opposes to the artifice of Tertullus and the policy of Felix the purity of his conscience. *I exercise myself, &c.* I

*strive, exert myself.* In this conscience I find a witness who clears me, an advocate who pleads for me, a judge who acquits me, and a superior authority which relieves me from all the injustice men can do me. In view of the retribution which will take place at the resurrection of the just and the unjust, it was the constant study of the Apostle to act such a part, that his conscience should bear testimony in his favor, and anticipate the approbation of his judge. Whatever opinion, therefore, Felix might entertain of the grounds of his hope, he could not condemn him for adopting a principle which exerted so salutary an influence on his conduct. *Toward God and toward man.* It is not enough in order to have "a conscience void of offense," that we be faithful in the duties which we owe to man—such as rendering to men their due, tribute to whom tribute, being just in our dealings, true to our word, charitable to the poor, compassionate to the distressed, and complaisant to all the world. Neither is it enough that we attend to the duties we owe to God—such as being zealous defenders of sound doctrine, constant in our attendance upon public worship, regular at home, in praying, praising and reading the Scriptures. There must be fidelity in *both these classes of duty.* There can be no conscience toward men without conscience toward God, and no conscience toward God without conscience toward man. The obligations which rest upon us in relation to duties both Godward and manward, rest upon the same foundation—God's will. We cannot, dare not separate them. Conscience is sadly defective when it ignores either the claims of the Supreme Being, or of those of our fellow-creatures, or makes attention to the one a reason for neglecting the other. The Emperor Constantius Chlorus, father of the great Constantine, though a heathen prince, indiscriminately took into his service both heathens and Christians. One day, with a view to try them, he commanded all the Christians of his household either to renounce their faith, and become heathens, or quit their office. As at all times men are to be found who acknowledge no other king but Cæsar, and who prefer the favor

of their prince to that of their God, some of them sacrificed to idols, but others of them renounced their worldly interests that they might preserve their religion. After this what did the Emperor? He recalled and continued in his service all those who had been faithful to their God, and dismissed, with disgrace, those who, from avarice or ambition, had abjured the Christian faith. He went upon the supposition that a man who is a traitor to his God would never be faithful to his prince. In like manner it may be affirmed that a man who is not faithful to his fellow-beings, cannot be faithful to his God. From this declaration of the Apostle, learn, 1. That we must, in our several stations, so far as they enable us to act, seek out for all proper occasions to exercise our talents, and this not merely for our own profit, but for the glory of God and the good of mankind. 2. That it is our duty carefully to examine our hearts and lives, for how can we possibly know whether we have a conscience void of offense without a due inquiry into its real condition? 3. That we should accustom ourselves to contemplate the hopes and fears of a general resurrection, so as to bring them into action, as motives of conduct.

17. Now after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. 18. Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult; 19. Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had aught against me. 20. Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil-doing in me, while I stood before the council; 21. Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question by you this day.

<sup>a</sup>Chap. xi. 29, 30, xx. 16; Rom. xv. 25. <sup>v</sup>Chap. xxv. 16.

Here the Apostle states, that after many years of absence, he came to bring alms to his nation from the Christians of Greece and Macedonia, and was seen by certain Jews from Asia, purified or performing his Nazarite vow in the temple, without any concourse of people or tumult whatever, and that they ought to be present (and no doubt would have been) if they had anything to prove against him. But, since they did not choose to appear, he appeals to his accusers on the spot, whether he had done evil while he stood before the council; or been guilty of any offense except his crying out among them, "touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question by you this day." —

22. ¶ And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter. 23. And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or to come unto him.

<sup>v</sup>Verse 7. <sup>v</sup>Chap. xxvii. 3.

In the Apostle's short defense every line speaks truth and integrity. And Felix was so sensible of Paul's innocence, that he found it impossible to give sentence against him. At the same time, willing to gratify the Jews, he would not entirely acquit and set him free, but deferred any further hearing till Lysias the chief captain should come down. This, we are told in verse 22, which may be more clearly rendered as follows: "Then Felix deferred them, and said, having obtained more exact knowledge of that way (or religion) when Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter." But we may easily perceive what impression the business had made upon his mind; for although he ordered him to be detained in custody, yet he made this as light and easy as possible; "he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come to him." Here we have an instance of a man wanting firmness to do complete justice, yet endeavoring to make some amends to the injured person, a case by no means uncommon in life, proceeding sometimes from fear, sometimes from interest, sometimes from partial affection, or other causes, which are sufficient to turn conscience aside, yet not wholly put down its awful warnings.

24. ¶ And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

After certain days—in which Paul had been kept in this lenient confinement. Felix came. It seems he had been absent a short time, and now came again to Cesarea. With his wife Drusilla, &c. It appears from Josephus, that Drusilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, and the sister of that Agrippa who is mentioned in chap. xxv. 13. She had been married to Azizus, king of Emessa: but Felix, struck with her great beauty, by means of a wicked Jew, named Simon, who professed himself a magician, persuaded her to abandon her husband, and marry him,

which she did, though Azizus had but a little before submitted to circumcision, and so embraced Judaism, as the condition required, in order to his marrying her. Josephus adds, that she was afterwards consumed, together with a son she had by Felix, in a terrible eruption of Mount Vesuvius. To gratify Drusilla's curiosity, as she was desirous of seeing and hearing so extraordinary a man as Paul, as well as to learn himself, from Paul's own mouth, what were the principles of his religion, Felix "*sent for Paul,*" and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. It is here implied that, in preaching the Gospel, the Apostle availed himself of the proper use of reason and argument, according to the occasion. He adapted his manner to the character of those addressed: he did this to the Athenian philosophers (Acts xvii.), citing their own poets, and appealing to Creation and Providence: with the Jews, as in his epistle to the Romans he reasoned on Jewish grounds, and here similarly adapted his moral reasoning to the Roman governor.

25. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

\*Prov. xvi. 12; Jer. xxii. 15-17; Dan. iv. 27; John xvi. 8. \*Ps. xxxi. 4, 5; Dan. v. 1-4; Hos. vii. 5; 1 Peter iv. 4. \*Ps. l. 3, 4; Dan. xii. 2; Matt. xxv. 31-46; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 12. \*Ps. xcix. 1; Isa. xxxii. 11; Hab. iii. 16; Heb. iv. 1, 12. \*Prov. i. 24, 3; Matt. xxii. 52, xxv. 1-10.

*Reasoned.* If ever there was any man, who, in the strength of the Spirit and light within, might have neglected reason, which he was so well qualified to wield, Paul was that man. If ever there was any man who, on the strength of speaking as the oracle of God, might have expected a blind assent in his hearers, Paul was that man. But so far was he from doing this, that it was his constant aim and effort to establish the doctrines of revelation by the arguments of reason. His epistles were not florid, empty declamation. His discourses were not loose harangues, made up of rambling, disjointed observations, nor bold assertions, abruptly thrown out, and unsustained by any show of argument. Neither did he summon to his aid the artifices of rhetoric, or labor after the embellishments of a gaudy eloquence, which, like the meteor's flash, might dazzle for a moment, but leave no ray of light or of heat

behind. But he addressed man as a rational being, and his great object was to enlighten the mind, and carry conviction to the judgment. (See on v. 24.) He "*reasoned,*" presenting the truth in an argumentative strain, which he believed to be best adapted to produce the desired effect of conversion, and bending his whole soul to accomplish this result, with as much earnestness as if all depended on himself, though knowing, as he did, that without the blessing of God, all his efforts must be fruitless.

*Of righteousness.* This includes truth, justice and mercy in our outward actions, as well as the inward dispositions from which they flow, as meekness, long-suffering, love. (Titus ii. 12; Luke i. 75; Eph. iv. 24.) Paul would probably show his hearers, on this occasion, their want of righteousness both toward God and man; he would show them the necessity of the imputation of righteousness, or of justification before God (Rom. iii. 24, 25), of regeneration, sanctification, and a conformity to God (Eph. iv. 22-24; Col. iii. 9, 10), of practical obedience to His laws (1 John iii. 7; 1 Cor. vi. 9), and he would likewise display the excellency and happy effects of this righteousness *here* (Ps. xxxiv. 15, 17, 19; 1 Peter iii. 12, 13; Isa. iii. 10, xxxii. 17), and *hereafter* (Rom. v. 21), as well as the way of attaining this righteousness, that it is through Christ (Jer. xxiii. 6; Rom. x. 4; 1 Cor. i. 30; Gal. ii. 16; Acts xxvi. 18; Phil. iii. 8, 9). *Temperance.* This, as to its nature, consists in the due subjection and government of the body, its members and senses, appetites and passions, including sobriety, continence, and chastity, in which both Felix and Drusilla had trespassed in their alleged marriage—in the proper use of all God's creatures, and not the abuse of them, using them with moderation, not idolizing them, nor resting in them, being led to the Creator by them. This would be strange doctrine to Felix. The excellency and necessity of temperance are seen, whether we regard the good of our family, the health of our body, the peace of our mind, the favor of God, or the edification of our neighbor, whether we regard justice to the creatures, gratitude to God for the loan or gift of them, or

our own good here or hereafter. *Judgment to come.* It is certain that there will be a future judgment. Reason assures us that virtue and piety ought to be rewarded, and vice and wickedness punished, but here, too often, wicked men prosper, and good men are afflicted. Conscience condemns us, and creates in us fears and forebodings of a future judgment, or approves our actions, and fills us with confidence and peace, as we do ill or well. (See chap. xvii. 31; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 12.) Jesus Christ will be the Judge in the future judgment. It will be exercised on man in his incarnate state. He shall receive according to the deeds done in the body. It will be universal. It will be simultaneous; all will be judged together. Men, under the Gospel, will be judged as believers or unbelievers; the heathen, that sinned without law, will be treated according to the light of natural conscience. It will be sudden, as a thief in the night, like the deluge on the generation of Noah, like the fire from heaven on the men of Sodom. It will be final, emphatically the last judgment, from which there can be no appeal. "Eternal judgment." (Heb. vi. 2.) Observe the consequence of judgment. (Matt. xxv. 46, xiii. 48, 49.)

"Eternity, the various sentence past,  
Assigns the sever'd through distinct abodes,  
Sulphureous or ambrosial, what ensues?  
The deed predominant! The deed of deeds!  
Which makes a hell of hell, a heaven of heaven.  
The goddess, with determin'd aspect, turns  
Her adamantine keys, enormous size,  
Through destiny's inextricable wards,  
Deep driving every bolt, on both their fates.  
Then, from the crystal battlements of heaven,  
Down, down she huris it, through the dark profound,  
Ten thousand thousand fathom, there to rust,  
And ne'er unlock her resolutions more."

*Felix trembled*—for Felix was not ignorant of these things; he felt how justly the Apostle spake—how reasonably and simply—how sincerely and faithfully. The truth shook him, but not out of his iniquities. If a man will hear and take the Word of God for his standard, he must fear and tremble when he hears what God says of man dying an unpardoned and impenitent sinner. *Go thy way*, &c. The truth when believed and felt, will always make a man dislike either himself or the minister who sets it forth. "Let me put off the evil day a little longer; I would fain shake off my conviction." Here is an old device of Satan: "You will not die just yet; have a little longer pleasure; go on in thy ways

of vice; think of it at some future season." A more free and leisure period to attend to the things of the soul, may never come. It *did* arrive to Felix, but the opportunity came without the disposition. He saw the preacher frequently, but no trembling now, the good feeling was gone forever!

Here we see, 1. *The duty of a minister.* Paul neither considered the greatness of the persons before him, nor did he bend to their taste and notions, nor did he consider his own safety. He preached justice, to an oppressor, chastity, to an adulteress, judgment to come, to a judge on the judgment seat, while he himself was the prisoner. Truth will pay no undue respect to persons. It aims at the conscience. 2. *The force of truth.* Drusilla, being a Jewess, might possibly shroud herself under her Jewish privileges, but Felix could not thus shelter himself from conviction, he knew something more than Drusilla. Greatness cannot support us against truth. Belshazzar may revel in the midst of his lords and concubines, yet, if God write upon the wall, his loins will tremble, his greatness will not save him.

26. † He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.  
27. But after two years, Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

† Ex. xxiii. 8. \* Mark xv. 15, Chap. xxv. 9.

Behold *the deceitfulness of sin.* What miserable evasions are here, when the truth is so plainly set before him! Nay, worse than evasions, for he hoped that Paul would offer him a bribe for his liberation; but because the Apostle would not use money for this purpose, if he had it, *Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.* Such is the deceitfulness of sin, that many will trifle with God and with their convictions: they will regard their self-interest and the good-will of men, as Felix did, more than the truth and the fear of God. Men are less disposed to that which is good and has been disregarded so long. Evil propensities have grown by continuance. The disease has gained strength by neglect, and the shrub, by being left, has become a tree, and is too radicated to be removed. Bless God if you tremble at His word, but remember conviction is not conversion. Depend not on excitement in religion, without princi-

ple. Pray that you may tremble to pursue. Let your fear induce you to flee for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before you.

1. Who informed the governor against Paul? 2. What points did Tertullus make in his accusation? 3. Repeat Paul's answer. 4. What disposition did Felix make of the case? 5. What command did he give to the centurion? 6. When, and for what purpose, did Felix send for Paul? 7. Of what themes did Paul reason? 8. What was the effect on Felix? 9. Why did he send for Paul "the oftener?" 10. Who came into Paul's room? 11. What was Felix willing to do, in order to show the Jews a pleasure?

### CHAPTER XXV.

2. *The Jews accuse Paul before Festus.* 8. *He answereth for himself.* 11. *and appealeth unto Cesar.* 14. *Afterward Festus openeth his matter to King Agrippa,* 23, *and he is brought forth.* 25. *Festus cleareth him to have done nothing worthy of death.*

NOW when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cesarea to Jerusalem.

Festus comes into the place of Felix. From the scriptural narrative, as well as from Josephus, we infer that he was a better man and a more upright judge. His official life at Cesarea seems to have been very short. He commenced office in the autumn of A. D. 60, and died in the summer of A. D. 62. *After three days, &c.* The governors of Judea at this time generally resided at Cesarea, but Jerusalem was regarded, for many reasons, as the seat of influence. Hence they spoke in those days of ascending or going up to Jerusalem.

2. Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, 2. And desired favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. \*Chap. xxiii. 14, 15.

*The high priest*, or, according to the oldest copies and the latest critics, *the High (or Chief) Priests*, in the plural number. The actual high-priest, at this time, as we learn from Josephus, was not Ananias, but Ishmael, the son of Phabi, nominated to that office by Agrippa. *The chief of the Jews*. By these are meant the chief-people of the Jews, and as most of these were members of the Sanhedrim, the phrase probably denotes a deputation from that body. (See chap. xxiv. 1.) Two years had elapsed since Ananias and the elders had

appeared before Felix to accuse Paul, yet their enmity against the Apostle had not decreased. They had found themselves baffled by the procrastinating spirit of Felix, but now that a new governor of greater decision had arrived, they thought they might succeed better with him, and as it was his policy to ingratiate himself with them on his entrance into office, they had reason to hope that their request would be granted. *Desired favor*, that is, requested it as a favor from Festus on his accession to office. Nothing is more cruel than false zeal: its rage is heightened by the suffering of its victims, and confirmed by years: fortitude and virtue but inflame it more, being looked upon as new insults upon its infallible decisions. *That he would send, &c.* According to the account which Festus gave of the transaction, the Jews first asked that judgment might be pronounced against Paul, and to this request Festus replied that it was not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to death before the accused had his accusers face to face, and had opportunity to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. (Verses 15, 16.) Having failed in this, they then requested that Paul might be brought up to Jerusalem, and there tried. The plea would doubtless be, that he was accused of offenses chiefly against the Jewish law, and that his accusers and the witnesses against him, were in Jerusalem; whereas the real purpose was to assassinate him on the way. *Laying wait, &c.*—forming an ambuscade.

4. But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*. 5. Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him. 6. And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Cesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment-seat, commanded Paul to be brought. 7. And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

<sup>b</sup>Not more than eight or ten days is regarded by the best authorities as the true text. <sup>c</sup>Ps. xxxv. 11; Matt. v. 11, 12; chap. xxiv. 5, 13.

But Festus answered, &c. God here protected Paul in a wonderful manner. The Apostle himself was not aware of the extent of the danger from which his life was again rescued. (Verse 3.) How numerous are the cases in which we have been protected and rescued, and of which we shall remain in ignorance until we hereafter stand before the throne of God! The expression *stood round about* indicates the eagerness with which they crowded around their long-lost victim. They felt a fiendish pleasure in having him, as they thought, once more within their reach. *Grievous complaints*—a repetition, most likely, of the charge before Felix. (xxiv. 5, 6.)

8. ¶ While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cesar, have I offended anything at all.

While he answered for himself. In this instance Luke gives only a general account, both of the accusations and of Paul's defense. But from the words in this verse, the charges appear to have been three-fold. 1. That he had broken the law. 2. That he had defiled the temple. 3. That he had dealt in treasonable practices; to all of which he no doubt answered *particularly*, though we have nothing further here than the general statement made. Reproach has been the reward of religion and righteousness. The servants of Christ are happy in their own innocence, and their adversaries render themselves odious by belying them, and laying that to their charge which every one can disprove.

9. But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

Willing to do the Jews a pleasure. This was merely to please them, and conciliate their esteem; for he knew that as Paul was a Roman citizen, he could not oblige him to take a new trial at Jerusalem. Although men, who are not influenced by

the fear of God, may, for a season, pursue the right path, they can at any time, when earthly motives are presented, deviate from it, and act deceitfully. Hence we should put confidence, not in men, but in God. (Ps. cxviii. 8, 9.)

10. Then said Paul, I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged; to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

The Roman governors were the emperor's representatives; the Apostle, therefore, as a Roman citizen, when standing at the tribunal of Festus, was in the place where "he ought to be judged," but should he be sent to Jerusalem, to be tried under the influence of the Jewish rulers, he would, independently of plots and conspiracies, be deprived of his privilege. Nero, who is still infamous, was at that time the Roman emperor.

11. For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cesar. <sup>a</sup>Chap. xxvi. 32.

If I be an offender—"if I am unjust," guilty, *i. e.*, in consequence of past wrongdoing. If the degree of guilt was such that he deserved to die, he was willing to die. *I appeal*, &c. It is well known that the Roman law allowed such an appeal to every citizen, before sentence was passed, and made it highly penal for any governor, after that, to proceed to any extremities against the person making it.

12. Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cesar? unto Cesar shalt thou go.

Festus (little expecting such an appeal, but bound to respect it) having conferred with the council (his assessors in judgment, as to the admissibility of the appeal), said, *Hast thou* (for "thou hast") . . . . . *unto Cesar shalt thou go*—as if he would add (perhaps) "and see if thou fare better."

13. ¶ And after certain days, king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cesarea, to salute Festus.

King Agrippa—son of Herod Agrippa, spoken of in chap. xii. 1, and grandson of Aristobulus, son of Herod the Great. As he was but seventeen years of age when his father died, the emperor Claudius did not think it proper to appoint him king of Judea in the room of his father, but made it a Roman province. However, on the death of his uncle Herod, he made him king of Chalcis, which, after he had gov-

erned it four years, he exchanged for a greater kingdom, and gave him the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias, to which Nero afterward added part of Galilee, with several towns in Perea. *Bernice* was the eldest daughter of Agrippa the First, and a sister of Drusilla. (xxiv. 24.) She was noted for her beauty and her profligacy. Luke's accuracy in introducing her at this stage of the history is worthy of remark. After a brief marriage with her first husband, she became the wife of Herod, her uncle, king of Chaleis, and on his death remained for a time with Agrippa, her brother. She was suspected of living with him in a criminal manner. Her third marriage with Polemon, king of Cilicia, she soon dissolved, and returned to her brother, not long before the death of the emperor Claudius. She could have been with Agrippa, therefore, in the time of Festus, as Luke represents in our narrative. Her subsequent connection with Vespasian and Titus made her name familiar to the Roman writers. Several of them, as Tacitus, Suetonius and Juvenal, either mention her expressly or allude to her. *To salute Festus*. It was their visit of congratulation. Agrippa, being a vassal of the Romans, came to pay his respects to this new representative of the power on which he was dependent.

14. And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying; There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: 15. About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. 16. To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. 17. Therefore when they were come hither, without any delay, on the morrow I sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. 18. Against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: 19. But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. 20. And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. 21. But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cesar. 22. Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To-morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

<sup>c</sup>Verses 2, 3. <sup>f</sup>Verses 6. <sup>g</sup>Chap. xviii. 15. <sup>h</sup>Or, I was doubtful how to inquire thereof. <sup>i</sup>Or, judgment.

*To whom I answered, It is not the manner, &c.* Festus, in this address to Agrippa, describes his own sense of justice and his impartial procedure, with much ostentation. But when we closely examine the whole transaction, it plainly appears that

he did not express his real sentiments. We are told in verse 9 that he wished to confer a favor on the Jews. He was disposed to employ indirect means for delivering up Paul to them in Jerusalem, and was prevented from executing his purpose solely by the appeal made to the Emperor. He was a mere man of the world, who was anxious to be popular among all classes, and he trimmed the sails according to the direction of the wind. This is by nature the evil tendency of us all. We are very ready to set forth our own merits, and to justify all our actions, although our conscience may convict us of many human infirmities. Observe what base and vile, what low and undervaluing thoughts, and apprehension, carnal men have of the high and holy things of God. Festus here calls the religion and worship, which was of God's own institution, most profanely and contemptuously by the name of *superstition*.

*One Jesus, &c.* "Notice," says *Rev. Robert Hall*, "the contemptuous manner in which Festus speaks of the Saviour of the world, as 'one Jesus,' which was dead. It is very remarkable that this *one* Festus owes all his celebrity to this *one* Jesus, for had it not been for this *one* Jesus, we should never have heard anything of this *one* Festus, for his name is never mentioned in profane history." *Augustus*. This surname was borne by all the emperors, from Cesar Octavianus, who first assumed it. *Would also hear the man myself*. No doubt but Agrippa had learned from his father, by whom, it is to be remembered, James had been put to death, and Peter imprisoned (xii. 2, 3), and from many others, something of the history and pretensions of Christianity; so that he would naturally have a curiosity to see and converse with so eminent a Christian teacher as Paul was; who, on account of what he had been in his unconverted state, was, indeed, more regarded and talked of among the Jews, than any other of the Apostles.

23. <sup>a</sup>And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing; with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth. <sup>b</sup>Ex. vii. 24. <sup>c</sup>Chap. ix. 15.

*With great pomp*. The original word properly signifies appearance, a lively im-



age in the mind, phantasy, but by the later Greeks it is used to signify pomp, splendor, parade. What has become of all the pompous solemnities of kings and princes at their births and marriages, coronations and triumphs? They are now as a dream—a mere phantasy. Hence learn the folly and pride of man, who can glory and please himself in the frail and wretched being he has here, who doats on this poor natural life, and cannot be persuaded to think on one higher and more abiding, although the course of time, and his daily experience, tell him this truth, that “all flesh is grass.” *Into the place of hearing:* in Latin, *auditorium*. Either the usual place where such causes were heard, the judgment-hall, or perhaps rather the place of hearing, set apart for the present occasion. *Chief captains*, or “tribunes.” These were the commanders of the Roman cohorts stationed at Cesarea. *Principal men of the city*. Among them were the *assessors*, or counselors of the governor. (Acts xxvi. 29, 30.) Thus Paul was brought before Festus, the representative of Cæsar, king Agrippa, the representative of the Jews, and all the nobles of Cesarea. Now was our Lord’s prophecy fulfilled: “Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.” (Matt. x. 18.)

24. And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. 25. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed unto Augustus, I have determined to send him. 26. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and especially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. 27. For it seemeth to me unreasonable, to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.

<sup>1</sup>Verses 3, 7. <sup>2</sup>Chap. xxii. 22. <sup>3</sup>Chap. xxlii. 9, 29, xxvi. 31. <sup>4</sup>Verses 11, 12. <sup>5</sup>Prov. xviii. 13. John vii. 51.

In the statement which Festus, in in-

troducing Paul, now makes, he vindicates two things.

1. His *personal* conviction in the matter. *But when I found, &c.* Here is a strong testimony to Paul’s innocence. Festus had heard all that the Jews had to say against him, both at Jerusalem and at Cesarea, he had seen and spoken to Paul himself; he had undoubtedly given much attention to the case, and here, in the open court of Cesarea, he declares that he had found “nothing worthy of death,” and that he had no “*certain thing*” of which to accuse him. This indicates—

2. His *official* embarrassment. Festus was bound to send Paul to Rome, to the emperor, to be tried. Paul had demanded this, and the request he could not disregard; but in sending him to the chief authority, whom he calls “*my lord*,” it was his duty to specify the crimes that he had committed. But the crimes he could not find. *It seemeth to me unreasonable, &c.* If Festus had done his duty, and acquitted Paul, he need not have sent him to Rome; but now he was bound to send him to Rome, and here was his embarrassment. What was he to do? He was unable to report the case to Nero without criminating himself. His hope, therefore, was, that something would come out before Agrippa that would solve the difficulty.

Although God sometimes permits his servants to be loaded with slanders and reproaches, yet He will find a time to vindicate their innocence, and cause their very judges, if not their accusers, to proclaim them guiltless. And it is no small mercy to have our reputation freed from those blemishes which the uncharitable suspicions, or rash censures of men, have cast upon us.

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1. Who informed Festus against Paul? 2. What did they desire against him? 3. What did Festus answer? 4. When and where did he command Paul to be brought before him? 5. What did Paul answer for himself? 6. What did Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, say? 7. State Paul’s reply. 8. What did Festus decide? 9. When was Paul brought before Agrippa? 10. What did Festus say before king Agrippa?

## CHAPTER XXVI.

2 Paul, in the presence of Agrippa, declareth his life from his childhood, 12 and how miraculously he was converted, and called to his apostleship. 24 Festus chargeth him to be mad, whereunto he answereth modestly. 28 Agrippa is almost persuaded to be a Christian. 31 The whole company pronounce him innocent.

**W**HEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

As king Agrippa occupied the highest rank in the assembly, as the guest of the procurator, he enjoyed the honor of being president on this occasion. Hence he opens the proceedings, and at last breaks up the meeting. Alas! that the reign of evil in our world should be so mighty as to give tyrants a power over a good man's tongue. "*Permitted to speak!*" Why, Paul had a Divine right to speak, and the world stands in urgent need of his utterances. *Stretched forth the hand.* A becoming expression of the earnestness of the speaker, and designed to draw the attention of the assembly. The eloquent Demosthenes often used the same gesture with Paul here.

2. I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

It was gratifying to the Apostle to be permitted to speak at all on this occasion, for he had much that lay on his conscience to say, much that would throw light upon his history and his religion. But it was especially gratifying to him to be able to speak on this occasion before Agrippa.

3. Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

<sup>a</sup>Deut. xvii. 18. <sup>b</sup>Chap. xxiv. 4.

*I know thee to be expert in all customs, &c.,* well acquainted with the customs and the disputes which exist among the Jews. Agrippa was himself a Jew, and was truly represented by Paul as having adequate knowledge of Jewish manners and opinions. His early education in Jerusalem, in the family of his father, Agrippa the First, who was a bigoted Jew, his connection with the sacred treasure, and with the government of the temple, and his having a voice in nominations to the priesthood, must have made him intimately acquainted with Jewish affairs. The Apostle's opening remarks were adapted to gain the good will of Agrippa, but he by no means

transcended the limits of truth. Let us imitate the courtesy of Paul, mingled, as it was by him, with unswerving fidelity and truth, without aught of the fulsome or exaggerated in his compliments.

4. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews: 5. Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.

<sup>c</sup>2 Tim. iii. 10. <sup>d</sup>Chap. xxii. 3; Phil. iii. 5.

*Which knew me from the beginning*—plainly showing that he received his education even from early youth, at Jerusalem. (See on chap. xxii. 3.) *If they would* ("were willing to") *testify*—but this, of course, they were not, it being a strong point in his favor. *After the most straitest* ("the strictest") *sect*—as the Pharisees confessedly were. This was said to meet the charge, that as a Hellenistic Jew he had contracted among the heathen lax ideas of Jewish peculiarities.

6. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: 7. Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

<sup>e</sup>Chap. xxiii. 6. <sup>f</sup>Gen. iii. 15, xxii. 18, xlix. 10; Deut. xviii. 15; 2 Sam. vii. 12; Ps. cxxxii. 11; Isa. iv. 2, vii. 14, ix. 6, 7; Jer. xxxiii. 5, xxxiii. 14-16; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Dan. ix. 24; Micah vii. 20; Zech. xiii. 1-7; Mal. iii. 1; chap. xiii. 32; Gal. iv. 4. <sup>g</sup>Luke ii. 37; 1 Thes. iii. 10. <sup>h</sup>Night and day.

*For the hope of the promise, i. e.,* founded on, excited by the promise; or, the sense may be, the hope of its fulfillment. *Made*—given, brought into existence. *To the fathers, i. e.,* to the patriarchs and to the intervening generations. *Our*, which identifies the speaker with the Jewish race and Church. *I stand and am judged*, literally, *stand* (or *have stood*), *being tried* (or on my trial). *Our twelve tribes.* The twelve tribes are also mentioned in the epistle of James. (James i. 1.) This is probably an expression used for the Israelites in general, for although ten of the tribes were carried away into captivity, and appear to have been lost among the nations, yet the Jews did not dissever themselves from the twelve tribes of Israel. Besides, several of the ten tribes returned with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin from the Babylonish captivity (Ezra vi. 17, viii. 35), and although as a nation they were carried captive to Assyria, yet several remained behind and lived among the Sa-

maritans. *With earnestness, serving God night and day*, alluding to the zeal and earnestness with which the Jews clung to their religion, a zeal which has carried them through the severest persecutions, and which still preserves them as a separate people, distinct among the nations in the midst of whom they dwell, a zeal which no violence has been able to destroy, and no persuasion to overcome. *For, or concerning which hope I am accused of the Jews.* The accusations brought against Paul by the Jews referred to the Messianic hope, because he had taught that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah—he had preached the fulfillment of the hope in the risen Jesus. Hence, then, Paul affirms that he was not chargeable with apostasy from Judaism. He was no apostate, but, on the contrary, a true Jew; along with his accusers, he believed in the promise of the Messiah made to the fathers, but whilst they looked forward to His advent, he affirmed that He had already come. Thus, then, in His defense before Agrippa, as well as in his defense before Felix, he connects Christianity with Judaism, affirming that it is its development, the legitimate carrying out of its principles.

8. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?  
1 Cor. xv. 12, 20.

If this question be considered as addressed to Agrippa, it is not easy to perceive the propriety of it. The resurrection of the dead was not deemed incredible by the Jews, in whose Scriptures it is expressly taught, and who entertained such conceptions of the power of God, as removed the difficulties with which it seemed to be encumbered. They did not disbelieve the resurrection of our Saviour because they judged it to be impossible but because they counted Him an impostor, in whose favor it was absurd and blasphemous to suppose God to have exerted His miraculous power. We consider the question, therefore, as addressed to the Gentile part of the audience, to whom the resurrection did seem incredible. As it was a doctrine of great importance in the Christian system, Paul was careful in this stage of his discourse to obviate an objection against it, which

arises from the complete destruction of the body in the grave. How can it be believed that its parts, which are separated, decomposed, and in appearance annihilated, shall be collected together, and arranged in their original order; and that it shall live again, after an interval of hundreds or thousands of years? He reminds the Gentiles that, however strange it may seem, the event ceases to be improbable, as soon as we reflect upon the agent, to whose power no limits can be assigned. He who created the body of man is undoubtedly able to restore it, after it had been blended with its native elements. Nothing which may be done is impossible to Omnipotence; no effect, how much soever it may surpass the common operations of nature, should be accounted too wonderful to be believed, when God has declared His intention to produce it. "Ye do err," said our Lord to the Sadducees, "not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." If we had a lively hope of a resurrection and future life, what influence it would exert over us! What a new color it would give to the whole of our present existence, did we realize in very truth a coming heaven when we die.

9. I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.—1 Tim. i. 13.

*I verily thought, &c. I seemed to myself—* thought. The pronoun opposes his own to another and higher judgment. This same act in which Paul gloried at the time appeared to him as the crime of his life after he became a Christian. In 1 Cor. xv. 9, he declares that he "was the last of the Apostles, that he was not meet to be called an Apostle, because he persecuted the Church of God." The blessed change which Jesus had affected in his soul, was to him a perpetual miracle, he could not forget the grace which had been granted to him. (See 1 Tim. i. 16.)

10. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.  
1 Chap. viii. 3; Gal. i. 13. 10 Chap. ix. 14. 11 Chap. xxii. 19.

*Of the saints.* So he terms the Christians, appropriately to the beginning of his speech, using a term transferred to them from the Jews. *I—*emphasis. *Hav-*

ing received, &c.—speaking as to his audience, not his judges. Authority, literally, the authority. The article signifies that Paul could not have done this without the authority, and that the chief priests gave a general authority to all who wished to persecute. *I gave my voice*, some read, *gave in my vote*. *Synagogue*—of Jerusalem. *Compelled them to blaspheme*. This was the saddest of all. *Mad*. In the same chapter, Paul confesses and denies *madness* in himself. (Comp. verse 25.) While he was mad, indeed, no one suspected him of it, but when in his right mind, then Festus taxeth him of madness.

<sup>12</sup>. Whereupon as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests; <sup>13</sup>. At midday, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me.  
<sup>14</sup> Chap. ix. 3, on which see notes.

*At midday*. Here, as in xxii. 6, the time of the day when this occurrence took place is particularly mentioned. This may be intended either to remind the hearers that this was no nocturnal vision, but an incident occurring in the blaze of noon, or as a vivid recollection which would naturally dwell upon the mind of the chief actor, although just as naturally passed by in the narratives of others. *A light from heaven*, &c. This light was not indebted to a surrounding obscurity for any part of its luster; on the contrary, it shone forth at midday with a splendor that eclipsed the beams of a meridian sun. It was the light of Divine glory which Saul beheld on this occasion, that light unapproachable, in which Jesus Christ continually dwells. It was of the same nature as that which John describes in his vision, when he says, "His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength." It was that light in which He will appear when He comes to judge the world, "and every eye shall see him." Much as the prophets and Apostles have said of the glory of Christ, it is impossible for us to form an adequate conception of it; the full revelation of it is reserved for a future state, when, if we are true Christians, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.) How short is the transition between this and the unseen world! How soon, when God pleases, can He transport His creatures into higher scenes of exis-

tence! It is but for Him to draw aside the veil, and objects are presented to the view, compared to which whatever is most admired on earth is mean and contemptible. Every moment we stand upon the confines of an eternal state, and, without dissolving the connection between soul and body, God can open a passage into the "heaven of heavens." Why should we doubt of good men's being admitted into the more immediate presence of Christ at death, when we consider what Saul was permitted to see and hear before he was finally removed from this world? Stephen beheld the heavens open, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God; and Saul, in the transaction before us, was permitted to see that Just One, and to hear the words of His mouth.

<sup>14</sup>. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

*Why persecutest thou me?* It will be observed that Jesus identifies Himself with His disciples, He makes their cause entirely His own, and considers what is done against them as against Himself. He and believers, notwithstanding the immense disparity of their circumstances, are one. He is touched with a feeling of their sufferings and whatever insults or reproaches are offered to them for His name's sake, He feels and resents as done to Himself. Let those who are tempted to insult and despise the followers of Christ on account of their conscientious adherence to Him, remember that their scoffs and insults reach higher than they may apprehend; they will be considered as falling on their Sovereign and their Judge. *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* He compares Paul to the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, who, in order to free himself, wounds himself by kicking against the goads. Thus fruitless is all opposition to the cause of Christ. It will be injurious, it will be destructive to ourselves if not desisted from, but can never eventually injure the cause against which it is directed. The heathen may rage, and yet "the Lord hath set His King upon His holy hill of Zion," and there will forever continue to sit. (Ps. ii. 6; Isa. viii. 14; Luke xx. 18.)

15. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

*Whom thou persecutest.* (See on verse 14.)

16. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee: 17. Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee; 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me.

\*Eph. iii. 7. Col. i. 23, 25. \*Chap. xxii. 15. \*Chap. xxii. 21. Rom. xi. 13. \*Isa. xxxv. 5, xlii. 7. \*Luke i. 79; John viii. 12; 2 Cor. iv. 6; Eph. i. 18. \*Col. i. 13; 1 Peter ii. 9. \*Luke i. 77; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14. \*Eph. i. 11; Col. i. 12; 1 Peter i. 4. \*John xvii. 17; chap. xx. 32; 1 Cor. i. 30; Rev. xxi. 27. \*Eph. ii. 8; Heb. xi. 6.

*But rise, &c.* "The Lord killeth and maketh alive—He bringeth low and lifeth up—He raiseth them that are bowed down." (1 Sam. ii. 6, 7; Ps. cxlvi. 8.) The same evangelical word was addressed to the three disciples on the holy mount, when they heard the voice out of the cloud, and fell on their faces. (Matt. xvii. 7.) And Saul, too, arose, in order to stand, by the power of Jesus Christ, unto this day. (Verse 22.) *To make thee a minister, &c.* It is evident this commission was given to Paul by our Lord, at the time of his conversion, though not mentioned in the compendious narrative of that event. (ix. 15, 16.) *Rise, &c.* The words make a part of the sentence in which Christ bids him rise from his astonishment, into which his appearance to him, in the way to Damascus, had thrown him. *A minister and a witness* may be understood as a generic and specific expression of the same idea, one who ministers by witnessing, or each term may have its distinct meaning, one who administers and one who testifies. *Delivering thee from the people—from the Jews—and from the Gentiles*, put here in opposition to the *Jews*; and both meaning *mankind* at large, where-soever the providence of God might send him. But he was to be delivered from the malice of the *Jews*, that he might be sent with salvation to the *Gentiles*. *To open their eyes*. Although, no doubt, amidst the many other miracles which he performed, the Apostle gave sight to some who were literally blind, yet these words, like those spoken of Christ's mission (Isa. xlii. 7), are evidently to be understood of those spiritually blind, through inattention, unbelief (2 Cor. iv. 4), prejudice, superstition, love of the world, fleshly lusts, or wicked habits of any sort. *To turn them from dark-*

*ness to light*. The heathen, even the learned Greeks and Romans, were in a state of great darkness, i. e., ignorance and error, as to spiritual and Divine things in general. By the preaching of the Spirit, and the influences of the Spirit, men are translated from this darkness. *And from the power of Satan unto God*. Satan, who is "the prince of darkness," "the ruler of the darkness of this world" (Eph. vi. 12), obtains his power over mankind mainly through their ignorance. The Gospel, by enlightening men, and bringing them to repentance, by conviction, humiliation, regeneration, rescues them from Satan's power, and brings them to the knowledge, not merely speculative, but experimental and saving, implying the fear and love of God, and obedience to Him. *That they may receive forgiveness of sins*. They do not merit this as a reward or debt, but they "receive" it as a free gift, the effect of Divine mercy and grace (Titus iii. 4, 5), obtained through Christ's sacrifice and intercession (Rom. v. 9, 10), proclaimed in the Word (Acts x. 43, xiii. 38, 39), received "by faith that is in Christ" (see John iii. 14-18, Gal. ii. 16), and sealed on the heart and conscience by the Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 13). This is the same with justification, and is attended by peace with God, the Divine favor, adoption, the spirit of adoption, deliverance from the fear of death, a lively hope of the heavenly inheritance, gratitude, joy, patience under present trials, purity of heart and life. *And inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*. Note, *Faith* is here made the instrument of salvation at once in its first stage, *forgiveness*, and in its last, *admission to the home of the sanctified*, and the faith which introduces the soul to all this is emphatically declared by the glorified Redeemer to rest upon Himself—"Faith, even that which is in me." And who that believes this can refrain from casting his crown before Him, or resist offering Him supreme worship?

19. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20. But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.—\*Chap. ix. 10, &c. \*Matt. iii. 8.

*Whereupon—I was not disobedient*. Paul now speaks of his resolution to obey the

Divine call, and of the labors in which he subsequently engaged. He ascribes his obedience to the Divine character of the appearance which he had seen, but especially (if we also refer to the words which immediately precede), to the nature of the precious office which was intrusted to him. He could not resist this heavenly call, he says, because this precious office was conferred on him by Divine authority—an office by which many thousands of benighted souls were to be enlightened and made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. (Col. i. 12.) Surely if all teachers would diligently consider what eternal glory they could give to God, and how great a salvation they could secure for themselves and for others, they would become more diligent, more faithful, and more obedient. *Works* (acts, habits) *meet for*, or worthy of, *repentance*, not merely consistent with it, but suited and proportioned to it, both as its necessary fruits, and as proofs of its existence and sincerity. This varied yet harmonious statement of Paul's great commission may throw light also on the ministerial work in general, and on that of the missionary in particular.

21. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. 22. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: 23. That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people; and to the Gentiles.

\*Chap. xxi. 30. †Luke xxiv. 27, 46. †1 Cor. xv. 23.

Observe with what thankfulness the Apostle owns and acknowledges the merciful providence of God in preserving him both from the fraud and force of his enemies. *Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day.* And how did the sense of Divine goodness upon his soul stimulate him to go on with his work, declaring no other thing concerning Christ, but what Moses and the prophets had foretold of Him, namely, that He should be put to death, and should be the first that should rise again by His own power, and be the author of our resurrection. Note here, that the sufferings of Christ were taught by Moses in all the commands given about sacrifices, and not by Moses only, but by the prophets also, particular-

ly the Prophet Isaiah (chap. liii.), the evangelical prophet and prophetic evangelist, who wrote as clearly of Christ's coming as if He had then already appeared. From this the Apostle argues how black the wickedness of the Jews was, who sought to kill him for preaching the same doctrine which Moses and the prophets had taught before him.

24. † And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad.—2 Kings ix. 11.

Festus, who, no doubt, had sat in mute astonishment at the declaration of truths which to him must have been completely unintelligible, could no longer keep silence, when he heard the Apostle assert that the crucified Nazarene had risen from the dead, and that this was the incredible fact for which he was hazarding his life. He burst forth before the whole assembly with the declaration which, in all probability, spake the honest conviction of his heart—*Paul, thou art beside thyself, &c.* The charge against Paul was mental derangement. Festus did not denounce him as a hypocrite or a knave, but rather as a brainless fanatic. How extremely natural a result for such a mind to arrive at! A man evidently capable of great things, an educated man, a well-connected man, a talented man, and more than all in the eyes of Festus, a Roman citizen—such a man, at one time voluntarily traversing the earth, from city to city, and from country to country, at another, dragged from prison to prison—for the sole purpose of declaring a fact which Festus imagined no one in his senses could believe, and inducing others to give up every preconceived opinion, and to agree with him in honoring and obeying this dead, but as he asserted, risen and living malefactor—if *this* were not insanity, Festus was acquainted with no principle sufficiently powerful to induce such a result. This is precisely the judgment which the world passes secretly upon every man in every age, who really and conscientiously follows the Apostle's example. There is always in the mind of worldly men, when judging of the conduct of the true and consistent followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, a certain indefinite suspicion that all is not right with them; that if they really

are not hypocrites, a very difficult fact to establish in the minds of their enemies, they are certainly of very weak and questionable judgment; and while the ungodly portion of the world may exercise too much courtesy to say, "Thou art beside thyself," it fully believes, and does not hesitate to insinuate, that the mind, so deeply interested in the things of God as to prefer eternity to time, the promise of the future to the enjoyment of the present, has lost its balance, and should be no guide to them in seeking the way of everlasting life.

25. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

Paul had previously said, in verse 11, that once in his life he had been "mad," but now the clear light of his preaching is reviled by one whose eyes were not yet opened. What does he do? He brings forward the simple counter-proof in calm and well-ordered language, in which he ceases to address Agrippa for the present, and turns to Festus, with whom the whole speech had its due weight. To the charge—"These men are full of new wine," Peter answered in the name of all, "These are not drunken." (ii. 15.) Just so Paul now replies, *I am not mad*. The Master had Himself supplied the model for such a reply, when He said to the Jews "I have not a devil." (John viii. 49.) As a proof of what he says, now follows the humble and proper address, *Most noble Festus!*—a fitting parallel to the previous address—"King Agrippa." Thou seest that I know well before whom I am standing, and that I am quite in my senses! *I speak forth the words of truth and soberness*, even now, at this moment, while I am calmly maintaining the fact. My words are words of *truth* as regards their purport, and of *soberness* (a contrast to nonsense) in their form and style: this is a two-fold counter-assertion, answering to Festus' implied two-fold accusation. By these two words Paul makes a profound distinction between the *subject* of his testimony and *his own personality*, and declares that he testifies quite reasonably of something existing, and is not speaking of some fanatical idea which was only to be found in his own feelings.

26. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him: for this thing was not done in a corner.

The Apostle declares that his discourse would bear the test of the severest examination. And in confirmation of this assertion, he appeals to the king, before whom he spoke with freedom, persuaded of his qualifications to judge in the matter. Agrippa was a Jew, knew the sacred writings, and could not be ignorant of the events connected with Christianity, for these things were accomplished in the view of the public. *For this thing was not done in a corner*. This indeed is the best test of truth, and what distinguishes the religion of the Bible from all religions in the world: for there never was one beside it, in which deceit, disguise, false pretenses, and gross impositions, were not practiced upon the multitude; whereas in *this*, everything was done openly, chiefly before enemies the most subtle and malicious, who never slackened a moment in their vigilance, yet never either in our Lord or His Apostles were able to discover the smallest appearance of craft, or any tendency to hidden arts. They, who preached His resurrection, were enabled to support their testimony by stupendous miracles in the face of thousands: so that if these had not been favored with the sight of our Lord after He rose from the grave, they were yet favored (infinitely above what they had cause to hope) with undeniable evidence of the fact itself. In the same manner Paul confirmed the account of his own conversion, and of having seen the Lord. What better proofs then could be required? And how well-known and admitted must the facts have been, when the Apostle ventures to call upon Agrippa, an unconverted Jew, for his conviction of their truth.

27. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

The courage and confidence here shown proceeded from a vivid persuasion of Agrippa's knowledge of the *facts* and faith in the *predictions* which they verified: and the king's reply is the highest testimony to the correctness of these presumptions and the immense power of such bold yet courteous appeals to conscience. This

passage may be thought, in every quality of fine writing, equal to anything to be found in Demosthenes, or any of the ancient orators.

28. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.—*James* i. 23, 24.

There is not the slightest reason for interpreting this language of Agrippa as an irony. To do so, would be to suppose him very unreasonably and absurdly ludicrous. Such an interpretation, moreover, would be in direct conflict with the Apostle's apprehension of his case, for it is evident from his answer, and from the sense in which he there uses "almost," in opposition to "altogether," that he *understood* the king to mean seriously that he was almost persuaded, and consequently that he *did* mean so. Paul had an advantage with Agrippa, which he had not on a former occasion when reasoning with Felix. He had now to deal with one who recognized the Scriptures; acknowledged that God had revealed Himself to mankind. Agrippa had that general belief in the Divine word which such men commonly have when brought up in a country where it is professedly received, and God is avowedly worshiped. They are by no means prepared to deny the truth of revelation, any more than they are disposed to act as if it were true. Still, as Agrippa, when pressed closely by the Apostle, could not deny that he believed the prophets, so in our own land, and in our own day, a belief rests upon the minds of many, though it does not influence the heart. And in time of trouble, of danger, of distress, they are ready to say as Agrippa did. They commence, perhaps, some plans of reformation, they abstain from practices which conscience condemns, and enter upon a course of life more consistent with Christian faith. But, alas, they illustrate the momentary feeling upon Agrippa's mind, when he said, *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*

29. And Paul said, I would fto God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.  
*1 Cor.* vii. 7.

The words of Agrippa excited an affectionate emotion in the heart of Paul, while the thought arose with him—*Almost a*

*Christian!* That profiteth little! Oh that king Agrippa were indeed a Christian!

To be *almost* a Christian, only shows that truth has been neglected or resisted. "This is the condemnation, that light hath come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Agrippa is himself an example. Before what passed at this examination of Paul, he probably knew little of the Christians, except that they were a sect called Nazarenes, and "everywhere spoken against." Now he knew what they believed, and on what their belief was grounded. Now he knew that they rested their faith on the very law and prophets which he himself confessed to be from God. But instead of yielding to conscience, and appointing a time when he might hear Paul again of this important matter, he rises up, and dissolves the assembly. Because on the instant it would cross his mind, that to become a Christian would be the destruction of his worldly prospects, and involve the new-modeling of his whole life. Therefore the movement of his conscience was but the turn of a thought, the feeling of a moment; like the spark which blazes up, and on which at the same instant a drop of water falls, and it is extinguished. But it has shown that there is something within, something which we should not have been aware of if the spark had not betrayed it; something which might have grown up into a continuing and steady flame, if means had been used to foster and not to quench it. When account is given "of the things done in the body," account must be given of the perverseness, the sinfulness, the hardness of heart, which checked that rising flame.

This would furnish just cause for Paul's passionate exclamation, and his prayer that Agrippa might be *altogether* a Christian. *Not only almost but altogether.* He could be nothing else, if he were a Christian at all, in any proper or available sense. There is no mid-way. To be a Christian is to have sought acceptance with God through Christ, and to be looking for salvation through faith in Him. This admits of no middle course. If one



is accused before men, there is no middle course; he must be either innocent or guilty, and must plead either the one or the other. So it is at the bar of God. Either we are trusting in ourselves that we are righteous, or because we are not righteous, we are trusting in Christ, who has made propitiation for our sins. Therefore there can be no mid-way as to *faith*, no meaning in being *almost a Christian*. Neither as to *practice*, can there be a middle course. Because either we are seeking "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," or we are seeking this world first; that is, preferring it, wherever the interests of the one clash with the interests of the other. We cannot at the same time love God most, and mammon most. Either we are yielding to some desires, and habits, and temptations contrary to the Gospel, or we are rejecting and opposing these, as they must who are *altogether Christians*, and bringing every thought, and word, and deed into obedience to Christ. Such must be their purpose and endeavor. Not because to be altogether a Christian a man must be altogether perfect, but because he must be altogether sincere in aiming at perfection, and allowing himself in nothing short of it.

This was the state of Paul's own heart; and knowing the comfort which he derived from the consciousness of this, and the blessed consequence which should follow, he earnestly desired that both Agrippa, and all before whom he was pleading, might be nothing less: might be *not only almost but altogether Christians*.

Agrippa, however, had now heard enough to satisfy his curiosity, and too much, perhaps, to maintain his ease of mind; and he would hear no more.

30. † And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them. 31. And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 32. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

*The king rose up, &c.* King Agrippa, like Felix and Festus, like his ancestors in the sacred story, flits now from the scene. Nothing came, we believe, of this strange interview between light and darkness, be-

tween sin and the Gospel. Agrippa kept his useless idle faith in Jewish Scriptures, kept, too, his heart's lusts, his obscene idol; his earth-bound life. Times of trial drew on. In the last Jewish wars he sided with the Romans, and then retired to drag out an inglorious age, through thirty uneventful years, with a titular royalty, and in real servitude, under the imperial shadow of Rome. In the year of our Lord 100, being the third year of the Emperor Trajan, he died there, the last prince of the blood-stained race of Herod. Yet, like all whose names, for good or for evil, are once stamped upon the holy page, Agrippa remains to all time for the edification and instruction of the Church which he despised. The court leaves Paul. The king, and all who heard him in the court, withdrew from him, never perhaps to see him again in this world. But he has not done with them. His thoughts will tell forever on their destiny. He will live in their memory, he will meet them in another court. *This man doeth nothing, &c.* The reference here is to the general tenor of Paul's life, his general character and views. His defense had the natural effect of impressing his judges with a sense of his innocence.

Faithful servants of Jesus are grieved when they perceive that their discourses produce no other fruit than that the hearers say: "The preacher is a good man," or, "he has spoken well." And yet, such is here the experience of the holy Apostle. After he had testified of Jesus with the utmost sincerity, joy and power, and had with so much confidence opened his heart to all the hearers, whose salvation he earnestly desired, they all arose, conversed together, and at last said: "That is a good man." Should they not have learned much more, on far more important subjects, from his discourse? Such is the world.

*If he had not appealed unto Cæsar.* The appeal to Cæsar had placed him beyond their jurisdiction: they could now neither condemn nor acquit him, but had to refer the matter simply to the emperor.

1. What did Agrippa say to Paul? 2. What did Paul then do? 3. What did he say? 4. Repeat his defense? 5. What did Festus say with a loud voice? 6. What was Paul's reply? 7. What did Agrippa then say unto Paul? 8. What is it to be a Christian? 9. What was Paul's answer to Agrippa? 10. What was the result of the consultation between the king, the governor, and Bernice, and those that sat with them?

## CHAPTER XXVII.

1 *Paul shipping toward Rome, 10 for ettelth of the danger of the voyage, 11 but it is not believed, 14 They are tossed to and fro with tempest, 41 and suffer shipwreck, 22, 34, 44 yet all come safe to land.*

**A**ND when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul, and certain other prisoners, unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band,—xxv. 12, 25.

*And.* No packet ships or steamers in this, the palmy time of imperial Rome, crossed the sea at regular intervals, but the waters had been cleared of pirates, and from various directions a plentiful current of commerce tended to the Roman capital. Even consuls and emperors were obliged in crossing the sea to avail themselves of the merchant vessels, which were of a size hardly inferior to the same class of ships at the present day. *Determined.* The path in which believers walk often seems indeed to be determined by accident, or by the caprice or will of men, nevertheless, it will always be found to be, in reality, in strict accordance with the promises of God. The "we" includes Luke the historian, and Aristarchus a Macedonian Christian. Who the other prisoners were, or what their crimes, we are not told. With these criminals, Paul the incorrupt and incorruptible was delivered by Festus into the custody of *Julius, a centurion, &c.* From the time of Augustus Octavianus, legions took the name *Augustan*.

2. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia, one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us,—bix. 20.

*Adramyttium* was a sea-port with a harbor in Mysia, an Athenian colony. It is now a village called Endramit. *Welaunched.* According to Mr. Lewin's reckoning, it was on the twenty-first of August, in the year of our Lord 60, when Paul's ship departed from Cesarea. The winds at that date are generally from the west, but not violent, and the trip to Sidon was doubtless prosperous. This is the *Aristarchus* named in xix. 29, xx. 4. (See Phile. 24;

Col. iv. 10.) God can alleviate our trials, as in the case of Paul's captivity, when another true friend was associated with the faithful Luke. Aristarchus voluntarily offered himself as a companion of the suffering Apostle. Though he is called a fellow-prisoner in Col. iv. 10, the same term is applied to Epaphras (Phile. 23), where it denotes *fellow-laborers*. This fraternal act of taking up the cross, was so precious in the sight of the Spirit of God, that He caused it to be recorded for our benefit as an example.

3. And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself. xxiv. 23, xxviii. 16.

*Sidon*—a distance of sixty-seven geographical miles. This celebrated city is generally joined in the New Testament with Tyre, from which it was distant twenty-five miles, and of which it was probably the mother city. It was within the lot of the tribe of Asher (Josh. xix. 28), but never conquered by the Israelites. (Judges i. 31, iii. 3.) *Courteously entreated Paul, &c.* This record of the courtesy of Julius teaches us not to undervalue those civilities and attentions of the natural or ordinary politeness which obtains in society, even when they are rendered to us by those who are without.

4. And when he had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. 5. And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.

The expression "*we sailed under Cyprus*," means they kept near to it for shelter and safety. The ancient navigators, ignorant of the mariner's compass, and other means and resources now enjoyed, were accustomed to creep along the shores as much as possible in sight of land. With the nautical advantages of modern times, the open sea is considered the least perilous. Thus sailing on over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, they came to "Myra, a city



THESSALONICA.



PUTEOLI.

of Lycia." Lycia was a maritime district of Asia Minor, bounded on the north by Pamphylia, and on the east, west and south by the sea. Myra was the capital of the district, and situated on the coast. Here they landed.

6. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy, and he put us therein. 7. And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone; 8. And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The Fair Havens, nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

<sup>Or, Candia.</sup>

And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria, sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. The first part of the voyage is ended, the second part is commenced. The population of Rome, at this time numerous, were supplied with grain in a great measure from Egypt, whose Nile made it the granary of nations. The ship of Alexandria, now found at Myra, was laden with wheat. It must have been a large vessel, for, besides its cargo, it had two hundred and sixty souls on board, after the centurion, Paul, and his companions, and the prisoners, had embarked. Adverse winds had probably driven the ship on the coast of Asia Minor.

And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, This was a city, situated on a rocky and mountainous peninsula of the same name, in the province of Caria, between the island of Rhodes and Coos or Cos. It was distinguished for the worship of Venus, and contained the celebrated statue of that goddess by Praxiteles.

We sailed under Crete, now called Candia, an island fronting the Ægean Sea, one hundred and seventy miles long, and about thirty or forty broad, distinguished for its salubrity, fertility and beauty.

Over against Salmone. A promontory at the east end of the island, which they doubled, and sailed under Crete, or south of it, to escape the contrary winds.

Hardly passing it. Having passed Salmone with great difficulty, being almost driven on it, they steered round the coast end of the island, and came to a roadstead, a species of harbor, called the Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

9. Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, 10. And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also

of our lives. 11. Nevertheless, the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

<sup>2 Kings vi. 9, 10; Dan. ii. 20; Amos iii. 7. Or, injury.</sup>

<sup>1 Prov. xxvii. 12.</sup>

When much time was spent—since leaving Cesarea. But for unforeseen delays they might have reached the Italian coast before the stormy season. And sailing (the navigation of the open sea) was now dangerous because the fast was now already past—the fast of the great day of Atonement, which fell this year on the twenty-third day of September, the Autumn equinox. The period of safe navigation ends here in October, and begins in March. Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, &c. The prediction of the Apostle implies a regard on his part to the probabilities grounded on experience and the laws of nature. It is not accordant with God's actual economy to multiply miracles indefinitely, and though He did honor Paul with a miraculous revelation at this time, and also gave him the power of shaking off the serpent from his hand, so as to escape unhurt by it (xxviii. 5), yet He was pleased to leave the elements to their wonted course, and interfered not for the purpose of favoring His Apostle with a prosperous voyage. When Paul spoke his own human anticipations at the outset of the voyage from the Fair Havens, he stated the apprehension he felt of damage to the lives of the company, but afterward he spoke the word of prophecy, as received by him at the mouth of an angel, when he told them that all their lives should be saved—this having been communicated to him on the very night of this address to the passengers and crew. Nevertheless, &c. That Julius should defer to the opinion of these mariners, in preference to that of his own prisoner, was natural enough, and is here recorded, not as a reproach or censure, but as the unintentional occasion of the subsequent disasters.

12. † And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south-west and north-west. 13. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete. 14. But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. 15. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive. 16. And running under a certain island which is called Claudia, we had much work to come by the boat: 17. Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake

sail, and so were driven. 18. And being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; 19. And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. 20. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

<sup>1</sup>Verse 7. <sup>2</sup>Verse 21. <sup>3</sup>Or, beat. <sup>4</sup>Ps. cvii. 25. <sup>5</sup>Verse 41. <sup>6</sup>Ps. cvii. 27. <sup>7</sup>Job ii. 4; Jonah i. 5. <sup>8</sup>Ps. cv. 23. <sup>9</sup>Ezek. xxxvii. 11.

The crew intended, according to custom, to winter in some convenient port; but, before they could get that purpose accomplished, they were overtaken by a storm, and, being deprived of their usual and only guides, the sun, moon and stars, they were tossed about in the Mediterranean, not knowing whether they were carried to north, east, west or south. The storm that surprised them, and rendered the voyage so disastrous, is thought to have been one of those tremendous gales, called Levanters, which at some particular periods of the year sweep the Mediterranean, in all directions, with the resistless impetuosity of a whirlwind. In this perilous situation, they had recourse to all the means which their limited experience in navigation suggested for the preservation of the ship. Their attention was first directed to the boat, which, as is still the custom in those seas, was towed to the stern of the vessel, and consequently being violently tossed by the heaving billows, must have been a great drag and inconvenience to the ship, already unable to make head against the wind, as well as have been in danger of being separated from it altogether. They "took it up," but their purpose was not to hoist it into the vessel, a thing which Oriental sailors never do, but to fasten it closer to the stern, while it was still allowed, as before, to float upon the water. Their next expedient, as the planks were loosened, and otherwise much damaged, and in danger of falling asunder, was to throw a cable around and underneath, to hold the timbers more closely together—a singular contrivance, which, however, in violent storms, was very common in ancient, and has also been occasionally practiced in modern times. This method of undergirding, as it is called, is by suspending a stout cable under the ship, at one end, to catch it as it is borne up by the water on the other side, and then fasten the two ends very tightly on the deck.

*All hope that we should be saved was then taken away.* After human effort had exhausted its powers, then God interposed. It is so with the Gospel. It was after human reason had tried every effort to solve the stormy problems of the conscience, and guide the soul into the haven of spiritual peace, that Christ came. "You may see," says one, "Socrates in the twilight lamenting his obscure and benighted condition, and telling you that his lamp will show him nothing but his own darkness. You may see Plato sitting down by the water of Lethe, and weeping because he could not remember his former notions. You may hear Aristotle bewailing himself thus, that his 'potential reason' will so seldom come into act, that his 'blank sheet' has so few and such imperfect impressions upon it, that his intellects are at so low an ebb, as that the notions of Euripus will pose them. You may hear Zeno say that his 'porch' is dark, and Epictetus confessing and complaining that he had not the right 'handle,' the true apprehension of things. 'The world by wisdom knew not God.'"

21. But after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, *Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.*

<sup>1</sup>Verse 10. <sup>2</sup>Verse 13.

When their distress had reached its extremity, when the last ray of hope had burnt out within them, and the cold shivering midnight of despair was settling on their spirits; at this point a light from heaven breaks on them, and that light leads to their salvation. That light comes through Paul. *Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, &c.* When the advice of wise and devout men has been rejected, and evil results have thence followed, they do not lose time by exhibiting undue sensitiveness, and by uttering reproaches, but proceed to give advice, if advice does not come too late, and offer their assistance, if it is still of avail.

22. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.—Job xxii. 29; Ps. cxlii. 7; 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.

Though the Apostle felt that they had done wrong in rejecting his advice, he cheers them by an assurance that there will be "no loss of any man's life," that the ship only would be destroyed. Observe Paul's self-forgetfulness. Whilst all

others were struggling for themselves, he seemed only concerned for them, though, for the most part, they stood in an antagonistic position toward him. He was a prisoner in the custody of Roman officers. The vessel was bearing him, not to his home, not to a scene of friendship, but to that of punishment and death. He did not seem to think of this. His own trying circumstances did not appear to affect him, he was careful for others, he had the "charity that seeketh not her own."

23. For there stood by me this night <sup>the</sup> angel of God, whose <sup>I</sup> am, and whom <sup>I</sup> serve. <sup>a</sup>Chap. xxiii. 11. <sup>b</sup>Heb. i. 14. <sup>c</sup>Deut. xxxii. 9. <sup>d</sup>Ps. cxxxv. 4. <sup>e</sup>Isa. xlv. 5. <sup>f</sup>Mal. iii. 17. <sup>g</sup>John xvii. 9, 10. <sup>h</sup>1 Cor. vi. 20. <sup>i</sup>1 Peter ii. 9, 10. <sup>j</sup>Ps. cxvi. 16. <sup>k</sup>Isa. xlv. 21. <sup>l</sup>Dan. iii. 17, vi. 16. <sup>m</sup>John xii. 26. <sup>n</sup>Rom. i. 9. <sup>o</sup>2 Tim. i. 3.

The words "of God" are added because Paul addressed heathens, who otherwise would have understood by an angel a messenger of the gods. The context does not determine whether this vision was made to Paul in a dream, or when awake—probably the latter. *Whose I am*, to whom I belong as His property; in other words, whose servant I am, and whom I serve, rather worship, to whom I offer religious service and homage. This verb refers to external acts of worship, and not to a religious life in general, except as the latter may be a concomitant of the former. "Happy," says Rieger, "is he who can, with sincerity and joy of heart, repeat Paul's confession of faith: 'God, whose I am, and whom I serve,' and who, amid all the scenes which may be presented on the troubled ocean of this world, can continue to pray, 'O God, I am Thine, I serve Thee, be Thou my Preserver.'"

24. Saying, Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25. Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. 26. Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island. <sup>a</sup>Gen. xix. 21, 29. <sup>b</sup>Luke i. 45. <sup>c</sup>Rom. iv. 20, 21. <sup>d</sup>2 Tim. i. 12. <sup>e</sup>Chap. xxviii. 1.

Lo, behold, God hath given thee, &c. Doubtless Paul prayed earnestly for the safety of those who were in the ship with him, and their lives were granted in answer to his prayers. Paul does not here exalt himself, but merely states what was revealed to him. How greatly are men indebted for their blessings to God's favor toward eminently pious men! How much, too, should this thought excite pious men to a deeply serious and devout life! *Where-*

*fore*, because of this Divine assurance, cheer up, be cheerful, or of good cheer. For assigns the reason of this exhortation, I believe (or trust in) God, not only in the general, but that it shall be (come to pass or happen) even as, literally, after what manner it has been told (or spoken to) me. Howbeit, but, we must (or it is necessary for us) upon (literally, in or unto) a certain island be cast (literally, fall out). The name of the island, it would seem, was not revealed to Paul.

27. But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country:

The fourteenth night, i. e., the fourteenth night since they left the Fair Havens. In Adria—in the Adriatic. Adria is not to be restricted to what is now called the Gulf of Venice, but embraces all that part of the Mediterranean which lay south of Italy, east of Sicily, and west of Greece, and thus included the Ionian Sea. It was on the same stormy Adriatic Sea that the great Cæsar cried to the trembling pilot: "Steer boldly, thou carriest Cæsar and his fortune." The shipmen, i. e., the sailors, deemed or suspected that they were in the vicinity of land. "The roar of breakers is a peculiar sound, which can be detected by a practiced ear." Luke does not state the grounds of the conjecture, but it was, no doubt, suggested by the increasing sound which proceeded from the surf.

28. And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

To sound, is to cast or let down the sounding line. A fathom is six feet, the space measured by the arms stretched out. The decrease in their soundings, at first twenty fathoms, and a little farther on fifteen fathoms, convinced them that their supposition was correct, and that they could not be far distant from land.

29. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.—<sup>a</sup>Ps. cxxx. 6.

Fearing lest, during the darkness of the midnight, they should run against rocks or be stranded, they cast four anchors out of the stern. This was contrary to our practice, but conformed to the immemorial custom of Eastern sailors, who drop their anchors at the stern, which anchors have four flukes, so that, in all probability, from the permanent character of customs in the

East, the instrument dropped by the crew of Paul's vessel was a four-pointed anchor, which both the celebrated travelers, Bruce and Buckingham, inform us is the kind of anchor used to this day by the sailors who navigate the seas and rivers about Egypt and Palestine.

30. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under color as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship. 31. Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

Dr. Chalmers, observes: "Perhaps the most practically useful lesson in this passage is what is grounded on the comparison of verses 22 and 23 with verse 31, by which we learn that the absolute decree does not supersede the conditions which precede its fulfillment, but that while the one is sure the others are indispensable. The prophecy—the announced predestination, it may be called—of verse 22, did not supersede the urgency of the prescription in verse 31; the ship's company were all absolutely to be saved, and yet unless the sailors were detained in the ship for the purpose of working it, they could not be saved. Here is a clear example of predestination not infringing upon practice, nor should it on the large scale of Christianity, either. There is nothing, O my God, revealed to me of Thy decree respecting my future and everlasting state; but let me be very sure that except I repent I cannot be saved—except I believe I cannot be saved—without holiness I cannot see God. O let me labor to make my calling and election sure. Let me be enabled to superadd the assurance of experience to the assurance of faith; and meanwhile let me be of good cheer when I bethink myself of that proffered mercy in the Gospel which is held forth to all, and which all have a warrant to lay hold of."

32. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

*Then.* Paul left it to the soldiers to consider what they should do. It should be our work to cut off the ropes of every boat in which we put our trust besides God, then will our dark night pass away before the morning light, and we shall behold the glorious help of God.

33. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

*While.* At dawn there was more opportunity for prolonged exhortation. *Fourteenth day that ye have tarried, or, waited, and continued fasting.* They had not so long abstained from food, although perhaps they had had no regular meals. So Appian speaks of an army, which, for twenty days, took no food nor sleep, by which he must mean they never made full meals, nor slept whole nights together.

34. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

<sup>c</sup>Matt. xv. 32; 1 Tim. v. 23. <sup>d</sup>1 Kings i. 52; Matt. x. 30; Luke xii. 7, xxi. 18.

The word *meat* means, in the Bible, *food, that which is to be eaten.* For this is for your health, rather, this will be for your safety. They all needed to recruit their strength, so as to be ready to avail themselves of the opportunity which would occur for getting to land. *Not an hair fall, &c.*—a proverbial expression denoting their entire safety. (1 Kings i. 52; Matt. x. 29; Luke xii. 6, xxi. 18.)

35. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

<sup>e</sup>1 Sam. ix. 13; Matt. xx. 36; Mark viii. 6; John vi. 11, 23; 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

Notice, 1. *The calm self-control.* He was in the midst of the most agitating scenes. The boisterous billows—the furious hurricane—the reeling, plunging, shattered ship—the two hundred threescore and sixteen terror-stricken men, were confessedly scenes of terrible excitement, yet how sublimely calm this man is! *He took bread, &c.* A finer picture of moral majesty in man can scarcely be conceived than this. The philosophy of his tranquillity we know. It was faith in that God whose he was and whom he served. 2. *The practical piety.* He gave thanks to God in presence of them all. This was according to the Christian practice. (Matt. xv. 36, xxvi. 27; John vi. 11–23; Rom. xiv. 6; 1 Cor. x. 13, xi. 24, xiv. 17; Eph. v. 20; 1 Thes. v. 18.) This thanking God before food, on Paul's part, was not a matter of fanaticism, form or parade, it was an expression of the spirit of his life. Paul lived in the element of religion. There is no moral greatness apart from religion.

36. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. 37. And we were in all, in the ship, two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

*Then were they all of good cheer, &c.* The return of hope brought with it a keener

sense of their wants, and they could now think with more calmness and comfort of satisfying their hunger. "They *also* took," &c. The Apostle had set them the example, and they all followed it. *Two hundred*, &c. Amounting to two hundred and seventy-six. This number, far from being incredible, as some have thought, is not unusually large, considering the size of these Egyptian store-ships (see on verse 6), and compared with the statement of Josephus, that about this same time he was wrecked in the Adriatic with a shipload of six hundred.

38. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

*Wheat.* Most recent commentators translate "provisions," as Job iii. 24, Prov. iv. 17, for, had their cargo been wheat, they would doubtless have thrown it overboard before, as there had already been two discharges, verses 18, 19.

39. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

*When it was day.* After the darkness, light reappears, the night passes away, and the sun rises; our troubles will at length come to an end. God is nearest to us in our greatest distress.

*Shore, i. e., beach to run upon,* as is the custom in the Mediterranean, even now, with smaller vessels. This inlet on the north-west of Malta, is now called *La Cala di San Paolo* (St. Paul's Creek). It opens to the north-east with a sand-bank in its middle, formed by a current, which passes between the coast and an island: *here two seas meet.* (Verse 41.)

40. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

*They committed.* The ship, and themselves with it. *Loosed the rudder-bands.* Formerly fastened, when they left the ship to drive, but now necessary to direct their course. Ships in those days had frequently two rudders or helms. *And made toward shore.* Dashed by the force of the tempest, the vessel is soon hurled thither.

41. And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the fore part stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

*A place where two seas met.* Such a place,

for instance, is an oblong mound composed of closely compacted sand. (See on verse 39.) Amid conflicting eddies *the forepart*—the bows or fore-castle—*stuck fast*—plunged into the sand—and *remained unmoveable*. The stern, meanwhile, exposed to the fury of the breakers, is broken to pieces. Now it is a question of life or death—each man for himself.

42. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out and escape. Ps. lxxiv. 20.

The cruel purpose of the soldiers proceeded from their dread of being called to an account, if any of the prisoners escaped; for the Roman law was very severe in such cases, if there were any room to suspect the guards of connivance or negligence.

43. But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: 44. And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land. 2 Cor. xi. 25. 1 Ps. cvii. 28-30; verse 22.

The centurion interposed to thwart this murderous project, and he does so for the sake of Paul, who was a prisoner, and who had saved the vessel. Thus God, for Paul's sake, not only saved all the rest of the ship's company from being drowned, but kept the prisoners from being murdered, according to the barbarous proposal of the soldiers. *And the rest.* These words depend on "commanded"—"he commanded the rest" to "get to land." *Boards,* planks which were at hand in the ship. *On things from the ship,* that is, probably on broken pieces of the ship, the hinder part of which had been broken up. *And so it came to pass,* &c. Thus all are rescued, and thus, according to the word of Paul, as given him by the angel, "there was no loss of any man's life, but of the ship."

Let the fiercest tempest arise, let winds and waves dash about us with the utmost fury, yet if we trust in Jesus, and endeavor to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, we shall, though "on boards and broken pieces of the ship," escape "all safe to land."

"Give thy mind sea-room, keep it wide of earth,  
That rock of souls immortal; let loose thy cord;  
Weigh anchor, spread thy sails, call every wind,  
Eye thy great pole-star, make the land of life."



1. To whom was Paul delivered? 2. Who was Julius? 3. Who was Aristarchus? 4. How did Julius treat Paul at Sidon? 5. What ship was taken at Myra? 6. Where was the place called the Fair Havens? 7. What admittance did Paul give? 8. What is said of a tempestuous wind which arose, and the consequences? 9. What "after a long absence," did Paul say? 10. What did Paul say as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship? 11. Why did Paul urge them to take some meat? 12. How many persons were in the ship? 13. How did they lighten the ship? 14. What occurred when they ran the ship aground? 15. What was the counsel of the soldiers? 16. What is said of the centurion? 17. Did they all escape safe to land?

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 Paul after his shipwreck is kindly entertained of the barbarians. 5 The viper on his hand hurteth him not. 8 He healeth many diseases in the island. 11 They depart towards Rome. 17 He declareth to the Jews the cause of his coming. 24 After his preaching some were persuaded, and some believed not. 30 Yet he preacheth there two years.

AND when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.—xxviii. 26.

*Escaped.* The ship is lost, but Paul and his companions are saved. Empires and kingdoms may perish, but the Christian Church continues to float, and is wonderfully preserved. *Melita*, the modern *Malta*, which is sixty miles from Cape Passero, the southern point of Sicily, and two hundred miles from the African coast. Melita, when Paul was there, was a dependency of the Roman province of Sicily. From its position in the Mediterranean, and the excellence of its harbors, it has always been important both in commerce and war. It was a settlement of the Phœnicians at an early period, and their language, in a corrupted form, continued to be spoken there in Paul's day.

2. 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.

<sup>b</sup>Rom. i. 14; Col. iii. 11. <sup>c</sup>Matt. x. 42; Heb. xlii. 2.

*Barbarous people*, or, *barbarians*. "Every one not a Greek is a barbarian," is the common Greek definition, and in this strict sense the word is used in Rom. i. 14—"I am a debtor both to Greeks and barbarians." It often retains this primitive meaning, as in the text, also in I Cor. xiv. 11, where it designates one using an unknown tongue. *Because of the present rain and . . . of the cold.* The appearance of these shipwrecked men, destitute of food and raiment, shivering in the cold and the rain, stirred their hearts with commiseration. This feeling, though often perverted, seems to belong to our nature. Let us take courage in God who will not

leave us defenseless in the work of spreading abroad His truth, even throughout the families of a hostile world.

3. 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. 4. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. 5. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. 6. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly; but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

<sup>d</sup>John vii. 24. <sup>e</sup>Matt. xvi. 18; Luke x. 19. <sup>f</sup>xiv. 11.

*There came a viper, &c.* We may naturally suppose that there had been fuel laid before on the fire, and that the viper was in this fuel, and that it had been revived by the heat, and when Paul laid his bundle on the fire, the viper was then in a state to lay hold on his hand. The viper is one of the most venomous of reptiles. When the Lord designed to introduce His Apostle to these strangers, He previously permitted an evil to befall him, which Paul overcame by faith, thereby he made an impression on the hearts of all who surrounded him. Our afflictions are thus intended, like a bell, to attract to us the eyes and attention of men, the faith which we exhibit under such circumstances, or the victory which we gain by the grace of Christ is designed to induce others to imitate us. *When the barbarians saw, &c.* Their conclusion was such as would naturally occur to persons persuaded that a moral government is exercised over mankind, but whose views were not corrected and enlarged by Scripture, or by accurate observation and extensive experience. They were right in believing that God who knows the actions of men will recompense them according to their desert, and that He sometimes interposes, in a visible manner, to punish atrocious crimes. But they erred in supposing such interposi-

tions to be so regular as to afford certain grounds for interpreting the design of every calamitous event. Possibly these people, not having any correct notions of the justice of the *true* God, may have used the word translated "vengeance," not to express the quality or attribute of any being, but the goddess *Diké*, or vindictive justice herself, who is represented as punishing the iniquities of men. Hesiod makes a goddess of what the Maltese called *justice* :

"Justice, unspotted maid, derived from Jove,  
Renow'd and reverenc'd by the gods above:  
When mortals violate her sacred laws,  
When judges hear the bribe and not the cause,  
Close by her parent God, behold her stand,  
And urge the punishment their sins demand."

And he shook off the beast, &c. Then was fulfilled the promise of the Lord: "I give you power to tread on serpents," &c. (Luke x. 19; Mark xvi. 18.) God often exemplifies in His servants that Christ has recovered for us also the dominion over the beasts, which had been lost. (Gen. i. 26, 28, ix. 2; 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35.) Christians cannot be poisoned. *When he should have swollen, &c.*, rather, when he should have been *inflamed*, by means of an acrid poison introduced into the blood; it soon coagulates, and in consequence, the extremities of the vessels become obstructed, strong inflammation takes place, and all the parts become most painfully swollen.

*They changed their minds.* So much were they astonished at his remaining unscathed, where his deliverance from such imminent danger could not have been owing either to the vigor of his own constitution, to his skill in enchantment, or any natural resources of man, that they unanimously ascribed it to a Divine power, and said that *he was a god*. *Æsculapius*, the god of physicians, who ruled over the serpent, was specially worshiped in Melita. So was Hercules (who was famous for having destroyed, in his youth, two serpents that attacked him in his cradle), there worshiped under an epithet signifying *the dispeller of evil*. Hence they probably thought that Paul was *Æsculapius* or Hercules. The inhabitants of Lystra had done just the reverse of what was done by these Melitese: first they sacrificed to Paul as a god, and then they stoned him. (xiv. 13,

18, 19.) Here we see a true picture of man, who judges by appearances and equivocal signs, and changes his opinions as often as the scene around him fluctuates. The same voices which applaud to the very echo the hero of to-day; are tomorrow rending the skies with yells of detestation and abhorrence. Let us endeavor to attain to something of that truly Scriptural and comfortable feeling which enabled Paul to be alike indifferent to the opinion which, at one moment, proscribed him as a murderer, and in the next enrolled him among the gods: an indifference which he himself so plainly and so forcibly expressed, when he said: "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self; but He that judgeth me is the Lord." There is, assuredly, no bar more insuperable to our real progress in vital religion than an overweening respect for the opinion of our fellow-sinners.

7. In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius: who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

*Possessions*—estates. *The chief* (or first) *man of the island*, was probably an official title: the more so, as Publius can hardly have borne the appellation from his *estates* during his father's lifetime. Two inscriptions have been found in Malta, at Citta Vecchia, which seem to establish this view. If so (and his Roman name further confirms it), Publius was *legate of the Proctor of Sicily*, to whose province Malta belonged. *Who received us, &c.*—entertained us, viz.: Luke, Paul, Aristarchus (xxvii. 2), and no doubt the noble-hearted Julius, not the entire two hundred and seventy-six, as so indiscriminate a hospitality would be uncalled for, and without any sufficient motive.

8. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

James v. 14, 15. Matt. ix. 18, Mark vi. 5, vii. 32, xvi. 18, Luke iv. 40, Ch. xix. 11, 1 Cor. xii. 9, 28.

It has been remarked that no writer of the New Testament uses such exact technical expressions of diseases as Luke, who was trained as a physician. Formerly it was maintained that a dry climate, such as Malta, did not generate dysentery and inflammation of the lower bowels; but

recently physicians resident in the islands have shown that these diseases are by no means uncommon at the present day. *And prayed, &c.*, thereby avowing that he healed him, not in his own strength, but as an instrument of the Divine mercy. Paul experienced, almost at the same time, two fulfillments of his Master's promise, "they shall take up serpents . . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark xvi. 18.)

9. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came and were healed: 10. Who also honored us with many honors; and when we departed they lauded us with such things as were necessary. 1 Th. ii. 6, 1 Th. v. 17. JMatt. vi. 31-34, x. 8-10, 2 Cor. ix. 5-11, Phil. iv. 11, 12.

The miracle on the father of Publius brings all the sick in the island to Paul, and all are healed. Now again beam forth the power and glory of the Apostle: the prisoner is now a miraculous benefactor, and the supposed murderer is a dispenser of life. Then must the ship's company indeed have wondered. Those who were healed amply expressed their gratitude for the benefits received, for at their departure they loaded them with all things necessary for them. There was an inferior honor due to the Apostles which the miracles they wrought were the means of procuring. They never, however, in a single instance, employed their supernatural powers to draw admiration to themselves or to promote their secular interests. Notwithstanding the silence of the history, we may confidently affirm that Paul here, as he did at Lystra, rejected with indignant zeal the honor of being a god; and made the miracles which he performed in Malta subservient to the cause of Christ. A man so eager to do good, who, although a prisoner, does not seem to have been under entire restraint, would not remain inactive during the three months which he spent in the island, and as his wonderful works had gained him the favor of the people, he enjoyed a very favorable opportunity to instruct them in the knowledge of the Gospel. And thus, what we should call an accidental event, the shipwreck of Paul upon an unknown coast, was overruled by Providence as the occasion of introducing Christianity into Malta, where it still exists in the corrupted form which it has assumed in countries subject to the authority of the Pope.

11. ¶ And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

*We departed.* They probably set sail not earlier than the sixth of the ides of March (*i. e.*, March 10). *Ship of Alexandria.* Malta was in the direct line of the great corn commerce from Alexandria to Puteoli and Rome. This ship, detained probably at Valetta, like Paul's ship from Alexandria, was more fortunate in escaping shipwreck, though arrested in its career by winter. When the Spring of this southern clime approached and navigation opened, this vessel was ready for Julius' use. *Whose sign was* (literally, *with the sign (of) the Dioscuri*). The ancient ships carried at their prow a painted or carved representation of the sign which furnished their name, and at the stern a similar one of their tutelary deity. Sometimes these were one and the same, as appears to have been the case with this ship. Castor and Pollux (the Dioscuri, sons of Zeus), sons of Jupiter and Leda, were considered the tutelary deities of sailors. Castor and Pollux are nothing (1 Cor. viii. 4), but all the ships that sail are the Lord's, and those who sail in them with thanksgiving suffer no harm from any idolatrous banner. Herein those who succeed the Apostle of the Gentiles find consolation, when they set forth with the banner of the cross, but sail in vessels that bear as their banner the golden calf of "money-making."

12. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.

This city, the capital of Sicily, on the south-eastern coast of that island, was about eighty miles north from Melita. It was built partly on the adjacent island of Ortygia, and from that circumstance, or as others say, because it included at length several villages, may have received its plural name. The modern Siracusa or Siragessa occupies only a part of the ancient city, *viz.*, Ortygia. They may have stopped here for trade, or in the hope of a better wind.

13. And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: 14. Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

*Fetched a compass*, rather, "coasted about." *Rhegium*—now *Reggio*, a seaport on the S. W. point of the Italian coast, opposite the

N. E. point of Sicily, and at the entrance of the narrow straits of Messina. *After one day the south wind blew*—"a south wind having sprung up," being now favored with a fair wind, for want of which they had been obliged first to stay three days at Syracuse, and then to tack and put in for a day at Rhegium. *The next day to Puteoli*—now *Pozzuoli*, situated on the northern part of the magnificent bay of Naples, about 180 miles N. of *Rhegium*, a distance which they might make, running before their "south wind," in about twenty-six hours. The Alexandrian corn-ships enjoyed a privilege peculiar to themselves, of not being obliged to strike their top-sail on landing. By this they were easily recognized as they hove in sight by the crowds that we find gathered on the shore on such occasions. *Found brethren*. How the Gospel reached this place, and who were the instruments of converting these men to Christianity, we are not told. Probably some of the disciples from Jerusalem, who had been scattered abroad in time of persecution, went through Italy preaching the Gospel.

15. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and the Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.  
xxi. 5; 3 John vi. 8. Josh. i. 6, 7, 9; 1 Sam. xxx. 6; Ps. xxvii. 14.

Tidings having gone from Puteoli to Rome of Paul's arrival, brethren from the imperial city hastened to meet him, and they meet at Appii Forum and the Three Taverns, two well-known stopping-places on the oldest and most famous Roman roads. "Appii Forum" was a market-place, and Tres Tabernæ, a group of shops and inns, the former about forty miles from Rome, the latter ten miles nearer. The meeting of these brethren gave new inspiration to the Apostle. *He thanked God, and took courage*. Paul attributed their friendship to the right source, the tender compassion of his God, and bold as he was and indifferent to human opposition, he was clearly not indifferent to human love, and human sympathy. It is delightful, from such instances as these, to see that even this great Apostle now when drawing near to the end of his course, was still glad to avail himself of the same aids, and to cling to the same human succors, as we our-

selves. Although, like God's people of old, he doubtless "encouraged himself in the Lord his God," although he possessed His rod and His staff to comfort him, he was still not above the support of a human arm, the ministering kindness of kindred spirits. He who made us, made us weak, suffering, dependent creatures, dependent not merely upon Himself, but upon each other, for much of our peace, comfort and consolation, in traversing this vale of tears, and, doubtless, He made us thus, that we might educate that peculiar faculty of our souls in time, which should form the well-spring of all our joys throughout eternity.

16. And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.—xxiv. 23, xxvii. 3.

*Came to Rome*. Starting from the Three Taverns, our ambassador, with his company of bondsmen and escort of freemen, would pass the celebrated Alban Hills, and on a summit a little beyond Aricia would cast his first glance upon the imperial Rome. It was itself a magnificent nation, the head of the nations of the earth. He entered the city by the Capenean Gate, where many a conqueror had entered in triumphal procession, but none with a name so notable to posterity as this "prisoner of Christ." *Captain of the guard*, rather, *commander of the camp*, i. e., the Prætorian camp, where the emperor's body-guard was quartered. (See Phil. i. 13.) *Was suffered*. This permission probably resulted from the letters of Festus, expressing that no crime was laid to the charge of Paul; perhaps, also, partly from the favor of Julius and his report of the character and bearing of Paul on the journey. *A soldier*—Prætorian, to whom he was chained. The very imprisonment in which Paul was held favored him. Had he been able to enter into the Jewish synagogues, or to dispute, as at Athens, in the public places with them that met with him, the magistrates would have interfered, and the law would have put him down. But being confined to *his own hired house*, "with the soldier who kept him," he received all who came to him, no man forbidding him; and though he was bound, "the word of God was not bound." Many, we suppose, of his visitors were his own

countrymen, whose lingering prejudices he would endeavor, and often successfully, to remove. But the greater number, probably, were Gentiles; providentially led, through acquaintance or connection, to seek that light which God had set up, ready to enlighten every man.

17. And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans; 18. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. 19. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. 20. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. 21. And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. 22. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.

<sup>a</sup>Chap. xxiv. 12, 13; xxv. 8. <sup>b</sup>Chap. xxi. 33, &c. <sup>c</sup>Chap. xxiv. 10; xxvi. 31. <sup>d</sup>Chap. xxv. 11. <sup>e</sup>Chap. xxvi. 6, 7. <sup>f</sup>Chap. xxvii. 23; Eph. iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 16; ii. 9; Phil. x. 13. <sup>g</sup>Luke ii. 34; Chap. xxiv. 5, 14; 1 Peter ii. 12; iv. 14.

After three days. Paul showed his earnestness, in sending for the rulers of the Jews only three days after his arrival at Rome. The three days would probably be spent in intercourse with the Roman Christians, in procuring a lodging, and in refreshing himself after his long journey. By *the chief of the Jews* are here meant the rulers of the synagogues, or the heads of the principal Jewish families at Rome. Paul, thinking that reports prejudicial to him might have been sent and circulated among them, was naturally anxious to justify himself before them, and thus to remove any obstacle which might hinder the reception of the Gospel. *I have committed, or, done nothing, &c.* He held that, so far from abolishing, he fulfilled the law by the Gospel, that Christianity was the true development of Judaism, and that the Christian was the true Jew. His opposition was not against the law, but against its abuse—against the opinion that it was sufficient for justification; but, so far from calling in question, he maintained and defended its divine origin and authority. *Would have let me go, &c.,* would have set me at liberty. Compare xxiv. 22, 23, 26, 27; xxv. 25; xxvi. 31, 32. In all the examinations which the Apostle underwent, before Roman officers and king Agrippa, it became evident that there was no just ground of complaint against

him, and that he ought to have been set at liberty. *When the Jews spake against it.* He speaks mildly: for they had tried, by plotting his murder, to stop his speaking in Palestine. *I was constrained, &c.* His appeal to the emperor had become indispensably necessary, only because the Jews protested against his acquittal, to which the Roman authorities judged him to be entitled.

*Because that for, or, on account of, the hope of Israel.* By “the hope of Israel” here is meant the Messianic hope—the promise of the Messiah. As if the Apostle had said: “My sufferings are caused on account of my belief in the fulfillment of the hope of Israel.” And this was certainly the case. It was his belief in Jesus as the promised Messiah that was the cause of the hatred of the Jews, and of all those persecutions and sufferings which he endured. *I am bound*, literally, encompassed, *with this chain*, referring, perhaps, to the fact that the chain encompassed his arm. As already noticed, it was the custom of the Romans to bind their prisoners to soldiers who kept them. Perhaps, however, the expression may be a general allusion to his imprisonment, without necessarily implying that he was always bound to a soldier. *Neither any of the brethren came, shewed, or spake any harm of, or concerning thee.* That is, they neither related the report of others, nor said anything themselves, affecting his character, any more than that of the followers of Christ in general, who were represented everywhere by Jews and Gentiles as a dangerous sect, who sought to destroy every religion on earth but their own. This was a peculiarly favorable circumstance, since it afforded Paul an opportunity to obtain as candid a hearing as any one of the brethren in Christ, and it is no less extraordinary, considering the light in which the Jews in Judea and elsewhere viewed him. It may, perhaps, be partly accounted for from his long confinement as a prisoner in Cesarea, in which situation he would attract less the attention of the public; but certainly the finger of God was in it. *When a man's ways please the Lord, his enemies are at peace with him,* when this is connected with his good and the Divine glory. *Concerning this sect, or*

schismatical party, the reference being to the Christians, to whom Paul notoriously belonged, *we know*, literally, *it is known to us that it is everywhere opposed* (or *contradicted*), *i. e.*, by the Jews, with whom they were in correspondence or communication.

23. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

\*Phil. 2. \*Luke xxiv. 27, Chap. xvii. 3, xix. 8. \*xxvi. 6, 22.

When they had appointed him a day, at his own suggestion, perhaps, since by leaving it to them to designate the time he would be more sure of their presence. *Lodging.* Most interpreters identify this with the *hired house* mentioned in verse 30. *There came many to him, &c.* (See on verse 16.) *He expounded, &c.* He furnished a two-fold exposition: he first testified the kingdom of God, *i. e.*, he announced the facts of redemption and of the establishment of the kingdom of God through Jesus Christ, he furnished in the second place certain explanations concerning Jesus, which were derived from the Old Testament and were intended to convince the minds of his hearers. *From morning till evening.* The whole day was occupied, not probably in one formal discourse, but partly in familiar and colloquial discussion on the grand subject. "Who" (says Bengel) "would not wish to have been present? but virtually we are present while listening to those epistles which he dictated from his prison at Rome, and to his other epistolary expositions of Christian truth against the Jews."

24. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

\*xiv. 1, xvii. 4, xix. 9; Rom. iii. 3.

Such has always been the success of the Gospel; to some it has been a *savor of life unto life*, to others of *death unto death*. (2 Cor. ii. 16.) If all had believed there had been no disagreement, so that all the blame of the division lay on those who would not believe. Perhaps no sermon ever produced the same effect upon all the assembled hearers. Even the discourses of Christ were far from commanding uniform impressions amongst his auditors.

25. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, *Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers*; 26. Saying, Go unto this people, and say,

Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive; 27. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 28. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

\*Ps. lxxxii. 11, 12; Isa. vi. 9; Jer. v. 21; Eze. viii. 6, 7, xii. 2; Matt. xiii. 14, 15; Rom. xi. 8. \*Matt. xxi. 41; Chap. xiii. 46, 47, xviii. 6, xxii. 21, xxvi. 17, 18; Rom. xi. 11.

*Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias, &c.*

A terrible farewell was this to the unbelievers as they departed. It sounds as the knell of doom. He peals into their ears the soul-startling words of Jehovah to the old prophet. (Isa. vi. 9, 10.) "In the fearful process here indicated," says a modern commentator, "there are three distinguishable agencies expressly or implicitly described—the ministerial agency of the prophet, the judicial agency of God, and the suicidal agency of the people themselves. The original passage makes the first of these most prominent: "Fatten the heart of this people, dull their ears, shut their eyes," &c. The quotation in John xii. 40 draws attention to the second: "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart." That in Matt. xiii. 15, like the one before us, dwells upon the third, and represents the people as destroyed by their own insensibility and unbelief. We have thus a striking and instructive instance of the way in which the same essential truth may be exhibited in different parts of Scripture, under several distinct aspects, or successive phases." *The salvation of God is sent, &c.* The original word here, *sotérion*, is used sometimes for the Author of salvation (as Luke ii. 30), and sometimes, as here, for the preaching of the Gospel. Possibly, God might have given the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, though the Jews had not despised and rejected it.

29. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

As these were Paul's *last words* to the Jews, the result was that they departed. They left God's word and testimony, and among themselves, now given up to their own folly, they had great reasoning; much *disputation* because they had rejected the truth, much vacillating, *asking and seeking* because they had refused to receive and believe that which was sure and certain.

30. ¶ And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.

*Dwelt*, or, rather, *remained*. *Two whole years, i. e.*, in the state mentioned, with the evident implication that at the end of that time his condition changed. The reader's conclusion is, that the two years completed the term of the Apostle's captivity. *In his own hired house, i. e.*, hired at his own expense. In the bosom of a Christian Church the Apostle could not have been destitute of the means of providing for such an expense. We learn, also, from Phil. iv. 14, 18, that during this captivity Paul received supplies from the Church at Philippi. *Received*—the original word means in its special sense, *received gladly*, because it afforded him such joy to preach the Gospel. (Comp. xv. 4, xviii. 27; see also on verse 16.)

31. Preaching <sup>the</sup> kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

<sup>4</sup>iv. 31, Eph. vi. 19.

*Preaching the kingdom*—in the very seat of empire of the world. *Which concern the Lord* of that kingdom, *Jesus as Christ*. The kingdom of God, which was promised in the Old Testament, is perfected in the New Testament in and through Jesus. There is no kingdom of God without Jesus, but where Jesus is, there ultimately will the kingdom of God have its full consummation. He who will proclaim the kingdom, let him teach of Jesus, and he who teaches of Jesus let him not forget to proclaim the kingdom. To preach the kingdom of God, and to teach about Jesus is representing the *whole* of the Gospel—"it is the circumference and the center" (see on verse 10). *With all confidence*. Of this confidence of the Apostles at Rome we have additional evidence in the Epistles to the Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and to Philemon, which were written in that city. They are all fragrant with the oil of joy, wherewith Jesus had anointed him. They also enable us to gather some particulars of his residence, which history has not elsewhere recorded. *No man forbidding him*, better, *unhindered*—outwardly, after so many hindrances were overcome. A victory of God's word. It was in those times considered a very great mercy when the Gospel could be preached without hindrance; it was a source of comfort to teachers, and they diligently employed the

time during which they could enjoy it. But we, on the contrary, whose liberty has so long been established, have well nigh forgotten how great this mercy is. As we have therefore opportunity let us labor to do good. (Gal. vi. 10.)

"The course of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome (says *Stier*) embraces the whole historical scope of the book; and if, with *Rieger*, we ask, 'When will it again return to Jerusalem?' we may find our question provisionally answered in the Epistle to the Romans, the succeeding book of the New Testament in our arrangement. This reveals, both as regards Jew and Gentile, the whole of God's plan for setting up His kingdom, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Here, as has been beautifully observed, "the curtain drops upon the unfinished life of Paul." We read no more of him after this. He disappears forever. It is true that tradition and certain references in one or two of his Epistles have led some to conclude that after this his first imprisonment in Rome, he was released, and returned to visit some of the churches which he had planted. "It is very probable," says *Howson*, "that he went to Spain, and not improbable that he came to Brittany. The general impression is that he was beheaded at Rome, in the last year of the reign of Nero, when Peter was also crucified." All this, however, is at best conjecture; certainty ends with this verse. Curiosity craves for minute information concerning the closing scenes in the life of this wonderful man, but Scripture offers no gratification. Why this? Why is sacred history so fragmentary? There are, no doubt, good reasons. Fuller details are, indeed, unnecessary. Luke has given sufficient memoranda of this great and good man's life to enable us to judge how sublimely he passed through the last scenes. Many years before he had said, "I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the sake of the Lord Jesus." Longer experience had not made him less ready to do or to suffer for the Master whom he served. We possess his parting words: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. iv. 6-8.)

Thus, like the prophet before him (see 2 Kings ii. 12, 13), who, taken himself from his earthly trials, cast down his mantle to encourage his successor; so has Paul, in

his last recorded sentiments, left for others the comfort wherewith he himself was comforted of God. A crown of glory was prepared for him. But not for him only, the Apostle in labors most abundant, in grace above measure; but for all them also that "love the Lord's appearing;" for all the faithful brethren in every age and country, whose hearts have been directed by the Spirit "to the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ." (2 Thess. iii. 5.)

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1. What was the name of the island at which they escaped? 2. What is said of the barbarous people? 3. What is said of the viper? 4. What did the barbarians say among themselves? 5. What did Paul do with the viper? 6. What did the people say when they saw him uninjured? 7. Who was the chief man of the island? 8. What is said of the father of Publius? 9. Were others in the island healed? 10. What is said of honors conferred? 11. When did Paul and his companions depart? 12. What was the sign of the ship in which they sailed? 13. At what points did they land as they went toward Rome? 14. Who met them at Appii Forum? 15. What disposition was made of Paul at Rome? 16. What was Paul's address to the chief of the Jews? 17. What is said of his "lodging?" 18. When had the Jews great reasoning among themselves? 19. How long did Paul dwell in his own hired house? 20. What is said of him during this time?



## APPENDIX A.

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE APOSTLES.

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#### SIMON (PETER).

Simon was the son of Jonas, or Jona. This, which signifies *hearing*, was his original name. Hence he is once called Simon Bar-jona, that is, son of Jona. (Matt. xvi. 17.) He was born at Bethsaida. He was a married man, and lived at Capernaum. (Matt. viii. 14; Mark i. 29; Luke iv. 38.) He was a fisherman, and probably associated with his brother Andrew in this business.

The name *Cephas* (a Syrian word signifying *a rock*, and in Latin *Petra*, translated Peter) was given to him when Andrew introduced Simon to our Lord, though he was not called to the special discipleship till some time after this. (Matt. iv. 18-20.) The name *Peter*, does not denote constancy, or firmness, which were not peculiar traits of Peter's character, but strength and boldness. The new name did not wholly supersede the old one, as in the case of Saul and Paul (Acts xiii. 9), for we find the latter still employed (Luke xiv. 37, xxii. 31, xxiv. 34; Matt. xvi. 16, 17; Acts xv. 14), and throughout the Gospel of John, and in the opening words of Peter's second epistle, both names are combined. The religious life of this Apostle, from its commencement to its close, is filled with the most interesting incidents. His two epistles, the date usually assigned to which is between A. D. 64 and 66, and which are called *general*, because they were not addressed to any particular Church or community of believers, constitute a valuable part of the inspired writings.

It may not be doubted that Peter was a spokesman to the college of Apostles, like the foreman of a jury or the chairman of a large committee—a position for which he was qualified by his forwardness of speech and action, and which was naturally accorded to him as one of the oldest, most active, most influential, and most faithful of those who had “seen the Lord.” The story that he was Bishop of Rome, upon which popery asserts her claim to supremacy, has no historical value.

There is no satisfactory evidence that Peter had any superiority of rank, or office, among the Apostles, for the following reasons: 1. The fact that he is named first on the catalogue of the Apostles does not imply that he had. This was owing to the priority of his call. According to Matt. iv. 18, 21, it appears that Peter and Andrew, James and John, were called the earliest to attend constantly on the Saviour, with reference to becoming His public servants. Matthew and Luke mention Andrew next to Peter, as being his brother, and one of Christ's first disciples. The names of James and John

follow, as having been called next, and being persons of great eminence for piety and usefulness, and James is placed before John as being the elder brother. The names of the others seem to be placed nearly, at least, in the order in which they became disciples—Judas (though, perhaps, not last called), being last named, because he was the traitor. It is certain that the Apostles are not ranged in the catalogues according to their dignity, else would the order of the names have been exactly the same in all the Evangelists, which it is not, else, too, it must follow that John and Matthew, whose praise is in all the Churches, on account of their writings, were inferior to Apostles who are scarce once named, except in the catalogues. 2. Whatever honor or authority Peter received from Christ, in establishing the first institutions of Christianity, and declaring what it enjoined and from what it released (Matt. xvi. 18, 19), the other Apostles also received. (Matt. xviii. 18; John xx. 23; 1 Cor. v. 3, 5; Eph. ii. 20; Rev. xxi. 14.) 3. It is plain that the other Apostles and first Churches conceded to Peter no primacy, or authority over his brethren (Matt. xxiii. 8-12; Acts viii. 14, xii. 12, xv. 6-21; 2 Cor. xii. 11; Gal. ii. 2, xi. 14); and that he did not claim it for himself. (1 Peter v. 1-4.) 4. Peter was frequently betrayed into the gravest errors, both of judgment and of practice; he was repeatedly rebuked with great severity by Christ, and he alone of the eleven went so far as to deny his Master, and continued under the reproach of that apostasy, until the risen Saviour condescended to restore him. (John xxi. 15-17.)

Subsequent to Peter's history, as recorded in the Acts, he seems to have lived in the East, as one of his epistles is addressed to the Churches of Asia Minor, and was written from Babylon. It is supposed, from John xxi. 18, 19, that the death predicted of Peter, and expressed by the stretching forth of his hands, and his being bound by cords, was that of crucifixion. Accordingly, ecclesiastical history testifies that he suffered martyrdom, by crucifixion, at Rome, in the reign of the Emperor Nero. It is added that this death, and the tortures connected with it, were endured by the venerable Apostle with marvelous patience and fortitude, and that, deeming himself unworthy to die in precisely the same manner and posture as his Lord, he asked and obtained permission to be crucified with the head downward—a posture which could not fail greatly to aggravate the tortures of the cross.

#### ANDREW.

Andrew was a native of Bethsaida, and brother (whether the elder or younger is uncertain) of Peter. He, too, was called from his fishing-net to be a fisher of men, and was among the first called. (John i. 41; Matt. iv. 18.) The name Andrew was Greek. He probably had a Hebrew name besides, which had been gradually superseded by the Greek one. It was very common for the Jews of that age to have double names—one native and one foreign. (Comp. Acts i. 22, ix. 36, xii. 12, xiii. 1-9.) Andrew was first a disciple of John the Baptist, whom he left to follow our Saviour, after the testimony of John. (John. i. 40.) He set the first example of brotherhood in Christ, and was the first to proclaim, "We have found the Messiah." (John i. 40-42.) He is mentioned several times in the Gospels, though is not prominent. See Matt. iv. 18-20; Mark xiii. 3; John i. 35-40; vi. 3-13; xii. 22.) Except in the catalogue (chap. i. 14), his name does not occur once in the *Acts*. In the catalogues of Matthew and Luke, Andrew appears second, but in those of Mark and the Acts, fourth. Some of the ancients are of the opinion that he preached in Scythia, others, in Greece, others, in Epirus, or Argos. He is said to have died as a martyr at Patræ in Achaia, being sentenced to be executed on a cross of peculiar form, by Egæus, proconsul of that province.

#### JAMES THE SON OF ZEBEDEE.

*James* is the Greek form of *Jacob*, and it is somewhat remarkable that it now reappears for the first time since the patriarch himself. James, and John (here men-

tioned with him), are in most passages of the Gospels named together, and from the prevailing order it is inferred that John was the younger. They occupy a conspicuous position in the history of our Lord. (Matt. v. 7; Luke viii. 51; Matt. xvii. 1; Mark ix. 2; Luke ix. 28; Matt. xxvi. 37; Mark xiii. 3, xiv. 33.) Their father was Zebedee, their mother Salome, whom some recent critics identify with the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in John xix. 25. Zebedee, whose occupation his two sons followed, was a fisherman of Bethsaida, on the Lake of Tiberias, who, from having a vessel of his own, and hired servants (Mark i. 20), appears to have been in good circumstances for his station in life. We know nothing of him beyond his interposing no refusal when his sons were called to leave him (Matt. iv. 21), and his disappearance from the Gospel narrative leads to the inference that his death set Salome free to join her children in ministering to the Lord. Luke viii. 3.)

For the call of James and John to the discipleship, see Matt. iv. 21, 22. It occurred in the Spring or Summer of 27. For a full year after this we lose sight of James. He is then, in the Spring of 28, called to the Apostleship with his eleven brethren. (Luke vi. 13.) In the list of the Apostles given us by Mark, and in the Book of Acts, his name occurs next to that of Simon Peter; in the lists by Matthew and Luke it comes third. (See Mark v. 37; Luke viii. 51; Matt. xvii. 1; Mark ix. 2; Luke ix. 28; Matt. xxvi. 37; Mark xiv. 33, xiii. 3.) On the night before the crucifixion he was present at the Agony in the Garden. On the day of the ascension he is mentioned as persevering with the rest of the Apostles and disciples in prayer. (Acts i. 13.) His zeal seems to have been ardent and strong.

The surname *Boanerges* was given to James and John, probably at the time of the Twelve Apostles, or possibly before. (Mark iii. 17.) This term, which is no doubt a double modification (Greek and Aramaic) of some Hebrew phrase, which cannot now be certainly identified, is translated by Mark, *The Sons of Thunder*. They were doubtless so named with reference to their burning and impetuous spirit, which twice exhibits itself in its unchastened form (Luke ix. 54; Mark ix. 37); and which, when moulded by the Spirit of God, taking different shapes, led James to be the first Apostolic martyr, and John to become in an especial manner the Apostle of Love. James was the first of the Apostles who died. He was slain by Herod with the sword, shortly before the day of the Passover, A. D. 44. Clement of Alexandria says, that such was his firmness in death that the officer at his execution was converted thereby to Christianity, and was martyred with him.

#### JOHN.

To the particulars given of this Apostle in the foregoing sketch the following must be added. It is generally believed that John was the youngest of the Apostles, but it is not agreed what age he was of when called to follow Christ; some state it at twenty-five or twenty-six years, others at twenty-two, and others conceive him to have been about the same age as his Lord. His character appears to have been affectionate. The most intense affection, however, is compatible with an ardent temper and ambitious spirit, of both which qualities we find some traces in him. (Matt. xx. 24; Luke ix. 49.) He enjoyed, in an eminent degree, the special intimacy of Christ. To him belonged the distinction, in the Apostolic band, of being "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and this love was returned with a more single, undivided heart by him than by any other. He was present at several scenes in our Lord's history, from which most of the other disciples were excluded. His attachment to Jesus was remarkable toward the end of His earthly course. John was a witness to the interesting circumstances which occurred after Christ's resurrection. The tradition which ascribes to him a life of celibacy receives some confirmation from the absence of his name in 1 Cor. ix. 5.

Ecclesiastical historians state that John remained several years at Jerusalem, or at least in Judea, till after the death of Mary, who had been committed to his care. This is corroborated by the Acts of the Apostles, in which we find him at Jerusalem, as one of the chief Apostles of the circumcision. At first we find him with Peter working miracles, and preaching the Gospel with great success and boldness. John was also one of the Apostles present at the council held at Jerusalem, in the year 49 or 50, and before this time he had, probably, not traveled beyond Judea. But the ancient writers inform us that after the death of Mary he traveled into Asia Minor, where he founded many churches, making Ephesus his principal residence, and which continued to be such until, toward the close of Domitian's reign, he was banished to the isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation. Being released on the accession of Nerva, it seems he returned to Ephesus, where he wrote his Gospel and three Epistles, and where he died, the last of the Apostles, in the third year of the emperor Trajan, when he must have been about one hundred years of age. (See Preface to Gospel of John.)

## PHILIP.

The name is an old Greek one, and is found everywhere in ancient history. Philip was of Bethsaida (John i. 44), and apparently was among the Galilean peasants of that district who flocked to hear the preaching of the Baptist. He is not to be confounded with Philip the Evangelist, spoken of in Acts vi. 5, xxi. 8. The statement that Jesus found him (John i. 43), implies previous seeking. He was the introducer of Nathanael, upon whom our Lord pronounced so high a commendation (John i. 48). He apparently was among the first company of disciples who were with the Lord at the commencement of His history, at the marriage of Cana, and on His first appearance as a prophet in Jerusalem. (John ii.) In the lists of the Apostles his name is uniformly coupled with that of Bartholomew. We find him present at the feeding of the Galilean crowds which were miraculously fed. (John vi. 5-9.) To him the Gentile proselytes (Hellenes) expressed their wish for an interview with Jesus. (John xii. 20, 22.) He was distinguished for his frankness, through which he ventured to open every difficulty to the Saviour. (John vi. 7, xii. 22, xiv. 8, 9.) He was among the company of disciples at Jerusalem after the Ascension (Acts i. 13), and on the day of Pentecost. After this all is uncertain, yet it is said that he labored in Phrygia, and died at Hierapolis, probably as a martyr.

## BARTHOLOMEW.

*Bartholomew* is a patronymic, *the son of Tolmai*. His *own* name nowhere appears in the first three Gospels: and it has been not improbably conjectured that he is identical with Nathanael. (John i. 45.) Nathanael there appears to have been first brought to Jesus by Philip, and in the three first catalogues of the Apostles Bartholomew and Philip appear together. It is difficult also to imagine, from the place assigned to Nathanael in John xxi. 2, that he can be other than an Apostle. If this may be assumed, for which there seems to be strong reason, he was born at Cana of Galilee, and was known for his uprightness. (John i. 47.) He is said to have preached the Gospel in India, meaning thereby, probably, Arabia Felix, which was sometimes called India by the ancients. It is an authentic fact of ecclesiastical history, that a copy of Matthew's Gospel, in Hebrew, was found by Pantæus in India, left there by Bartholomew. Some allot Armenia to him as a mission-field, and report him to have been there flayed alive and then crucified with his head downward.

## THOMAS.

*Thomas* was also called *Didymus*, the two names being Aramaic and Greek synonyms, both meaning a *twin*. He was probably a Galilean, as well as the other Apostles,

but the place of his birth and the circumstances of his calling are unknown. Besides the lists of the Apostles, he is named eight times in the Gospel of John (xi. 16, xiv. 5, xx. 24-29, xxi. 2). In the three catalogues of the Apostles by the Evangelists he is coupled with Matthew, and with Philip in Acts i. 13. His character was that of a man slow to believe, seeing all the difficulties of a case, subject to despondency, viewing things on the darker side, and yet full of ardent love for his Master. (John xi. 16, xiv. 5, xx. 25.) In the famous statue of him by Thorwaldsen, in the church at Copenhagen, he stands with the rule in his hand for the due measuring of evidence and argument. "He doubted," says *Augustine*, "that we might not doubt." The earlier traditions, as he lived in the fourth century, represent him as preaching in Parthia or Persia, and as finally buried at Edessa. His martyrdom (whether in Persia or India) is said to have been effected by a lance. The Christians of the Syrian Church in India claim him as their founder, and call themselves by his name.

MATTHEW.

For a sketch of Matthew's history see "Preface" to his Gospel.

JAMES THE LESS.

Was the son of Alphaeus. He is called by Mark (xv. 40) James the Less, either because he was younger than the other James, the son of Zebedee, or smaller in stature, or called later to be an Apostle; and appears to be that James whom Paul calls "the Lord's brother." (Gal. i. 19.) *Alphaeus* seems to be a Greek modification of an Aramaic name, of which *Clopas* (John xix. 25) is supposed to be another form. Now, as Clopas was the husband of the Virgin Mary's sister (John xix. 25), his son would be the cousin of our Lord, and might, according to a common Hebrew idiom, be called brother. (See Gen. xiii. 8; 2 Sam. i. 26; Acts vii. 25, 26, ix. 17.) Alphaeus appears to have died before the commencement of our Lord's ministry, and after his death it would seem that his wife and her sister, a widow like herself, and in poor circumstances, lived together in one house, generally at Nazareth (Matt. xiii. 55), but sometimes also at Capernaum (John ii. 12) and Jerusalem (Acts i. 14). James the Less is mentioned with peculiar distinction. (Acts xii. 76, xv. 13, xxi. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 7; Gal. i. 19, and ii. 9, 12.) He was put to death in the year 62, and tradition says that he was thrown by the Jews from the battlements of the temple, and then dispatched with a fuller's club, while on his knees, and in the act of praying for his murderers. His Epistle was written in the year 61 or 62. It is called *general*, because it was not addressed to any particular Church, but to the whole Jewish nation—to *the twelve tribes scattered abroad*. (Ch. i. 1.)

LEBBEUS.

Besides being also named *Thaddeus*, (Mark iii. 18) he is called by Luke (vi. 16) *Judas, the brother of James*. It is generally accepted that these were three names for one and the same person, who is therefore said by Jerome to have been *trionymus*. As the words *the brother* (in Luke) do not occur in the original, it has been a question whether the ellipsis should not be supplied with the words *the son*, as the ellipsis is supplied here respecting James. The probability is, however, that he was the brother of James the less, son of Mary (sister of the Virgin Mother), and therefore cousin-german of the Saviour. He is the "Judas, not Iscariot," mentioned by John xiv. 22. His given name, doubtless, was Judah, and his two surnames, Lebbeus and Thaddeus, signifying *hearty* or *courageous*, are regarded by some as denoting him as a spirited, brave man. He was the author of the short Epistle near the end of the New Testament canon, which was written, as many have supposed, about A. D. 65, but it is by no means certain. Nothing is certainly known of the later history of the Apostle. It is impossible to determine from conflicting traditions whether he died a natural death, or was martyred, but Edessa seems to be the place where his earthly career terminated.

SIMON THE CANAANITE, (or, properly, the *Canaanite*.)

He is referred to in Luke vi. 15 as "Simon called Zelotes." The two epithets attached to his name have the same signification, the latter being the Greek translation of the former, which is Chaldee. Both seem to point him out as belonging to the Jewish faction called *Zealots*, which was animated by a most bitter and uncompromising zeal against the Roman rule, as a thing accursed, unlawful, and by every means to be put down, and which played so conspicuous a part in the last defense of Jerusalem. If Simon was really a member of this fierce sect, it was a great change for him to be placed thus intimately near to Him who was "meek and lowly in heart." Possibly, as some suppose, the name was given to him on account of personal zeal for the law. Simon is not mentioned in the New Testament out of the catalogues of the Apostles. He is reported, on very doubtful authority, to have preached in Egypt, Cyrene, and Mauretania, and to have been crucified in Judea, under Domitian. A modern writer remarks, that, while Matthew (x. 4) associates Judas Iscariot with Simon the Canaanite, Luke associates him with Jude, the brother of James. This, he thinks, arose not from a varying tradition, but from a varying practice of our Lord, who allowed not Judas always to retain the same companion, for fear of his corrupting influence.

## JUDAS ISCARIOT.

Judas is uniformly mentioned last on the lists, with a brand of infamy. Some suppose the appellative *Iscariot* to signify "The Zealot," others, that it is derived from a word signifying *suspension*, and refers to the manner of his death (Matt. xxvii. 5); others, still, that it means "the man of Carioth," or Keriath, a city of Judah. (Josh. xv. 25.) The last explanation is now generally accepted, and if it be right, Judas is the only one of the Apostles whom we have any reason to regard as not a Galilean. Judas came to an awful end. (Matt. xxvi. 34; John xvii. 2; Acts i. 25; see notes below.)

Such were the persons (Matthias afterward being chosen in the room of Judas, and Paul being subsequently selected) Jesus chose to be His Apostles—His assistants and coadjutors in the establishment and administration of His kingdom. It was, indeed, natural to expect that in making a choice He should look to men of influence, authority and weight, that being Himself destitute of all the advantages of rank, power, wealth and learning, He should endeavor to compensate for these defects in His own Person, by the contrary qualities of His associates, by connecting Himself with some of the most powerful, opulent, learned and eloquent of His time. In pursuing an opposite course, however, as He did, and choosing plain, humble, unpretending men, of low birth and low occupations, without learning or education (excepting Paul, who was a scholar), without any extraordinary endowments, natural or acquired, without anything, in short, to recommend them, but their simplicity, integrity and purity of character, He meant to show that He was *above* all such great instruments and agencies as the world might supply, and that He had far other resources, far different auxiliaries, to call into His support, in comparison with which all the wealth, magnificence, power and wisdom of the world were trivial and contemptible things. (1 Cor. i. 26.) Such selection, however, is not an argument against learning in the ministry *now*, unless it can be shown that the ministry now has power to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and cast out devils.

Why Judas was chosen by Jesus, when it was known that He would betray Him, it must be admitted, is surprising, and at variance with the course which human wisdom would have marked out. (See 1 Cor. i. 25.) Thus was prophecy fulfilled, and

thus was the great purpose accomplished of redeeming the human race by Christ's death. (See Ps. xli.; Acts i. 16.) It may probably serve to solve some of the mystery of this case, to look at the following lessons which it teaches: 1. It is possible to be with Jesus, to hear Him night and day, to *appear* to be religious, and to preach holy doctrines, and yet to perish everlastingly. 2. Although the Church is to desire and aim at absolute purity, it cannot be expected, even in her highest places, during her militant condition, and it is her duty to guard against terror and despair, when great defections do occur. 3. It is the duty of ministers to guard against avarice, hypocrisy, and all unfaithfulness. (Matt. xxvi. 34; John xvii. 12; Acts i. 25.) 4. The choice of Judas supplied a powerful indirect evidence of the purity and blamelessness of our Lord's conduct and ministry, as; if anything *could* have been proved against Him, Judas was exactly the witness who could have proved it, but he had nothing to allege to Christ's disadvantage. (See Matt. xxvii. 4.) 5. Then, again, look how Christ treated Judas—He warned him (Matt. vi. 19–21; Mark vii. 21–23; Luke xii. 10–20), He left him free to go (John vi. 67, xiii. 27), with long-suffering He endured him (John xiii. 11), and finally, with majesty, He removed him.

## APPENDIX B.

## DEMONIACAL POSSESSIONS.

The subject of demoniacal possessions has given rise to much discussion. Some make the account of them merely symbolic without basis of fact, others regard them as mere diseases; others still look upon the narratives of them as mere accommodations to the error and superstition of the age in which they were written. In support of the common, simple and ancient interpretation of these cases, and as relating to the entire subject in its general bearings, we submit the considerations following:

The whole system of Bible demonology presupposes one arch enemy of God and man, finite yet powerful, an archangel of evil, who is the mightiest finite representative of wickedness revealed to us in the universe. (See notes on Matt. iv. 1.) He is known in the Old Testament history as Belial, Satan, and perhaps as Azazel. In the New Testament he is Satan, Beelzebub, the devil, and the prince of devils, the word *diabolos*, devil, being the corresponding Greek word for the Hebrew *Satan*. Under him there are *demons*, or inferior evil spirits—a kingdom with its subordinate ministers—"the devil and his angels." This is the acknowledged meaning of the word. Thus it is translated in James ii. 19, and rightly, too, for it cannot with propriety be applied to any other beings, nor well admit of any other translation than "the devils believe and tremble." Thus, also, in the Gospels, the same beings that are named *demons*, are named also *spirits*, and *unclean spirits*, and *evil*, and *wicked spirits*. (Matt. xii. 43, 45, x. 1, viii. 16, xvii. 18; Luke xi. 24, 26, iv. 33, &c., ix. 1, iv. 41, ix. 42; Mark i. 23, iii. 11, ix. 25, 26), showing that these names are synonymous terms. It further appears that demons are beings of the same kind, of the same nature as *Satan* and *Beelzebub*, the prince or chief of the demons, for the reasoning of Jesus (Matt. xiii. 22, 32; Mark iii. 22, 30; Luke xi. 14, 26) shows that the casting out demons by *Beelzebub*, is the same as casting out demons by *Satan*, and that *Satan's* casting out *demons* is casting out *himself*. So, too, when the Seventy returned to our Saviour (Luke x. 17, 18), He considered the fall of demons as the fall of *Satan*, and Peter spoke of the demoniacs under the name and notion of "oppressed with the devil." (Acts x. 38.)

That the possessions in question were not mere *diseases*, such as epilepsy, mania and melancholy, we think it impossible to deny. That there was a substratum of disease, which, in many cases, helped to lay open to the deeper evil, and upon which it was superinduced, there can be no doubt, but the scheme which confounds these cases with those of disease cannot, even setting aside the testimony of Josephus, and other historians, that possession in those times was no uncommon case, be sustained by any reverent handler of God's Word.



There is a distinction everywhere drawn in the New Testament between natural diseases and demoniacal possessions. In Matt. iv. 24 there is mention made of four classes of the afflicted. 1. All the sick taken with divers diseases and torments. 2. Those possessed with devils. 3. The lunatic. 4. Paralytics. In Matt. viii. 16 there is a distinction made between *healing the sick*, and *casting out spirits*. Luke, likewise (who was himself a physician), distinguishes (iv. 40, 41) between *healing* and *casting out*, as well as between *diseases* and *devils*. How could it be said that common diseases were *cast out*, and that they *came out crying and saying* anything, especially acknowledging Christ as the Son of God! (See Mark i. 23, 24, 32, xvi. 17, 18; Luke vi. 17, 18; Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 24, v. 7; Luke iv. 41, &c.) Besides, the unclean spirits are said to "enter into" and "depart out" of those whom they possess, and remain out. They speak and are spoken to, both while within their victims and after they have come out, neither of which things could be affirmed of *diseases*. Every expression that Jesus makes use of with respect to these demoniacs plainly supposes them to be really possessed. He addresses the evil spirit as distinct from the man. (Mark i. 25 ix. 25; v. 8; Luke iv. 35.) In His confidential discourses with His disciples He recognized this distinction. (Matt. x. 8, and especially xvii. 21.) In the charge He gave to the Twelve He distinguished between the casting out of devils and the healing of diseases. (Luke ix. 1.) When charged with casting out devils (Matt. xii. 24) He did not deny the possibility of such a thing. He bade the demons to be silent. (Mark i. 25.) He refers to a particular "kind" of demons. (Matt. xvii. 21.) In addition to all this, it must be borne in mind that the possessed had an invariable dislike and dread of our Lord. They do not appear ever to have come to Jesus of their own accord; but, with one exception, to have been brought to him by others. In that exceptional case, as in all the others, their antipathy and terror seem to have been extreme. "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." Surely this infatuated sympathy with their oppressors, and their no less infatuated antipathy to and avoidance of their Deliverer, is something more and something worse than madness. Further, we find that Jesus has represented the casting out of demons as a necessary part of His own work. Very emphatically he sends this message to Herod: "I must cast out demons and do cures to-day and to-morrow." (Luke xii. 32.) He argues from His performance of this work to the truth of His mission, and the advent of God's reign. "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." (Matt. xii. 28.) And over their ejection by His disciples in His name, He rejoiced in spirit, as the beginning and earnest of the downfall of Satan's power, saying, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." How then shall all this be accounted for if demoniacs were madmen of whatever sort?

Now it cannot be supposed that the Evangelists wrote and that our Lord spoke on this subject, merely in a figurative manner, and "in accordance with the belief of the time, and with a view to be clearly understood." Accommodation is possible, indeed, when, in things indifferent, language is used which, although scientifically or etymologically inaccurate, yet conveys a true impression, or when, in things not indifferent, a declaration of truth (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2), or a moral law (Matt. xix. 8) is given, true or right as far as it goes, but imperfect, because of the imperfect progress of its recipients. But certainly here the matter was not indifferent. The age was one of little faith and great superstition, its characteristic the acknowledgment of God as a distant law-giver, not an inspirer of men's hearts. This superstition in things of far less moment was denounced by our Lord. Can it be supposed that He would sanction, and the Evangelists be permitted to record forever, an idea in itself false, which has constantly been the stronghold of superstition? If the Evangelists use language with such extraordinary freedom, if they make such amazing concessions to the prejudices and errors of men, no person can have any distinct view of what was in fact their meaning—no one can be certain when they relate things as they were in truth, and when

they relate them as they appeared to vulgar and prejudiced minds. All the ideas which we can have of the man Christ Jesus, who flattered no popular prejudices, who was not only the truth-speaker, but the truth itself, and who came into the world not to make a lie the basis of His mission, but to put an end to all deceptions, to all hypocrisies, to all falsehoods, compel us to believe that He would not have used language which would have upheld and confirmed so great and mischievous an error in the minds of men, as the supposition of Satanic influence, which did not in truth exist.

The distinguished feature of the condition of those whom our Lord and His Apostles signalized by the name of demoniacs, was the complete or incomplete loss of the sufferer's reason or power of will, his actions, his words, and almost his thoughts were mastered by the evil spirit (Mark i. 24, v. 7; Acts xix. 15), till his personality seemed to be destroyed, or, if not destroyed, so overborne as to produce the consciousness of a two-fold will within him, like that sometimes felt in a dream. Plato affirms that "demoniacs do not use their own dialect or tongue, but that of the demons who have entered into them." Lucian says: "The patient is silent, the demon returns the answer to the question asked." Apollonius thus addresses a youth supposed to be possessed: "I am treated contumeliously by the demon, and not by thee." (Comp. Matt. viii. 28 and 31; Mark v. 2, ix. 12; Luke viii. 27, 32.)

We are not to suppose that those who were possessed by devils, were eminently wicked, or in the highest degree offensive to God, and hence they were allowed to be so possessed. Though they were greatly guilty, yet they were not the guiltiest of men. With the exception of Judas, whose case was specifically different from the others, such persons were treated by the Saviour as objects of compassion rather than of condemnation. They may have been guilty of what opened the door and courted the inrush, as it were, of the evil spirits by which they were inhabited, but still their case, in the main, was misfortune—more misfortune than it was crime. Hence, there was in them a groaning under the tyranny they endured, and a piercing cry was continually heard for deliverance. However mysterious it may be, it may not be doubted that, like all God's ways of dealing with men, possession was meant to serve the great ends of moral discipline. Although it might appear, like insanity, so to overbear the reason, and conscience, and will, as to suspend responsibility, it can be readily understood to have formed the most important exercise of the principles and dispositions of all with whom those "vexed with the devil" were related in social and family bonds, as in the beautiful and blessed example of the woman of Canaan and her daughter. And in whatsoever way, or to whatsoever effect, all affliction, including insanity itself subserves the great moral purpose of human life, the same end might be equally accomplished by the worst and most violent assaults of the demon's power.

In regard to demoniacal possessions, the Bible, as in many other things, without contradicting ordinary experience, yet advances to a region whither human science cannot follow. The state itself cannot be fully explained, nor need the skeptical complain of this till they have explained mental derangement. The limits and mutual reactions of the spiritual, mental and corporeal faculties in man have as yet baffled all the researches of science.

To the question, Why were demoniacal possessions so numerous at the commencement of the Christian era? the following answer has been given: "Other forms of affliction have had their day and place as well as this. If the fact were, as seems likely, that about those times men were more addicted than ordinarily to sorcery and divination (Acts xix. 18, 21), might not this, according to the rules of Divine judgment, have provoked this special visitation? Or, can it be thought unnatural, that with the knowledge that their time was short, the evil spirits should then, so far as permitted, have thus put forth their malice and activity to the uttermost? (Rev. xii. 2.) And

as regarded our Lord and the ends of His mission, what was so fitted to confirm His claims, and to illustrate His work in the eye of a sense-bound people, as the opportunity thus afforded for the manifestation of His power over the enemy? The demoniacs recovered by His word to a sound body and a right mind, were more convincing trophies of His power, and more palpable representatives of His work, than were His own disciples, in whom the effect of His influence was chiefly inward and spiritual. Hence He once and again refers to His casting out of demons, not simply like His other miracles, as the proof of His Divine mission in general, but as special evidence of His work and errand, as manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and to establish His own kingdom of grace."

Is it asked, Why do not demoniacs appear at the present day? To this inquiry a three-fold reply may be made. 1. Even admitting that they do not, the most profound observers in mental and psychological science have remarked that certain supernaturalisms seem to affect the human system in particular ages, then disappear, and are the subjects of skepticism in a later era. Phenomena of this kind took place in the middle ages which are unknown now. 2. Yet there are cases, especially of men given over to delirium tremens, which exhibit a terrible approximation to possession, and which, if Satan's power were at the present time in the manifest ascendant, would very possibly develop a clear possession by the power of the evil ones. The same may be said of the habitually lustful, and the opium eater. And how much of the diabolical mingles with the so-called *spiritism* of the present day, may be matter of serious consideration; certainly its phenomena belong not to the Divine, but to the *lower*, if not the *infernal* order of the invisible powers. 3. The might of hell, we cannot doubt, has been greatly broken by the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and with this the grosser manifestations of its power. (See Luke x. 18.) Satan's rage and violence, it is to be believed, are continually hemmed in and hindered by the preaching of the Word. In heathen lands, where the great conflict between light and darkness begins by the first in-coming of the Gospel, manifestations are sometimes seen not unlike those in the days of Jesus.

## AN HISTORICAL INDEX

### OF ALL THE PERSONS, PLACES, ETC., MENTIONED IN THE GOSPELS AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

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**AARON** (a *teacher*, a hill), the brother of Moses; a progenitor of Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias. Luke i. 5;—the Israelites' request of him in the wilderness; Acts vii. 40.

**ABEL** (*mourning, vanity, vapor*), murdered by his brother Cain. His blood alluded to by our Lord, Matt. xxiii. 35; Luke xi. 51.

**ABIA** (*will of the Lord*), called also *Abijam*, son of Rehoboam, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 7.)

**ABIATHAR** (*excellent father*), high-priest when David ate the shew-bread. (Mark ii. 26.)

**ABILENE** (*weeping, mourning*), a small region of Syria between mounts Libanus and Anti-Libanus; and of which Lysanias was tetrarch. (Luke iii. 1.)

**ABIUD** (*father of praise*), son of Zerubbabel, and a progenitor of Christ. (Matt. i. 13.)

**ABOMINATION of Desolation**. The Roman army besieging Jerusalem; of which the ensigns and images were brought into the Temple, and placed over against the eastern gate where the Romans sacrificed to them. (Matt. xxiv. 15; Luke xxi. 20, 21.)

**ABRAHAM** (*father of a great multitude*), a progenitor of Christ. (Matt. i. 1.) Our Lord rebukes the Jews for boasting of Abraham as their father. (John viii. 37-53; Matt. iii. 9; Luke iii. 8, 34. Also alluded to in Luke i. 55, 73, iii. 34, xiii. 28, xvi. 23, 24, 30, xix. 9; John viii. 33; Acts vii. 2, xiii. 26.)

**ACELDAMA** (*the field of blood*), the field bought with the thirty pieces of silver that betrayed our Lord, and assigned to be a burial-place for strangers. The earth had been dug from it to make earthenware, hence it was called the "*Potter's Field*." (Matt. xxvii. 7-10.) And because of the violent death of Judas, it is supposed to have derived the name of *Aeldama*, "*the field of blood*." (Acts i. 19.) It was outside the southern wall of Jerusalem.

**ACHAIA**, a province in the south of Greece, comprising the northern portion of the Peloponnesus, and of which *Corinth* was the capital. (Acts xviii. 1, 12; xix. 21.)

**ACHAZ**, or *Ahaz* (*taking, seeing*), son and successor of Jotham, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 9.)

**ACHIM** (*rising again, confirming*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 14.)

**ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**, the history of the infant Church for *thirty years* after Christ's death, written by Luke. It begins with the ascension of our Lord A. D. 33 (Acts i.

3-11), and concludes with Paul's first arrival in Rome, a prisoner two whole years for the Gospel, A. D. 63. (xxviii. 30, 31.) The first part of "The Acts" is chiefly occupied with the life of Peter, and the latter part with that of Paul; yet many important incidents respecting Paul have been found omitted, which his epistles supply to us.

ADAM (*red earth*), our first parent, in whom all fell. A progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 38.)

ADDI (*witness, traveler*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 28.)

ADRAMYTIIUM (*mansion of death, a commonalty*), a maritime town of Asia Minor, at the foot of mount Ida, opposite Lesbos; famous for its shipping trade; a vessel from which conveyed Paul to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 1, 2.)

ADRIA, the *Adriatic Sea*, including the Ionian and Sicilian Seas, and the waters washing the western side of Crete. (Acts xxvii. 27.)

AGAEBUS (*a locust, a father's feast*), a prophet who foretold the famine in the reign of Claudius, in A. D. 44 (Acts xi. 28), and the imprisonment of Paul by the Jews, (Acts xxi. 10.)

AGRIPPA (*sick, sorrowful*), or *Herod Agrippa, II.*, was the son of Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great; he was a favorite of Claudius, in whose court he continued some time, and having obtained from the emperor the provinces of Gaulanitis, Trachonitis, Batanæa, Paneas and Abilene, lately held by Lysanias, he left Rome about A. D. 53. When Festus arrived as governor of Judea, Agrippa went to Cesarea to salute him, A. D. 60, and there, in company with his sister Bernice, he heard Paul, and "almost" became a Christian. (Acts xxv. 13, 22, 26, xxvi. 1-32.) Nero added other districts to his rule; and when the Jews rebelled against Rome, A. D. 66, Agrippa united with the Roman power, led his forces against Jerusalem, after the taking of which in A. D. 70, he retired to Rome, where he died, A. D. 90.

*Alabaster Box.* By the English word *Alabaster* is to be understood both that kind which is also known by the name of *gypsum*, as well as the *Oriental alabaster*, which is so much valued on account of its translucency, and for its variety of colored streakings, red, yellow, gray, &c., which it owes, for the most part, to the admixture of oxides of iron. Both these kinds of alabaster, but especially the latter, are and have been long used for various ornamental purposes, such as in the fabrication of vases, boxes, &c. The ancients considered alabaster (carbonate of lime) to be the best material in which to preserve their ointments. "Unguents," says *Pliny*, "keep best in alabaster."

ALEXANDER (*helper of men, strong, virtuous*)—(1) a son of Simon, who carried our Lord's cross. (Mark xv. 21.)

—(2) lately high priest, and among those who examined Peter and John, when brought before the Sanhedrim for healing a man lame from his birth at the gate called "Beautiful." (Acts iv. 6.)

—(3) a Jew of Ephesus, who encouraged the tumult raised by Demetrius. (Acts xix. 33.)

ALEXANDRIA (*irritation, prohibition*), a celebrated city in Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great (B. C. 332), whence its name, and colonized by him with Greeks and Jews. It was the capital of Egypt under the Ptolemies, whose encouragement of learning brought hither the most celebrated philosophers of the East, as well as of Greece and Rome; whence it became the hot-bed of Gnosticism, and other heresies. It was the Alexandrine Jews who persecuted Stephen, (Acts vi. 9.) *Apollos* was born here (Acts xviii. 24); and in a ship of Alexandria Paul was taken to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 6.) Mark, the Evangelist, after the death of Peter, is said to have retired into Egypt, and founded a Christian Church in this city.

ALPHÆUS (*the thousand, learned*)—(1) the father of Matthew or Levi; Mark ii. 14.

—(2) one of the Apostles, and the Father of James the Less (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13), and husband of Mary the sister of the mother of our Lord; he is thought to be the same with Cleophas (Luke xxiv. 18; John xix. 25), the latter being his Syriac or Hebrew name, and Alphæus his Greek name.

AMEN (verily), "it is true." (John iii. 3, 5.)

AMINADAB (*a free people*), son of Aram, and father of Naason, and of Elisheba, the wife of Aaron, and one of the progenitors of our Lord. (Matt. i. 4; Luke iii. 33.)

AMON (*faithful*), son and successor of Manasseh, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 10.)

AMOS (*a burden, mighty*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 25.)

AMPHIPOLIS (*a city surrounded*), a city of Macedonia, called also Chrysopolis, through which Paul and Silas passed on their way to Thessalonica, after their escape from imprisonment at Philippi. (Acts xvii. 1.) It is said that Paul did not stay at Amphipolis, because there was no synagogue there.

ANANIAS (*the cloud of the Lord*)—(1) a son of Nebedæus, and a high priest of the Jews, A. D. 59. When Paul was brought before him by Claudius Lysias, his ignominious treatment of the Apostle met with a very severe rebuke from Paul, who excused himself by alleging that he was ignorant of his office. (Acts xxiii. 1-5.) He went to Cesarea to accuse Paul before Felix (Acts xxiv. 1), and at last was killed by a seditious faction, headed by his own son, at the commencement of the Jewish wars.

—(2) one of the first Christians of Jerusalem; but from attempting, in conjunction with his wife *Sapphira*, to defraud the Apostles, and lie to the Holy Ghost, they were both struck dead at Peter's feet. (Acts v. 1-5.)

—(3) a disciple of Christ at Damascus, directed by the Lord in a vision to visit Saul, who had just arrived in the city after his conversion. (Acts ix. 10.) Knowing Saul's late proceedings he was afraid (verse 13); but being a second time enjoined, he proceeded, and after restoring his sight, baptized him (verse 15-20; Acts xxii. 12); he is thought to have been one of the *seventy* disciples, and to have become bishop of Damascus, in which city he died a martyr, by order of Licinius (or Lucianus) the governor.

ANDREW (*strong man*), one of the twelve Apostles. (See Appendix A.)

ANNA (*gracious, merciful*), a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (Aser), and a widow of 84 years of age; coming into the temple at the presentation of the Lord, where Simon was offering up his hymn of thanksgiving, she also gave thanks unto God, and spake of the Lord to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. (Luke ii. 36-38.)

ANNAS (*answering, merciful, afflicting*), called also *Ananus* by Josephus, was high priest of the Jews under Quirinus, the governor of Syria; he was deprived by Valerius Gratus, the successor of Quirinus; still, however, retaining the title of high priest; and when his son-in-law, Caiaphas (or Joseph) obtained the dignity a few days after, which he held from A. D. 26 to A. D. 35, Annas acted as his sagan or deputy, and possessed considerable influence both over his son-in-law and over the people. Our Lord, when betrayed, was brought before him (Luke iii. 2; John xviii. 13-24); and at a subsequent period he encouraged the persecution of the Apostles. (Acts iv. 6.)

ANTIOCH (*for, or against a wagon*)—(1) the capital of Syria, founded by Seleucus Nicanor, B. C. 301, and named Antioch in honor of his father, Antiochus. It was the birth-place of *Luke* and *Theophilus*; and here Paul and Barnabas preached (Acts xi. 19, 20, 22, xiv. 26, xv. 22, 35); and it was the center of Paul's movements. It is also noted as the first place where the disciples of our Lord were called CHRISTIANS. (Acts xi. 26.) It subsequently suffered much from earthquakes, and is now but a trifling place, known as *Antakia*.

— (2) the capital of Pisidia in Asia Minor, founded by the same Seleucus, where Paul and Barnabas preached, but from which they were driven out by a tumult of the Jews. (Acts xiii. 14.)

ANTIPAS HEROD. See HEROD.

ANTIPATRIS (*for, or against a father*), a small town on the road from Jerusalem to Cesarea, rebuilt by Herod, and so called in honor of his father, Antipater; about 18 miles from Joppa, and 40 from Jerusalem. Paul passed through it when taken a prisoner to Cesarea. (Acts xxiii. 31.)

APOLLONIA (*destruction*), a city of Macedonia between Amphipolis and Thessalonica; through which Paul passed when going to the latter place through Philippi. (Acts xvii. 1.)

APOLLOS (*Apollonius, a destroyer*), a Jew of Alexandria, learned in the Scriptures, and an eloquent preacher of the Gospel; first at Ephesus, where he arrived in the absence of Paul about A. D. 57, and at which time he was only acquainted with John's baptism, yet still with the truth that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts xviii. 24); but he became better informed by the teaching of Aquila and his wife Priscilla (Acts xviii. 25-28), after which he went to Corinth, where his eloquence and philosophic arguments produced such an effect as to create a party in the Corinthian Church, which Paul cautioned those believers to guard against, and not to boast themselves as disciples either of Paul, or of Apollos, or of Cephas, *but of Christ*. He subsequently left Corinth for Ephesus to meet Paul, who particularly urged him to return to Corinth, after which out of regard for him the Apostle recommended him to the friendly consideration of Titus. What ultimately became of him is not known.

APOSTLES (*a messenger*), those commissioned by Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel; appointed (Matt. x. 1; Mark iii. 13; Luke vi. 13); commissioned (Matt. x. 1, xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15); sent forth (Matt. x. 5; Mark vi. 7; Luke ix. 1); their power to bind and loose (Matt. xviii. 18; John xx. 23); to perform great works (John xiv. 12); witnesses of our Lord's resurrection (Acts i. 22.) (See Appendix A.)

APPII FORUM, a forum or market town built by Appius Claudius, about 50 miles from Rome. (Acts xxviii. 15.)

AQUILA (*an eagle*), a Jew, born at Pontus in Asia Minor, and who resided in Rome, till the edict of Claudius compelled him with his wife Priscilla to quit that city; whence he retired to Corinth. While here, Paul for some time took up his abode in his house, both being tent-makers (Acts xviii. 2, 3, 26), and by the Apostle's teaching Aquila and his wife were converted to Christianity. When Paul left Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied him to Ephesus, where he left them to improve that Church during his absence at Jerusalem. They were instrumental in saving Paul's life, but whether it was when the Apostle was brought before Gallio at Corinth (Acts xviii. 12), or in the tumult at Ephesus excited by Demetrius (Acts xix. 24), is not known. They subsequently went to Rome, as we find Paul saluting them in his epistle to the Romans, A. D. 58, and afterward returned to Ephesus about A. D. 65; as he salutes them again in his Epistle to Timothy, who was then at Ephesus; what became of them after this is not known.

ARABIA, an extensive country of Asia, lying between Syria, Palestine, the Arabian and Persian Gulfs, and the Indian Ocean. Its inhabitants are descended from the Ishmaelites, and some of them were in Jerusalem at the noted day of Pentecost, and heard the Apostles preach (Acts ii. 11); hither Paul retired after his conversion, a short period for study and reflection; some indeed say for *three* years; he probably did not go far from Damascus.

ARAM (*highness, deceiving*), a progenitor of Joseph, the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 3; Luke iii. 33.)

ARCHELAUS (*praise of the people*), the son of Herod the Great, by Malthace; on the death of his father the people proclaimed him king, but his brother Herod Antipas having disputed his title before Augustus, the Emperor allowed him only a half of his inheritance, and the title of Ethnarch instead of King. The cruelty of his government, however, lost him even that; after holding it but seven years, and on being called to Rome to answer for his mal-administration, he was banished to Vienne in Gaul, where he died. He was reigning in Judea on the return of the Holy Family from Egypt. (Matt. ii. 22.)

AREOPAGUS (*hill of Mars*), a tribunal or supreme council of magistrates in the middle of the city of Athens, on the summit of the Hill of Mars, whence its name, and opposite to the Acropolis or citadel, and before which Paul was brought "as a setter forth of strange gods." (Acts xvii. 19-33.) It is said to have been instituted by Cecrops, the founder of the city.

ARETAS (*virtuous*, or from the Arabic *Al Harath*, a name common to Arabian kings). A king of Petra in Arabia Petrea, including eventually Damascus and the country round; he was father-in-law to Herod Antipas, against whom he levied war because of his repudiating his daughter. Aretas sanctioned the apprehension of Paul, whose conversion excited the Jews against him, but he escaped from Damascus by being let down from the walls in a basket. (Acts ix. 23, 24.)

ARIMATHEA (from *Ramatha*, "height"), a town about 36 miles west of Jerusalem between Lydda and Joppa, where *Joseph* the counselor lived, who begged the body of Jesus from Pilate. (Matt. xxvii. 57; Mark xv. 43; Luke xxiii. 51; John xix. 38.) It is thought to have been the same place as Rama or Ramatha.

ARISTARCHUS (*best prince*), a Macedonian of Thessalonica, and a convert to Christianity: he was a companion of Paul in many of his travels, and was almost killed in the riot at Ephesus, but made his escape with the Apostle (Acts xix. 29); whom he thence accompanied into Greece, Asia (Acts xx. 4), and finally to Rome (Acts xxvii. 2); where he suffered imprisonment with the Apostle, and was beheaded at the same time.

ARPHAXAD (*healing*), a progenitor of Abraham and of Christ. (Luke iii. 36.)

ASA (*a physician*), son and successor of Abijam on the throne of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 7, 8.)

ASIA, which in the New Testament implies Asia Minor, included the regions of Bithynia, Cappadocia, Caria, Cilicia, Galatia, Lycaonia, Lycia, Lydia, Mysia, Pamphylia, Paphlagonia, Phrygia, Pisidia, Pontus; and the islands of Cyprus and Rhodes; also the *seven churches* of Ephesus, Laodicea, Pergamos, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna and Thyatira. (Acts vi. 9, xvi. 6, xix. 10, 26, 31, xx. 16, 18, xxvii. 2.)

ASSOS (*drawing near to*), a sea-port town of Mysia, some say of Troas, whence Paul proceeded with Luke and others to Mitylene; Assos was about midway between the latter place and the city of Troas. (Acts xx. 13, 14.)

ATHENS (*without increase, of Minerva*), a celebrated city of Greece, and the capital of Achaia, noted for its population, wealth, magnificence, philosophy and the fine arts; as well as for its idolatry. Paul visited it about A. D. 52, and "preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." The Epicureans and the Stoics, after disputing with him, brought him before the judges of the Areopagus, accusing him of being "a setter forth of strange gods." Paul defended himself, and having observed an altar bearing the inscription "To the Unknown God," he unfolded to them in a most powerful argument the living and true God, whom they had hitherto been "ignorant of" (Acts xvii. 15-33.) Many of his hearers were converted, among whom was Dionysius, the Areopagite, who is said to have ultimately become bishop of Athens; also a woman named Damaris, and others (Acts xvii. 34; xviii. 1.)

ATTALIA (*Attaleia, increasing*), a sea-port of Pamphylia, founded by Attalus, King of



Pergamos, whence its name: hither Paul and Barnabas came from Perga, and preached the Gospel about A. D. 47 (Acts xiv. 25), on their return to Antioch at the close of Paul's first missionary journey.

AUGUSTUS CÆSAR, (*Octavius*) Emperor of Rome, in the 40th year of whose reign, A. U. C. 750, B. C. 4, JESUS CHRIST was born at Bethlehem, in Judea; reckoning, that is, from his alliance with Antony and Lepidus in the Triumvirate, B. C. 43. He commanded the enrollment to be made, which brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. (Luke ii. 1; Acts xxv. 21, 25, xxvii. 1.)

AZOR (*helper, entry*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 13, 14.)

AZOTUS (*inclination, leaning*), in Hebrew, and in the Old Testament, *Ashdod*: a city 30 miles north of Gaza, on the Mediterranean, where Philip was found after baptizing the Ethiopian Eunuch: (Acts viii. 40.)

BABYLON. (Matt. i. 11, 17; Acts vii. 43.)

BAR, in the composition of names, implies the "*son of*," as *Bar-Jesus*, son of Jesus; *Bar-Jonas*, son of Jonas.

BARABBAS (*son of confusion*), a thief and murderer, released instead of Jesus. (Matt. xxvii. 17, 21; Mark xv. 11; Luke xxiii. 18; John xviii. 40.)

BAR-JESUS (*son of Jesus*), a Jewish magician of the island of Cyprus (Crete); who, trying to prevent Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, from embracing Christianity at the preaching of Barnabas and Paul, was severely rebuked and struck blind by Paul, (Acts xiii. 6-11.) Luke gives him the Arabic name of *Elymas*, which means the *sorcerer*, or *Wise-man*. (Acts xiii. 8.)

BAR-JONA (*the son of a dove, or of Jonas*), an appellation given to Peter, indicating him to be the son of Jona, or Jonas. (Matt. xvi. 17; John i. 42; xxi. 17.)

BARNABAS, (*son of consolation*), a surname given to *Joses*, a Levite of the island of Cyprus, and probably after his conversion, when he sold his possessions and laid the money at the Apostles' feet. (Acts iv. 36.) He is said to have studied under Gamaliel, when he acquired an intimacy with Saul, which will account for Barnabas introducing him to the Apostles as lately converted to Christianity, when they avoided him at the time he visited Jerusalem because of his former hatred to the cause, A. D. 37. (Acts ix. 26, 27.) Barnabas, five years after was sent by the Apostle to Antioch, to strengthen the disciples there (Acts xi. 22); and finding the numbers increasing, he went to Tarsus, and brought back Saul to assist him. (Acts. xi. 25.) He next, in company with Saul, took to Jerusalem the subscriptions of the brethren of Antioch for the poor saints in Judea, A. D. 44. (Acts xi. 30); and when they had returned, having his nephew John Mark with him (Acts xii. 25), he and Mark afterward accompanied Saul on his first *Apostolic Journey*, A. D. 45 (Acts xiii. 1, 2, 50); while at Lystra, Barnabas was taken for *Jupiter* (Acts xiv. 12); at length they returned to Antioch; shortly after, Barnabas with Paul and Titus were sent to Jerusalem to consult the Apostles on the subject of circumcision (Acts xv. 2, 12), and Barnabas, with Silas and others, took back the decision of the Council, A. D. 50-1. It was not long, however, before he was led by Peter into some error on this very point, which brought upon him the reproof Paul. And at the next journey of the latter, Paul having objected to Mark accompanying them, Barnabas separated from him and journeyed with his nephew to Cyprus. (Acts xv. 35-39.) This step did not lose him the friendship of Paul, for the Apostle makes kind mention of him in his Epistle to the Corinthians. What became of Barnabas after this is not known; according to Baronius he was stoned to death at Salamis, in Cyprus.

BARSABAS (*son of rest, or of the oath*)—(1) surnamed *Justus*, the unsuccessful candidate for the Apostleship vacant by the falling away of Judas Iscariot. (Acts i. 23.) The lot fell upon Matthias. (Acts i. 26.) He is said to have been one of the Seventy.

—(2) the surname of *Judas*, one of the chief disciples of Jerusalem, sent with Barnabas and Silas to Antioch, to carry the decree of the council. (Acts xv. 22.)

**BARTHOLOMEW** (*a son that suspends the waters, son of Ptolemy*), one of the twelve Apostles. (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 14; Acts i. 13; see Appendix A.)

**BARTIMEUS** (*son of blindness*), the son of Timæus, a blind beggar of Jericho, cured by our Lord. (Matt. xx. 30; Mark x. 46.)

**BEELZEBUB**, or *Belzebub* (*lord of flies*), the same as Baalzebul, a name of a Phœnician idol, worshipped at Ekron, and said to preserve the people from the flies or mosquitoes, with which that region was troubled; but why applied by the Jews in our Saviour's time to Satan, "the prince of the devils," is not known. (Matt. x. 25, xii. 24; Mark iii. 22; Luke xi. 15-19.)

**BEREA** (*heavy*), a city of Macedonia, where Paul preached with much success on leaving Thessalonica. (Acts xvii. 10-14, xx. 4.)

**BERNICE** (*the weight of victory*), daughter of Agrippa I., king of the Jews, and sister of Agrippa II., with whom she eventually lived in incest. She first was married to Mark, son of Alexander Lysimachus, alabarch of Alexander; afterward to her own uncle Herod, king of Chalcis; and at his death to Polemon (Polemo II.), king of Pontus and Cilicia. It was not long, however, before she quitted her last husband, and returned to her brother Agrippa, with whom she lived as just observed. Bernice was with Agrippa at Cesarea staying with Festus, and when Paul was brought before him, (Acts xxv. 13-27, xxvi. 30.)

**BETHABARA** (*house of passage*), a village beyond Jordan at the common *ford* of that river where John baptized. (John i. 28.) It is by some critics considered the same as *Bethania* or *Bethany*.

**BETHANY** (*house of song or affliction*)—(1) a town at the foot of the Mount of Olives, fifteen furlongs east of Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho, where Lazarus, and his sisters, Martha and Mary, dwelt. (Matt. xxi. 17; John xi. 1, 18, xii. 1.) Also Simon, the leper, at whose house Jesus was anointed (Matt. xxvi. 6, 7; Mark xi. 1, 12); and from the neighborhood of which Christ ascended into heaven. (Luke xxiv. 50.)

—(2) also, a village on the east side of Jordan, the same as *Bethabara*.

**BETHESDA** (*house of mercy*), a celebrated pool near the sheep market in Jerusalem, having five porches round it, and noted for its medicinal virtues. (John v. 2.)

**BETHLEHEM** (*house of bread*), a city of Judah, six miles south of Jerusalem, on the road to Hebron. It was also called "*Bethlehem Ephratah*" (Mi. v. 2), to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in Zebulun, in lower Galilee (Josh. xix. 15; Judg. xii. 10.) It is renowned as the birth-place of the SAVIOUR of the world, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. (Matt. ii. 1, 5, 6; John vii. 42.) It is also called "*the City of David*," because David was likewise born here. (Luke ii. 4-15.) Herod put to death its male children of two years old and under. (Matt. ii. 16.)

**BETHPHAGE** (*house of figs*), a small village at the foot of the Mount of Olives, between Bethany and Jerusalem, in the lands of which figs were cultivated. (Matt. xxi. 1; Mark xi. 1; Luke xix. 29.)

**BETHSAIDA** (*house of fruits*)—(1) a town of Galilee on the western shore of the Lake of Tiberias (Sea of Galilee). The Apostles Peter, Andrew and Philip, were of this place (John i. 44, xii. 21), but as it profited not from our Lord's ministry, who frequently visited it, and even cured a blind man there (Mark viii. 22), He denounced a woe against it. (Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13.) Philip the Tetrarch enlarged the town, and called it "*Julia*," in honor of the daughter of the Emperor Augustus.

—(2) a town on the eastern side of the Lake of Tiberias, in the district of Gaulonitis, over which Philip was tetrarch. (Luke iii. 1.) To a desert-place near here Jesus retired at one time (Luke ix. 10); and at a subsequent period He is said to have taken ship from this place to Capernaum. (Matt. xiv. 22-34; Mark vi. 45; John vi. 17.)

This town was enlarged by Philip, and called "*Julius*," for the same reason as the other Bethsaida.

**BYTHNIA** (*violent precipitation*), a province of Asia Minor, on the shore of the Euxine Sea, opposite to Constantinople, and some time under the government of Pliny. (Acts xv. 7.)

**BLASTUS** (*one who brings forth*), a chamberlain to Herod, king of Judea. (Acts xii. 20.)

**BOANERGES** (*sons of thunder*), a name given by our Lord to *James* and *John*, the sons of Zebedee (Mark iii. 17); because of their requesting Christ to call fire down from heaven on certain villages of the Samaritans that had refused to entertain Him. (Luke ix. 53, 54.) The name was probably prophetic of their zeal and power in preaching the Gospel.

**BOAZ**, or *Booz* (*strength*), son of Salmon and Rahab, and the husband of Ruth. A progenitor also of our Lord. (Matt. i. 5; Luke iii. 32.)

**CÆSAR** (*cut or gash*), a general name applied to the Roman emperors. (Matt. xxii. 17, 21; Mark xii. 14, 17; Luke xx. 22, xxiii. 2; John xix. 12, 15; Acts xvii. 7, xxv. 8, 11, 21, xxvi. 32, xxvii. 24, xxviii. 19; Phil. iv. 22.) To Augustus. (Luke ii. 1.) To Tiberius. (Luke iii. 1.) To Claudius. (Acts xi. 28.)

**CAIAPHAS** (*a searcher*), also named *Joseph*, was a Sadducee, and the high-priest of the Jews at the time of Christ's crucifixion. He was the son-in-law of *Annas* (or *Ananus*). He urged that Jesus should be put to death (John xi. 49, xviii. 13, 14, 28), and was the chief instrument in effecting it. (Matt. xxvi. 3, 57; Mark xiv. 53; Luke iii. 2; xxii. 54.)

**CAINAN** (*possessor, one who laments*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 36, 37.)

**CALVARY** (*a skull, calvus, a bald pate*), *the place of a skull*, the same as the Hebrew word *Golgotha*. It was a little hill of a skull-like form, north-west of Jerusalem, just without the walls, and upon which CHRIST was crucified. (Luke xxiii. 33.) Criminals were usually executed there, it is supposed.

**CANA** (*zeal*), a town of Galilee in the tribe of Zebulun, 6 miles north-east of Nazareth, and 16 north-west of the Lake of Tiberias. Here our Lord performed His first miracle of turning water into wine (John ii. 1-11), and likewise His second, of healing a nobleman's son of Capernaum. (John iv. 46-54; xxi. 2.)

**CANDACE** (*pure possession*), a queen of Ethiopia, whose eunuch was converted by Philip. (Acts viii. 27.) Candace was the name of the dynasty, not of an individual.

**CAPERNAUM** (*city of comfort or consolation*; from *Caphar* "village," and *Nahum*, "a comforter"); a town on the borders of Zebulun and Nephthalim, on the western shores of the Sea of Galilee, and which our Lord made the usual place of His abode, hence called, "His own city." (Matt. iv. 13, 14, viii. 5; Mark i. 21; John ii. 12.) Here Christ performed many mighty works (Mark ii. 1-12; John iv. 46, vi. 17, 24, 59)—and from the great infidelity of the people denounced a woe against it. (Matt. xi. 23; Luke x. 15.) In the neighborhood was Matthew's receipt of custom, whence he was called to be a disciple. (Matt. ix. 1, 9.)

**CAPPADOCIA** (*an apple, a violet*), a region of Asia Minor, having Pontes on the north, the Euphrates on the east, Galatia on the west, and Lycaonia on the south. People from this country were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 9.)

**CEDRON** (*turbid*), a brook in Palestine (John xviii. 1), called also **KIDRON**; which see.

**CENCHREA** (*millet*), the seaport of Corinth, whence Paul sailed to Ephesus. (See Acts xviii. 8.)

**CEPHAS** (*a stone*), the name given by our Lord to Peter. (John i. 42.)

**CESAREA** (*bush of hair*), a maritime city on the shores of the Mediterranean, 62 miles north-west of Jerusalem, anciently the tower of Strato; when beautified and enlarged by Herod the Great, he named it *Cesarea* in honor of the emperor Augustus; it was the place of residence of the Roman proconsul. (Acts viii. 40, ix. 30, xviii. 22.)

**PHILIPPI**, a town near the source of the Jordan, about a day's journey from Sidon, and a day and a half from Damascus. It was beautiful and almost rebuilt by Philip the Tetrarch, who named it *Cesarea* in honor of the emperor, Tiberius, and *Philippi* was added to distinguish it from the other *Cesarea*. Our Lord visited its neighborhood (Matt. xvi. 13), and while there healed the woman troubled with an issue of blood. (Mark v. 25.)

**CHALDEANS** (*robbers, fields*), the people whence Abraham came. (Acts vii. 4.)

**CHARRAN** (*a calling out*), the country of Mesopotamia, whence Abraham came. (Acts vii. 2.)

**CHIOS** (*open*), or Coos, an island off the coast of Asia Minor, near Lesbos. Paul passed it as he journeyed from Mitylene, toward Samos. (Acts xx. 15.)

**CHORAZIN** (*the secret*), a town near Capernaum on the western coast of the Sea of Galilee; against the inhabitants of which a woe was denounced by our Lord on account of their impenitence. (Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13.)

**CHRIST** (*anointed*.)

**CHUZA**, or *Chusa* (*a seer*), a steward to Herod Agrippa, and husband of Joanna. (Luke viii. 3.)

**CILICIA** (*which turns over*), a country of Asia Minor, bordering on the Mediterranean, and north of Cyprus. Its chief town was *Tarsus*, the native place of Saul. (Acts xx. 39, xxii. 3, xxiii. 34.) The men of this country disputed with Stephen (Acts vi. 9.) Subsequently they were visited by Barnabas and Paul, and Silas. (Acts xv. 23, 41, xxvii. 5; Gal. i. 21.)

**CLAUDA** (*lamentable voice*), a small island near the south-west coast of Crete. (Acts xxvii. 16.)

**CLAUDIA** (*lame*), a pious Roman lady, a convert of Paul's, and thought to be the wife of Pudens; some say a British lady, and sister of Linus. (2 Tim. iv. 21.)

**CLAUDIUS CÆSAR**, the fifth emperor of Rome. In the fourth year of his reign the famine predicted by Agabus occurred. (Acts xi. 28.) In the ninth, he banished all the Jews from Rome. (Acts xviii. 2.)

— **LYSIAS**, the Roman tribune commanding the guard in Jerusalem. He rescued Paul from a conspiracy of the Jews. (Acts xxi. 23.) Ordered him to be scourged (Acts xxii. 24), and afterward dispatched him with a letter to Felix. (Acts xxiii. 26.)

**CLEOPAS** or *Cleophas* (*the whole glory*, contracted from *Cleopatros*), also called *Alphæus*, was a disciple of our Lord's, and said to be the brother of Joseph, the reputed father of Christ. He married *Mary*, the sister of the Virgin (John xix. 25), and was the father of *James the Less*, of *Jude*, of *Joseph* or *Joses*, and of *Simeon*, subsequently bishop of Jerusalem. Cleopas was one of the two disciples overtaken by Jesus, while walking to Emmaus. (Luke xxiv. 18.) Cleopas is found contracted into *Clopas* (John xix. 25), which has led some critics to suppose that *Cleophas*, the disciple going to Emmaus, is not the same individual as *Clopas*, the husband of *Mary*, the Virgin's sister.

**CNIDUS**, or *Gnidus* (*age*), a city standing on a promontory of the same name in Caria, a district of Asia Minor, jutting out between Rhodes and Cos. Paul passed it on his way to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 7.)

**Coos**, or *Cos* (*top*), a small island at a little distance from the south-west point of Asia Minor, which Paul passed on his way to Jerusalem. (Acts xxi. 1.)

**CORBAN**, the Hebrew word for a gift or offering made to God; the Jews sometimes swore by it; and our Lord reproved them for cruelty to their parents in making a

*Corban* of what should have been appropriated to their necessities. (Matt. xxiii. 18; Mark vii. 11, 12.)

**CORNELIUS** (*a horn*), a Roman centurion of the Italian band, living at Cesarea, whose piety and charity were such, that it pleased God in a miraculous manner by direction of an angel (Acts x. 1-7), and through the instrumentality of Peter, to make him acquainted with the Gospel of salvation (Acts x. 25), whence he and his family received the Holy Spirit, and were baptized (Acts x. 31). He is supposed to have belonged to the great Cornelian family of the Scipios, of Sulla, and the mother of the Gracchi.

**COSAM** (*divining*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 28.)

**COUNCIL** (*the first*). Certain men coming from Judea to Antioch, taught that *salvation* was not by *faith* alone, but that, "except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved." (Acts xv. 1.) Considerable discussion arose in consequence, which ended in Paul and Barnabas, and certain others, going to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and elders about this question (Acts xv. 6); they assembled together, and thus formed what has been considered the *First Christian Council*, A. D. 49, or 50, or 51. *James* appears to have presided, and after Peter had expressed his opinion, that "only through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved," and Barnabas and Paul had followed to the same effect, speaking of the miracles and wonders wrought through them among the Gentiles, he delivered his opinion, which resulted in the *decree*, that the Gentiles needed not circumcision, nor to keep the Mosaic Law; . . . and it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, that they should "abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." (Acts xv. 23-29.) This, having been formally written out, was sent to Antioch by the hands of Paul, and Barnabas, and others, and was to be read to the various Churches.

**CREATION** effected by God (Acts xiv. 15, xvii. 24); by the Lord Jesus Christ. (John i. 3, 10; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2; Rev. iv. 11.)

**CRISPUS** (*curled*), chief ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, who was converted and baptized by Paul. (Acts xviii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 14.) Some say he became bishop of Ægina.

**CRUCIFIXION**. The charges upon which our Lord was condemned were in accordance with the tribunals before which He was arraigned. He was brought (1st) before the Jewish Sanhedrim upon a charge of *blasphemy*; "Art thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed (God)?" "Jesus said, I am." (Matt. xxvi. 63-66; Mark xiv. 61, 62.) They then adjudged Him guilty of death; but not having the power of life and death, they carried Christ before Pilate, and charged Him (2dly) with *sedition*; saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar" (Luke xxiii. 2). Pilate, however, finding no fault in Him, was anxious to release Him. (3dly) Jesus was again brought before the people, and they now accuse him of *treason* in calling Himself a King: "Art thou the king of the Jews?" said Pilate. Jesus said, "Thou sayest." (Matt. xxvii. 11; John xviii. 33-37.) But our Lord having stated His kingdom not to be of this world, Pilate again attempted to let Him go. The clamor of the Jews prevailed, and our Lord was therefore condemned to undergo the Roman punishment of crucifixion.

**CYPRUS** (*fair*), a large island in the Mediterranean Sea between Cilicia and Syria; and the native place of Barnabas (Joses). (Acts iv. 36.) Christianity was introduced here soon after the persecution following the death of Stephen. (Acts xi. 10, 20.) Here also Paul and Barnabas successfully preached the Gospel. (Acts xiii. 4, xv. 39.) At Paphos, the governor, Sergius Paulus, became a convert. (Acts xiii. 7.) Paul sailed by the island twice after this (Acts xxi. 3, xxvii. 4), and Barnabas is said to have returned here, and to have met his death by martyrdom at Salamis. *Mnason* was also a native of Cyprus. (Acts xxi. 16.)

CYRENE (*a wall, coldness*), a city in Libya in Africa; whence came *Simon*, who carried our Saviour's cross (Matt. xxvii. 32; Mark xv. 21; Luke xxiii. 26), and *Lucius* (Acts xiii. 1.) The Jews from this place had a synagogue in Jerusalem (Acts ii. 10, vi. 9), and were among the chief opponents of Stephen. (Acts xi. 20.)

CYRENIUS, or QUIRINUS, the Roman deputy of Syria. (Luke ii. 1, 2.) He is said to have been sent into Syria about A. U. C. 749, to make an enrolment of the people; and possibly was associated with *Saturninus*, the then governor; but he was not actually governor till A. U. C. 755.

DALMANUTHA (*leanness, a branch*), a city on the east of Tiberias in the district of Magdala; some say east of the sea, and some say west. (Matt. xv. 39; Mark viii. 10.)

DALMATIA (*deceitful lights*), a country of Illyricum on the gulf of Venice, where Titus preached the Gospel. (2 Tim. iv. 10.)

DAMARIS (*a little woman*), a female convert of Paul's, and thought to have been the wife of Dionysius, the Areopagite. (Acts xvii. 34.)

DAMASCUS (*a sack of blood*), a celebrated city of Syria, the oldest in the world; and tradition makes it the place where Abel was slain. It was claimed by Aretas king of Arabia. Saul came here on his persecuting errand, but was converted by the way, and on his arrival, after three days, Ananias, by direction of an angel, came to him, cured him of his blindness, and baptized him. (Acts ix., xxii. 5-13.) Paul is said to have now gone into Arabia, and on returning to Damascus, and preaching his new faith, the Jews sought his life; but he escaped by a basket down the wall. (2 Cor. xi. 32; Gal. i. 17.)

DANIEL (*judgment of God*), his prophecy about the abomination of desolation (Dan. ix. 27, xii. 11), referred to by our Lord. (Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14; Luke xxi. 20.)

DAVID (*beloved*.) Jesus Christ is frequently spoken of in the New Testament as the "Son of David." (Matt. i. 1, 6, ix. 27, xii. 23, xv. 22, xx. 30, 31, xxi. 9, xxii. 42, 45; Mark x. 47, 48, xii. 35, 37; Luke iii. 31, xviii. 38, 39, xx. 41, 44; John vii. 42; Rom. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8, &c.)

DEACONS; the seven appointed (Acts vi. 5), their duties prescribed. (1 Tim. iii. 8, 12.)

DECAPOLIS (*ten cities*), a country of Palestine containing ten principal cities on both sides of the Jordan, whence its name. (Matt. iv. 25; Mark v. 20, vii. 31.) The chief inhabitants of this district were foreigners, which will account for the abundance of swine kept amongst them. (Matt. viii. 30.) The ten cities, according to Pliny, were: 1. Scythopolis; 2. Philadelphia; 3. Raphanæ; 4. Gadara; 5. Hippos; 6. Dios; 7. Pella; 8. Gerasa; 9. Canatha; 10. Damascus.

DEMETRIUS (*belonging to Ceres, or corn*)—(1) a silversmith of Ephesus, who made little shrines, or portable models of the celebrated temple of Diana in that city. Hearing of the great progress of the Gospel, and fearing lest his trade should suffer thereby, he raised so great a tumult that Paul was compelled to leave the city. (Acts xix. 24, 38.)

DEMETRIUS (2) the elder, an eminent Christian alluded to by John. (John iii. 12.)

DERBE (*a sling*), a city of Lycaonia to which Paul and Barnabas fled when expelled from Iconium. (Acts xiv. 6.) Its site is not discoverable, but some imagine it to be *Divlè*.

DIANA (*luminous, perfect*), a celebrated goddess (of chastity) of the heathen, principally worshiped at Ephesus, where there was a most splendid and costly temple erected to her. Paul, by his preaching, made himself particularly obnoxious to her worshipers. (Acts xix. 24, 35.)

DIDYMUS (*a twin*), the surname of the Apostle, *Thomas* (John xi. 16), or the Hebrew or Syriac signification of the name *Thomas*.

DIONYSIUS (*from heaven, or moved forward*), a member of the Areopagus at Athens

whence his name of Dionysius the Areopagite, who after hearing Paul became a convert to the Gospel. (Acts xvii. 34.) He is said to have been the first bishop of Athens, and to have been burnt to death for his zeal in the faith. A. D. 95.

DORCAS (*a gazelle, or female roe*), a female convert to Christianity, the widow of Joppa, and celebrated for her alms deeds. (Acts ix. 36, 41.) Having died, she was raised to life by Peter. (Acts ix. 39, 40.) Called also *Tabitha*, which see.

DRUSILLA (*sprinkled with dew*), the third daughter of Herod Agrippa I., and sister of Bernice; she married first Epiphanes, son of Antiochus, king of Comagena: but he refusing to turn Jew, she left him and married Azizus, king of Emessa; becoming afterward attached to *Felix*, the Roman governor, she abandoned Azizus, and became the wife of the Roman.

EGYPT (*anguish*), in Hebrew, *Mizraim*, a celebrated country of Africa to which the Holy Family retired when Herod ordered the destruction of all the children of Bethlehem. (Matt. ii. 13-19.) Allusion is also made to Joseph's sojourn there after being sold by his brethren. (Acts vii. 9, 39.)

ELAMITES (*a young man, or virgin*), a name given to the country of Persia, anciently peopled by Elam, the son of Shem. Some of these people were present in Jerusalem at the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 9.)

ELEAZAR (*aid of God*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 15.)

ELIAKIM (*God ariseth*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 13; Luke iii. 30.)

ELIEZER (*help of God*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 29.)

ELIJAH, or ELIAS (*God the Lord, or a strong Lord*), a celebrated prophet of Israel, promised to be sent again before the coming of the day of the Lord. (Mal. iv. 5.) John the Baptist declared to be he. (Matt. xi. 14, xvi. 14, xvii. 3, 4, 10-13, xxvii. 47, 49; Mark vi. 15, ix. 4, 5, 11-13, xv. 35, 36; Luke i. 17, iv. 25, ix. 8, 19, 30, 33, 54; John i. 21, 25.)

ELISEUS (*my God saveth*), a name given by Luke to the prophet Elisha. (Luke iv. 27.)

ELIUD (*God of praise*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 14, 15.)

ELIZABETH (*oath or fullness of God*) the wife of Zacharias, a Jewish priest, and mother of John the Baptist. (Luke i. 5, 7, 24, 36), saluted by Mary; (Luke i. 40-45), her delivery; (Luke i. 57.)

ELMODAM (*God of measure, or of garments*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 28.)

ELYMAS (*a sorcerer, or wise man*), another name of the magician *Bar Jesus*, who resisted the preaching of Paul in Cyprus, and would have prevented the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, but he was struck blind by the Apostle. (Acts xiii. 8.) See BAR-JESUS.

EMMAUS (*fearful, counsel, hot baths*), a village seven or eight miles north-west of Jerusalem, celebrated for the conversation of our Lord on the evening of His resurrection, with two disciples walking thither. (Luke xxiv. 13.)

ENEAS, or ÆNEAS (*praised*), a man who was miraculously healed of the palsy by Peter when at Lydda. (Acts ix. 33, 34.)

ENOCH (*taught*), the father of Methuselah, translated to heaven on account of his great faith. (Heb. xi. 5.) He prophesied the judgments of God upon sinners. (Jude 14, 15), where he is said to have written a book of prophecies, but this is only conjecture; he was a progenitor of our Lord. (Luke iii. 37.)

ENON, or ENON (*a cloud, or well*), a place near Salim by the river Jordan where John baptized, because there was much water there. (John iii. 23.) It was eight miles south of Scythopolis.

ENOS (*desperation*), son of Seth, and progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 38.)

EPIHESUS (*desirable*), formerly one of the most celebrated cities of Asia Minor, noted for its temple of Diana, one of "the seven wonders of the world." Paul preached there for three years, but the tumult of Demetrius and the craftsmen compelled him to leave. (Acts xviii. 19, 24; xix. 17, 26, 35; xx. 10.)

EPIHRAIM (*increasing*), a city on the road to Jericho toward the Jordan, about eight miles from Jerusalem, whither our Saviour retired just after raising Lazarus from the dead. (John xi. 54.)

EPICUREANS, a sect of Grecian philosophers founded by Epicurus, who considered *pleasure* the chief good, and *pain* the chief evil. They held *that* the world was made not by God, but by a fortuitous concourse of atoms; *that* God concerns not Himself with its government; *that* the soul dies with the body; *that* there are no angels; *that* there is a God, but no Providence. This sect opposed Paul at Athens. (Acts xvii. 18.)

ER (*watchman*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 28.)

ERASTUS (*amiable*), the chamberlain or treasurer of the city of Corinth, (Rom. xvi. 23), an office which he resigned on being converted, and then accompanied Paul to Ephesus, whence he was sent with Timothy into Macedonia, (Acts xix. 22), and subsequently returned to Corinth. (2 Tim. iv. 20.)

ESAIAS. See ISAAH.

ESLI (*near me*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 25.)

ESROM (*dart of joy*), a descendant of Phares, and spoken of by Matthew in his genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 3; Luke iii. 33.)

ESSENES, a sect in the time of our Saviour. The name is of Egyptian origin. They differed from the Pharisees in not relying on traditions or a rigorous observance of ceremonies: and from the Sadducees in their belief of a future state; yet they pretended to great sanctity of manners, and much self-denial: the austerity and recluse life of the Essenes are thought to have given rise to monkish superstition. They are not mentioned by name in the New Testament, but they are supposed to be alluded to by Paul in Col. ii. 18, and in the Ephesians, and Epistles to Timothy. From Philo and Josephus we learn that they believed in the immortality of the soul; were absolute predestinarians; strict observers of the Sabbath; and held the Scriptures in high reverence, but neglected their plain and literal meaning, indulging in mystical and allegorical interpretations. The time of their origin is unknown.

ETHIOPIA (*burning, black*), an extensive country of Africa to the south of Egypt, (now Abyssinia) governed by Queen *Candace*, whose eunuch was instructed in the Gospel and baptized by Philip, the deacon. (Acts viii. 27.)

EUNUCHS were of various kinds, (Matt. xix. 12); the one of Ethiopia converted by Philip. (Acts viii. 27.)

EUROCLYDON (*a north-east wind*), a dangerous wind in the Levant or eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. (Acts xvii. 14.)

EUTYCHUS (*happy*), a young man of Troas, who fell from a window while Paul was preaching, and was picked up dead, but Paul restored him to life. (Acts xx. 9, 10.)

EVENING, the evening of the Jews consisted of two divisions; the *former* evening commenced at noon, as soon as the sun began to decline; the *second* or *latter* began at sunset, so that the time "between the two evenings," when the passover was slain, was about three o'clock in the afternoon.

EZEKIAS, or *Hezekiah* (*strength of the Lord*), son and successor of Ahaz, King of Judah; and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 9, 10.)

FAIR HAVENS, a place on the coast of Crete, possessing good anchorage, whence its name. (Acts xxvii. 8.)

FELIX (*happy*). Claudius Felix, the procurator of Judea, succeeded Cumanus, and



meeting with *Drusilla*, the sister of Agrippa, he persuaded her to leave her husband Azizus, king of Emessa, and then took her as his own wife. Paul was sent a prisoner to him (Acts xxiii. 24, 26, 33), and on arriving at Cesarea, the Apostle was brought before him and partially examined. (Acts xxiv. 3-23.) After a few days, he was brought before Felix again, and his wife Drusilla, and in his defense Paul preached so forcibly of Jesus Christ and judgment to come, that Felix trembled (Acts xxiv. 24, 25); hoping, however, to receive money for his release, he detained the Apostle two years in prison, till his government was superseded by the arrival of *Portius Festus* (Acts xxiv. 27; xxv. 14), when Felix returned to Rome. A. D. 50.

*Festus (joyful)*. Portius Festus was the successor of Felix as procurator of Judea: three days after his arrival at Cesarea he proceeded to Jerusalem, where he was entreated by the Jews to order Paul to be brought to the latter city, intending to assassinate him by the way. (Acts xxv. 1-3.) Festus, however, desired his accusers to go back with him to Cesarea, where Paul should be examined. On his return, therefore, the Apostle was brought before him: but Paul, perceiving the design of the Jews to get him into their power, appealed unto Cæsar. (Acts xxv. 4-12.) A few days after, king Agrippa and Bernice coming to salute Festus, the latter stated Paul's case to them (Acts xxv. 14-27), and the Apostle was again brought up; by his pleading he almost persuaded Agrippa to be a Christian; and the whole company esteemed him innocent, but having appealed unto Cæsar, Festus ordered him to Rome. (Acts xxvi.) Festus died in Judea, A. D. 62, and was succeeded by *Albinus*.

*GABBATHA (high)*, a Hebrew word for "the Pavement;" an elevated place in Pilate's palace, probably a terrace or balcony, where he pronounced judgment on our Saviour. (John xix. 13.)

*GABRIEL (a man of God)*, one of the principal angels of heaven, sent formerly to Daniel (Dan. viii. 16, ix. 21, x. 16), and in later times to Zacharias, to announce to him the birth of John the Baptist (Luke i. 11-19), and six months afterward to the Virgin Mary. (Luke i. 26.)

*GADARENES (walled)*, the inhabitants of *Gadara*, a city east of Jordan and of the Sea of Tiberias in the Decapolis; here our Saviour ejected the devils out of a man, and cast them into a herd of swine. (Mark v. 1; Luke viii. 26, 37.) The lands of the Gadarenes were intersected by those of the Gergesenes. (See Matt. viii. 28.)

*GAIUS (lord, or earthly)*, one of Paul's converts, and thought to have been a Macedonian (1 Cor. i. 14), but resident at Corinth, where he entertained Paul (Rom. xvi. 23), and afterward accompanied him to Ephesus. (Acts xix. 29.) This Gaius is also thought to have been the same to whom John addressed his third epistle, and who is styled "Gaius of Derbe," in Acts xx. 4.

*GALILEE (turning, rolling)*. Galilee was a large province divided into Upper and Lower Galilee. It contained the tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, Nephthalim, Asher, and part of Dan: and was bounded by Mount Lebanon on the north, by the river Jordan and the Sea of Galilee on the east, by Chison on the south, and by the Mediterranean on the west. *Lower Galilee* contained the tribes of Zebulun and Asher. *Upper Galilee* abounded in mountains, and was termed "Galilee of the Gentiles," from possessing a mixed population of Egyptians, Arabians and Phœnicians, interspersed amongst the Jews. It is the scene of many of our Lord's miracles and teachings.

*GALILEE OF THE GENTILES*. See *GALILEE*.

*GALILEE, SEA OR LAKE OF*. A lake of Palestine (Luke v. 1), called also the "sea of Chinnereth" (Num. xxxiv. 11; Deut. iii. 17); "Chinnereth" (Josh. xi. 2), there being a town called Chinnereth near (xix. 35), and "the Sea of Tiberias." (John vi. 1.) It is now *Bahr Tubariyeh*. Anciently this lake was surrounded by busy cities; vessels crossed its waters; the sights and sounds of life were there. Now it is solitary: the cities are no

more: the fishing vessels have ceased to ply their occupation: the aspect is bleak, and the scenery monotonous. Yet, almost more than to any other spot, do the affections of the Christian heart cling to this lake. The most remarkable fact in its physical geography is its great depression. Its surface is about 650 feet (some make it as much as 845) *below* the level of the ocean. This has a marked effect on the temperature, climate, and natural products. The heat is intense during the summer months. The harvest on the shore is nearly a month earlier than on the neighboring high lands of Galilee and Bashan. Frost is unknown, and snow very rarely falls. The trees, plants, and vegetables are those usually found in Egypt, such as the palm, the lote-tree, the indigo plant, &c. Though the whole basin of the lake, and indeed the Jordan valley, is of volcanic origin, as evidenced by the thermal springs and the frequent earthquakes, yet the main formation of the surrounding wall of mountains is limestone.

GALLIO (*living on milk*), the brother of Seneca, the philosopher, and proconsul of Achaia; he resided at Corinth, where Paul was brought before him by the Jews, accused of "teaching men to worship God contrary to the Law." (Acts xviii. 12.) Gallio dismissed the charge without a hearing, declaring that he had nothing to do with disputes concerning their law (Acts xviii. 15, 16), upon which they seized *Sosthenes*, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before Gallio's face, but the proconsul troubled not himself with the matter. (Acts xviii. 17.)

GAMALIEL (*reward of God*), a celebrated Pharisee, and doctor of the law; he was the tutor of Paul (Acts xxii. 3), and it is said that Barnabas was also a pupil of his. When Peter and certain other of the Apostles had been seized and brought before the Sanhedrim for preaching in the name of Jesus, Gamaliel recommended that they should not be treated severely, which advice was followed. (Acts xxii. v. 34.)

GAZA (*strong*), a city of the ancient Philistines, which was destroyed by Alexander Jannæus, about B. C. 96. It was rebuilt by Gabinus, and conferred by Augustus upon Herod; toward this place Philip proceeded by direction of the angel when sent to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts viii. 26), and when Luke wrote, the city had again been destroyed, and was then desolate.

GENNESARET (*garden of a prince*), a name given to the Sea of Galilee. (see GALILEE), and likewise to the land adjoining it. (Matt. xiv. 34; Mark vi. 53; Luke v. 1.)

GENTILES (*"the nations"*), a name applied by the Hebrews to all who were not Jews. They are promised by the prophets to be called to the faith (Ps. ii. 8), and Paul is particularly considered the Apostle of the Gentiles (1 Tim. ii. 7), while the others were termed the Apostles of the circumcision (Gal. ii. 8). Luke, in the "Acts" usually designates the Gentiles by the name of *Grecians* and *Greeks* (Acts vi. 1, xi. 20, xviii. 4, &c.); and so does Paul in his Epistles (Rom. i. 14, 16, ii. 9, 10, x. 12; 1 Cor. i. 22, 24; Gal. iii. 28). So John in his Gospel. (John xii. 20.)

*Gate*. The entrances to walled cities in the East were, and still are, secured by gates, either of wood, iron, or brass. (Acts xii. 10.) Among the special purposes for which they were used may be mentioned: 1. As places of public resort. (Gen. xix. 1, 23, x. 24, xx. 24; 1 Sam. xiv. 18, &c.) 2. Places for public deliberation, administration of justice, or of audience for kings and rulers, or ambassadors. Deut. xvi. 18, xxi. 19, xxv. 7; Josh. xx. 4; Judg. ix. 35, &c. 3. Public markets. (2 Kings vii. 1.) In heathen towns, the open spaces near the gates appear to have been sometimes used as places for sacrifices. (Acts xiv. 13; comp. 2 Kings xxiii. 8.) The gates of the city were carefully guarded, and closed at nightfall. (Deut. iii. 5; Josh. ii. 5, 7; Judg. ix. 40, 44.)

GERGESHITES (*men from pilgrimage*), or *Gergashites*, the posterity of Canaan; a people who settled on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Decapolis. The town was called *Gergesa*, or *Geresa*, and in the same district was the city of *Gadara*, whence

the Gadarenes, and Gergesenes have been confounded one with another, so that our Lord going into the country of the Gadarenes (Mark v. 1), is the same as going into the region of the Gergesenes. (Matt. viii. 28.)

**GETHSEMANE** (*plentiful valley*, or *oil press*), a village on the Mount of Olives, whither our Saviour sometimes retired, and in a garden of which He endured His agony, and was betrayed. (Matt. xxvi. 36; Mark xiv. 32.) "The space inclosed as Gethsemane," says *Prof. Hackett*, "contains about one-third of an acre, and is surrounded by a low wall, covered with white stucco. It is entered by a gate, kept under lock and key, under the control of one of the convents at Jerusalem. The eight olive trees here are evidently very aged, most of them, though they are still verdant and productive, are so decayed that heaps of stones have been piled up against their trunks, to keep them from being blown down by the wind. . . . . Other olive trees, apparently quite as old, occur just beyond the limits of the inclosure. It may be allowed that the original garden may have been more or less extensive than the present site, or have stood a few rods farther to the north or the south, but far, certainly, from that spot, it need not be supposed to have been."

**GOLGOTHA** (the Hebrew word for the *place of a skull*, the same as *Calvary*, which see). Here our Saviour was crucified. (Matt. xxvii. 33; Mark xv. 22; John xix. 17.)

**GOMORRAH** (*rebellious people*), or *Gomorraha*, one of the cities destroyed by fire in the time of Lot; their fate a warning to others. (Matt. x. 15; Mark vi. 11.)

**GREECE**. A large country in the south of Europe; in its more extended sense it includes Ionia, and Asia Minor. Paul's visit was to Greece Proper. (Acts xx. 2.) Its inhabitants were called Grecians. (Acts vi. 1, ix. 29, xi. 20.)

**GREEK**, a term in the New Testament implying a *Gentile* (which see), and who was, or was not, a proselyte to Judaism, or converted to Christianity. (Mark vii. 26; John vii. 35, xii. 20; Acts xiv. 1, xvi. 1, xvii. 4, 12, xviii. 4, 17, xix. 10, 17, xx. 21, xxi. 28.) A *Grecian* was a *Hellenistic* or Grecizing Jew, who held to the Septuagint Scriptures (Acts vi. 1, ix. 29), and of Alexandrian rather than Babylonian sympathies (see "*Hebrew*").

**HEBER** (*companion*), a progenitor of Abraham, and of Christ. (Luke iii. 35.)

**HEBREW**. A *Hebrew* was a direct descendant from Abraham, educated in Judea, well versed in the learning and traditions of his forefathers, and conversant with the Hebrew tongue (Acts xxi. 40, xxii. 2, xxvi. 14), and holding to the Targums and Chaldee paraphrases of the Scriptures. They were the *Aramæan* Jews who resided in the region of the Tigris and Euphrates, and in Syria and Palestine. In one sense, therefore, the Hebrew was more esteemed than the *Hellenists*.

**HELI** (*ascending*), the father, or rather the *father-in-law* of Joseph, the husband of Mary. (Luke iii. 23.)

**HELLENISTIC JEWS**, were those Jews not purely descended from the stock of Abraham; and who adopted Grecian habits, and spoke the Greek tongue according to the Hebrew idiom, whence their name of *Hellenists* or *Grecians* (Acts vi. 1), as opposed to the pure *Hebrews*, and the pure *Greeks* or *Hellenes*; and their language was called *Hellenistic Greek*, which is the language of the New Testament. They came from the "dispersed Jews" of Alexandria; as the Hebrews from those of Babylonia and Mesopotamia.

**HERMON**. Called Great Hermon, north-east of Gennesaret, is considered by many as the most probable locality of the scene of the Transfiguration of our Lord. "It is impossible," says *Stanley*, "to look up from the plain to the towering peaks of Hermon, almost the only mountain which deserves the name in Palestine, and not be struck with its appropriateness to the scene. That magnificent height, mingling with all the views of Northern Palestine, from Shechem upward, though often alluded to as the northern barrier of the Holy Land, is connected with no historical event in the Old or New Testament. Yet this fact of its rising high above all the other hills of Pal-

tine, and of its setting the last limit to the wanderings of Him who was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, concurs with the supposition which the words of the Scripture narrative inevitably force upon us. High up on its southern slopes there must be many a point where the disciples could be taken 'apart by themselves.' Even the transient comparison of the celestial splendor with the snow, where alone it could be seen in Palestine, should not, perhaps, be wholly overlooked."

HEROD THE GREAT (*mount of pride*), was an Idumean, and the son of Antipater and Cypros; by skillful management he obtained from Mark Antony the kingdom of Judea, B. C. 36; and to conciliate the Jews, he divorced his wife *Doris*, and united himself to *Mariamne* of the royal family of the Asmoneans; but he maintained himself upon the throne by the most atrocious cruelty and bloodshed. On the fall of his patron Antony Herod judiciously secured the friendship of Augustus (Octavius), by whom he was confirmed in the possession of his kingdom. The jealousy, however, of the king, and his remorse of conscience, made him suspicious of all around him; his wife, whom he loved to extravagance, he ordered to execution, as he had lately done her father and her brothers; and not long after, her mother shared the same fate. Herod next cast aside the mask of religion, and attempted to uproot the prejudices of the Jews in favor of the Mosaic Law, and make them conform to the customs of heathen nations; this design of Romanizing Judea generated the hatred of the Jews against his rule; conspiracies were plotted against his life, which he frustrated by redoubled watchfulness, and a most rigid system of police; at length, thinking it better to endeavor to quiet the indignation of the Jews, and yield in some measure to their religious prejudices, he undertook to rebuild the Temple on a scale of great magnificence. The dreadful troubles, however, which continued to arise from the dissensions in Herod's family, hastened him to the grave, and were such as scarcely to find a parallel in history. His two sons by *Mariamne*, Alexander and Aristobulus, were accused of conspiring for the crown, and were immediately put to death; another son, named Antipater, soon after formed a like design, and met a similar fate; five days after which, *Herod*, who had been a long time ill with a most excruciating disease, himself died in the 37th year of his reign. Just before the execution of Antipater, our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST was born (Matt. ii. 1); an event which created great anxiety in the mind of Herod (Matt. ii. 3); on the visit of the Magi, he endeavored through them to find out where the infant Jesus was, that he might destroy Him (Matt. ii. 7, 8); but the Magi, under the guidance of a Superior Power, frustrated his design; in a moment of rage, therefore, he ordered all the male children of Bethlehem of two years old and under to be put to death, thus hoping to secure the death of our Saviour (Matt. ii. 16); but the Holy family had retired into Egypt, and escaped his murderous design, and soon after *Herod* died as above stated; and Archelaus, his son, reigned in his stead.

HEROD AGRIPPA I. (*sick, sorrowful*), the son of *Aristobulus*, and grandson of Herod the Great, was brought up at the court of Rome; on leaving Rome, his uncle Herod Antipas supplied him with funds, till his great extravagance compelled his uncle to withhold his liberality. Agrippa then borrowed large sums of money from the Jews, and returned to the court of Tiberius, the emperor; but he had not been long here before he was accused of having absconded from Judea with money out of the imperial exchequer. By the assistance of the Empress Antonia, Agrippa appeased the anger of Tiberius. Shortly after, however, Caligula succeeded to the empire, and invested Agrippa with the tetrarchy of Batanea and Trachonitis, which his uncle Philip had possessed, and likewise with the tetrarchy of Lysanias. Claudius, the succeeding emperor, gave him in addition Judea and Samaria. At length, with a view of gratifying the Jews, he began to persecute the Church of Christ (Acts xii. 1); he put to death James the Apostle (Acts xii. 2), and imprisoned Peter (Acts xii. 3, 4); but the hand of retributive justice overtook him, for shortly after, proceeding to Cesarea to hold certain

games in honor of Claudius, the applause and impious adoration of the people led him to forget the existence of a Supreme Being, and in a moment an angel smote him with disease, because he gave not God the glory; and in the course of five days, racked with torturing pains, he was eaten up of worms, and died. (Acts xii. 20-23.)

HEROD AGRIPPA II. was the son of the above, and called simply "Agrippa;" he was staying at the court of Claudius at the time of his father's death; where he was detained a few years, the emperor sending Cuspius Fadus into Judea to direct the government. On the death, however, of his uncle *Herod*, king of Chaleis, Claudius bestowed on Agrippa his dominions, A. D. 48; and four years afterward, A. D. 52-3, annexed to them the provinces of Gaulanitus, Trachonitis, Batanæa, Paneas and Abilene which had formerly belonged to Lysanias. Nero, the successor of Claudius, gave him still further Julius in Persæa, and Tarichæa and Tiberias in Galilee. A little before this, when Festus was governor of Judea, Agrippa, and Bernice his sister, who lived with him in a state of incest, went to Cesarea to salute him (Acts xxv. 13); while there, Festus spoke of the imprisonment of Paul (Acts xxv. 14-27); and Agrippa being anxious to hear him, the Apostle was brought forth; after hearing his history and defense (Acts xxvi.), Paul by the force of his argument almost persuaded Agrippa "to be a Christian" (Acts xxvi. 28), and at the conclusion Agrippa said, that "the prisoner might have been set at liberty, had he not appealed to Cæsar." (Acts xxvi. 32.) After some years, A. D. 66, the rebellion of the Jews broke out, when Agrippa was compelled to unite his forces with those of the Romans, and after the fall of Jerusalem he retired to Rome with his sister, where he died, about A. D. 90.

HEROD ANTIPAS, (*for, or against all*), was the son of Herod the Great, by *Cleopatra*, of Jerusalem: he succeeded to a portion of his father's dominions, as tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. (Luke iii. 1.) In honor of Julia, the wife of the emperor Augustus, he called Bethsaida *Julius*; and in honor of Tiberius he called the sea of Cinnereth the "*Sea of Tiberias*." Antipas first married the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, but he soon divorced her for *Herodias*, his brother Philip's wife. (Matt. xiv. iii.) For this incestuous proceeding John the Baptist reprovèd him. (Matt. xiv. 4.) Antipas therefore, instigated by Herodias, imprisoned John, and eventually ordered him to be beheaded. (Matt. xiv. 5-11; Mark vi. 14, 17, 18; Luke iii. 19, 20, ix. 7, 9.) The fame of Jesus reaching the ears of Antipas, he thought John had risen from the dead (Matt. xiv. 1); and he is said to have sought the death of our Lord (Luke xiii. 31); but when Christ was sent before him by Pilate to be examined he found no fault in Him: (Luke xxiii. 7-15.) Subsequently, Antipas was accused to Tiberius of having joined the conspiracy of Sejanus against the emperor, and of succoring the Parthians, the enemies of Rome; he was accordingly banished to Lyons in Gaul, where he died.

— PHILIP (*lover of horses, a warrior*), the tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonitis (Luke iii. 1), is thought by some to have been the first husband of Herodias, who left him to live with his brother Herod Antipas. (Matt. xiv. 3; Mark vi. 17; Luke iii. 19.) Most critics, however, on the authority of Josephus, take Philip, *the tetrarch* (Luke iii. 1), to be a different person from Philip, *the husband of Herodias* (Luke iii. 19, &c.); the tetrarch they imagine to have been the son of Herod the Great by *Malthæe* (others say by *Cleopatra*), and the husband of Herodias to have been a son of *Mariamne* (daughter of Simon the high priest), and this *Mariamne* having been discovered plotting against Herod was divorced, and her son Philip disinherited. The pride and ambition therefore of Herodias not relishing this disgrace, she abandoned Philip, and married Herod Antipas. Herod Philip, *the tetrarch*, the same critics observe, married *Salome*, the daughter of Herodias; and, they say, that the "Philip" of the Evangelists is the "Herod son of *Mariamne*" of Josephus; a private individual different from Philip the tetrarch. Philip the tetrarch was a very amiable prince, and much beloved by his subjects; he

enlarged and beautified the city of Paneas, and in honor of Tiberias called it *Cesarea* (Cesarea Philippi.)

HERODIANS, a sect of the Jews in the time of our Lord, and rather of a political than a religious character (Matt. xxii. 16; Mark iii. 6, xii. 13); according to Tertullian and others, they took their name from believing Herod to be the Messiah, and who was to raise the country to the highest pitch of glory; but there is no foundation for this idea in Scripture. They most probably were a set of men of very profligate habits, and strongly attached to the family and rule of Herod; and by consequence very zealous for the authority of the Romans, and the introduction of Roman manners, games and other heathen usages. This brought them opposed to the Pharisees, who considered it contrary to the law to have a king who was not of their own nation, and therefore held it to be illegal to pay the taxes. Some think the Herodians belonged to the sect of the Sadducees; but this is doubtful. The caution of Christ to His disciples to "beware of the leaven of Herod" (Mark viii. 15), probably meant to beware of suffering views of interest and worldly policy to interfere, or be commingled with true religion.

HERODIAS (*mount of pride*), the daughter of Aristobulus and Bernice, was granddaughter of Herod the Great, and sister of Herod Agrippa I. She married her uncle Philip, by whom she had a daughter Salome, but he falling into disgrace, and being obliged to live in private, Herodias left him, and married his brother Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. This proceeding incurring the censure of John the Baptist (Matt. xiv. 3-6; Mark vi. 17-22; Luke iii. 19), she procured his imprisonment; and, subsequently, through her daughter Salome, whose dancing inflamed Herod, effected his death. Her husband shortly after falling into disgrace was banished to Lyons in Gaul, whither she accompanied him; and there, it is supposed, died.

\*HOUSE. Oriental houses are very unlike our own. They are commonly square in their form, and of a single story. On approaching them from the street, a single door is seen in the center, and, usually, directly above it, a single latticed window. This destitution of doors and lights from the streets, though it gives their dwellings a somber appearance, is yet adapted to the habits of retirement and secrecy among the people of the East, where they are desirous of keeping their *females* from observation. On entering the only door in front, the first room is a small square room, surrounded with benches, called the *porch*. In this room the master of the family commonly transacts business, and, on private occasions, receives visits. Passing through the porch, you enter a large square room directly in the center of the building, called the *court*. This court is paved commonly with marble, and if possible, a *fountain* of water is formed in the center, to give it beauty, and to diffuse a grateful coolness. This room is surrounded by a gallery, or covered walk, on every side. From that covered walk, doors open into the other apartments of the house.

This center room, or court, is commonly uncovered or open above. In wet weather however, and in times of great heat of the sun, it is covered with an awning or canvas, stretched on cords, and capable of being easily removed or rolled up. From the court to the roof the ascent is by flights of stairs, either in the covered walk or gallery, or in the porch. The roof is nearly flat. It is made of earth, or in houses of the rich is a firmly constructed flooring, made of coals, chalk, gypsum and ashes, made hard by repeated blows. On those roofs spears of grass, wheat or barley, sometimes spring up, but these are soon withered by the sun. (Ps. cxxix. 6-8.) The roof is a favorite place for walking, for repose in the cool of the day, for conversation, and for devotion. It was surrounded with a *balustrade*, or railing, breast-high, on the sides, but where a house was contiguous to another, and of the same height, the railing was lower, so as to walk from one roof to another. In cities constructed in this manner, it was possible to walk through a considerable part of the city on the roofs of the houses. A breast-work or railing was, of course, built in the same manner around the open space in the

center, to prevent them from falling into the court below. This railing or breast-work is what Luke v. 19 says, they let the paralytic down through.

ICONIUM (*coming*), now Cognior, Koniah, or *Koniych*, was formerly the capital of Lycaonia in Asia Minor: Paul and Barnabas came hither from Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii. 51, xvi. 2), and while here they preached in the synagogue (Acts xiv. 1); but the unbelieving Jews having stirred up a tumult against them, they fled to Lystra. (Acts xiv. 2-6, 19.)

IDUMEA (*red, earthy*), a district of Arabia, south of Judea, extending to the Red Sea, and anciently called the land of *Edom*, from having been occupied by the descendants of Edom, another name of Esau. Herod the Great is said to have been an Idumean: and many of its inhabitants joined the multitudes following Jesus. (Mark iii. 8.)

INCENSE. This substance was composed of the perfumes stacte, onycha, galbanum and pure frankincense. (See Exod. xxx. 34-38.) All incense which was not made of these ingredients was forbidden to be offered. (Exod. xxx. 9.) The Jews were forbidden to make this composition for private use. Incense was burned by the priest morning and evening. It was placed in a *cup* or *vase*, called the *censer*, upon the Golden Altar in the Holy Place, hence called the *Altar of Incense*, with burning coals beneath, producing by its smoke a powerful perfume, filling the temple with its fragrance. Incense would seem to be symbolical, not of prayer itself, but of that which makes prayer acceptable—the intercession of Christ. In Rev. viii. 3, 4, the incense is spoken of as something distinct from, though offered with, the prayers of all the saints, and in Rev. v. 8, it is the golden vials, and not the odors or incense, which are said to be the prayers of saints.

ISAAC (*laughter*), the child of promise, son of Abraham and Sarah, and father of the patriarch Jacob (Matt. i. 2; Luke iii. 34; Acts vii. 8), his being in the kingdom of heaven alluded to by our Lord. (Matt. viii. 11; Luke xiii. 28.)

ISAIAS, or ESAIAS (*health, or salvation of the Lord*), one of the greater prophets, and who, from prophesying especially concerning Christ, is called the *Evangelical* prophet. His prophecies are frequently referred to in the New Testament: as in Matt. iii. 3 iv. 14, viii. 17, xii. 17, xiii. 14, xv. 7; Mark vii. 6; Luke iii. 4, iv. 17; John i. 23, xii. 38, 39, 41; Acts viii. 28, 30, xxviii. 25.

ISCARIOT. See JUDAS.

ISRAEL (*prevailing*), a name given to the patriarch Jacob by the angel who wrestled with him: in the New Testament the name is applied to his descendants, the Jews (*passim*); hence *Israelites*.

Italy, a celebrated country in the south of Europe, of which Rome was the capital. Aquila came from this place (Acts xviii. 2), and Paul journeyed hither when a prisoner (Acts xxvii. 1). The Roman cohort garrisoned in Judea, and commanded by Cornelius the centurion, was called "the *Italian band*." (Acts x. 1.)

ITURÆA (*mountainous*), a province of Syria or Arabia, beyond the Jordan, east of Batanœa, and south of Trachonitis, over which *Philip* was tetrarch when John the Baptist commenced his ministry. (Luke iii. 1.)

JACOB (*heeler, supplanter*)—(1) the son of Isaac and Rebecca, and twin brother of Esau, and the father of the twelve patriarchs. He is referred to in Matt. i. 2, viii. 11; Luke iii. 34, xiii. 28; Acts vii. 14.)

—(2) the father of *Joseph*, the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 15.)

JACOB'S WELL—a deep well near the city of Shechem (or Sichem, or Sychar), in Samaria, cut out of the rock; it became celebrated from the discourse of our Saviour with the woman of Samaria. (John iv. 5-30.)

JAIRUS (*illuminated*), a chief ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum, whose daughter, falling dangerously ill, he besought Jesus to heal her. (Mark v. 22; Luke viii. 41.) As our Lord was proceeding, the girl died; but when He arrived at the ruler's house, He raised her to life. (Mark v. 35-43; Luke viii. 49-56.)

JAMES (*supplanter*)—(1) *the Greater*, the son of Zebedee and Salome, and brother to John the Evangelist. (See Appendix A.)

—(2) *the Less*, the son of Alphæus or Cleopas, and brother of our Lord.

JANNA (*answering, afflicted, poor*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 24.)

JARED (*ruling, coming down*), the father of Enoch, and a progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 37.)

JASON (*healing*), a kinsman of Paul's, in whose house he dwelt at Thessalonica, and who hazarded his life to save the Apostles in a sedition excited in that city. (Acts xvii. 5-9.) He seems after this to have gone to Rome. (Rom. xvi. 21.)

JECHONIAS, or *Jeconiah (stability of the Lord)*, son and successor of Jehoiachim, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 11, 12.)

JEREMIAH (*exalting the Lord*), one of the greater prophets, who lived in the reign of King Josiah. (Matt. ii. 17, xxvii. 9.) John the Baptist thought to have been he. (Matt. xvi. 14.)

JEREMY, the same as *Jeremiah*, which see.

JERICO (*the moon, month*), a city about 26 miles north-east of Jerusalem, and six from the Jordan. Christ passed through it, and performed a miracle in its neighborhood. (Luke xix. 1)—the parable of the good Samaritan laid here (Luke x. 30.) By the faith of its assailants in the time of Joshua its walls fell down.

JERUSALEM (*vision of peace*), the metropolis of Palestine, and the seat of government from the time of David. It was called *Salem* in the time of Abraham, and Melchizedec was its king (Gen. xiv. 18; Heb. vii. 2), and subsequently it was called *Jebus* (Josh. xv. 8), whence its derivation, "*Jebus-Salem*," "*Jerusalem*." Christ lamented over it (Matt. xxiii. 37), and foretold its destruction (Matt. xxiv. 2-28), which took place by the Roman armies under Titus, A. D. 70. It is mentioned continually in New Testament history, and it was the scene of our Lord's passion. (Matt. xxvi., xxvii., &c.)

JESSE (*a gift, a being*), the son of Obed and father of David, and therefore a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 5, 6; Luke iii. 32.)

JESUS (*Saviour*)—(1) our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

—(2) the name of *Jeshua* or *Joshua*, the captain of Israel. (Acts vii. 45.)

JEWS (*praising*), the people of Israel, so called from their ancestor, *Judah*, especially after the Babylonish captivity.

JOANNA (*gift of the Lord*)—(1) the wife Chuza, Herod's steward; after being healed by our Lord, she followed and administered unto Him. (Luke viii. 2, 3.)

—(2) mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 27.)

JOATHAM, or *Jotham (absolute, perfect)*, son and successor of Uzziah, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 9.)

JOEL (*willing, swearing*), the son of Pethuel, and one of the minor prophets; he was contemporary with Jeremiah, and his prophecy is referred to by Peter. (Acts ii. 16.)

JOHN (*gracious, holy*)—(1) *the Baptist*, the son of Zacharias, the priest, and Elizabeth, was born six months before our Lord. His birth, name and office, were foretold to his father while performing his functions in the Temple (Luke i. 10-17; Mal. iv. 5), and for his incredulity he was struck dumb until the naming of the child, when his faith gave him the name of *John*, and Zacharias' speech was immediately restored. From this time the child was brought up in the wilderness in a very abstemious manner, and in coarse clothing (Matt. iii. 4; Mark i. 6), and when he became 30 years of age, he manifested himself to the world as the forerunner of the Messiah, whom he declared about to come. (Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 7; John i. 6, 15, 19, 27.) He preached repentance and confession of sins, and induced many to be baptized in the Jordan, whence he was called "*The Baptist*." (Matt. iii. 1; Mark i. 5; Luke iii. 3; John iii. 23; Acts i. 5, xi. 16, xiii. 24.) He baptized Christ Himself (Matt. iii. 14), and the next day proclaimed



Him to be the "Lamb of God." (John i. 29.) A little time after, in consequence of reproving Herod for marrying Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, he was imprisoned (Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 14; Luke iii. 19), and at the instance of Herodias, by the request of her daughter Salome, Herod commanded him to be beheaded. (Matt. xiv. 1; Mark vi. 14, 16; Luke ix. 7.) While John was in prison, he sent certain of his disciples to inquire if Jesus was the expected Messiah. (Matt. ix. 14, xi. 2, 4; Mark ii. 18; Luke v. 33, vii. 18, 19, 22, xi. 1; John iii. 25.) Subsequently Jesus bore testimony to the character of John. (Matt. xi. 7, 14; Luke vii. 24, xvi. 16; John v. 33, 36, x. 41.) John was much esteemed by the people (Matt. xxi. 26; Mark xi. 32; Luke xx. 6), and Herod was afraid of him (Mark vi. 20), yet for his oath's sake he sacrificed him to the revengeful temper of Herodias. Paul found some of John's disciples at Ephesus, who, not knowing whether there was any Holy Ghost, were baptized by the Apostles. (Acts xix. 3-7.)

—(2)—(*the Apostle and Evangelist*). (See Appendix A.)

—(3) MARK. (See Mark.)

—(4) A son of Annas the high priest, before whom and others, the Apostles were examined for preaching in the name of Jesus. (Acts iv. 6.)

JONA (*a dove*), or *Jonas*, the father of Peter. (Matt. xvi. 17; John i. 42, xxi. 15-17.)

JONAH (*a dove*), or *Jonas*, one of the minor prophets, son of Amittai, and he who was sent to preach repentance to the Ninevites; but in his endeavor to avoid this duty he was cast into the sea, and swallowed by a whale, in which he remained three days and three nights. When the Jews asked our Lord for a sign, He gave them only the sign of the prophet *Jonas*. (Matt. xii. 39-41, xvi. 4; Luke xi. 29, 30.)

JONAN (*a dove*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 30.)

JOPPA (*comelincss*), *Japho*, or *Jaff'a*, a sea-port of Judea, on the Mediterranean, 30 miles south of Cesarea, and 45 north-west of Jerusalem. Peter visited Joppa, where he remained at the house of Simon the tanner many days. In this city he raised Tabitha (*Dorcas*) to life (Acts ix. 36, 43), and while here Cornelius sent for him. (Acts x. 5, 23, xi. 5.)

JORAM, or *Jehoram* (*height of the Lord*), son and successor of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 8.)

JORDAN (from *Jor*, a spring, and *Dan*, a town near its source), the principal river of Judea, rising at the foot of the Anti-Libanus mountains at Cesarea Philippi (Paneas). It runs a course of upward of 100 miles due south, passing through Lake Merom, and the Sea of Galilee, and finally empties itself into the Dead Sea. *John* baptized in this river (Matt. iii. 6; Mark i. 5, 9; John i. 28, iii. 26), and here Christ also was baptized. (Matt. iii. 13.)

JORIM (*exaltation of the Lord*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke. iii. 29.)

JOSAPHAT, or *Jehosaphat* (*the Lord is the Judge*), the son and successor of Asa, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 8.)

JOSE (*sparing, lifting up*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 29.)

JOSEPH (*increasing*)—(1) the son of the patriarch Jacob, by Rachel (John iv. 5); he was sold into Egypt by his brethren. (Acts vii. 9, 13, 14.)

—(2) *The husband of Mary* was the son of Jacob, and grandson of Matthan; and as well as being a descendant of the royal house of David, he was also the *reputed* father of Christ. (Matt. i. 6, 16; Luke i. 27, iii. 23.) An angel informed him of the nature of Mary's conception, which reconciled him to her position (Matt. i. 19, 24), after which he proceeded with her to Bethlehem to be taxed, where CHRIST was born. (Luke ii. 4, 16.) Directed by an angel, he retired with Mary and the child into Egypt, till the death of Herod (Matt. ii. 13), after which he returned (Matt. ii. 19), and took up his

abode at Nazareth, where it is supposed he followed the calling of a carpenter. (Matt. xiii. 55; Luke iv. 22; John i. 45, vi. 42.) In one of his visits to Jerusalem to keep the passover, Joseph lost the child Jesus, then about 12 years old, and after three days found Him in the temple disputing with the doctors. (Luke ii. 41-43.) What became of Joseph is not known, but he is thought to have died before our Lord entered on His public ministry.

—(3) of *Arimathea*, a Jewish counselor, and private disciple of Christ's. (Matt. xxvii. 57-59; Mark xv. 42-45; Luke xxiii. 50; John xix. 38.) He did not consent to the condemnation of Jesus (Luke xxiii. 51), and after our Lord's crucifixion he went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, and after wrapping it in linen, buried it in his own tomb. (Luke xxiii. 52, 53.)

JOSEPH (4) called also *Barsabas*, and surnamed Justus; he was a candidate with Matthias for the Apostleship, vacant by the death of Judas Iscariot, but he lost it. (Acts i. 23)

—(5) called also *Joses*, which see.

—(6, &c.) mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 24, 26, 30.)

JOSES (the same as *Joseph*) was the son of Mary and Cleophas, and brother of James the Less, and therefore one of the brethren of our Lord. (Matt. xiii. 55, xxvii. 56; Mark vi. 3, xv. 40, 47.) Some critics think this person to be the same as Joseph, called also *Barsabas*. See above. *Joseph* (4).

JOSIAS, or *Josiah* (*the fire of the Lord*), son and successor of Amon, king of Judah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 10, 11.)

JUDA (*confession, praise*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 26, 30, 33.)

JUDAS (*confession, praise*)—(1) or *Barsabas*, one of the disciples sent by the Apostles from Jerusalem to Antioch, with the decree of the council respecting adherence to the Mosaic ritual. (Acts xv. 22-32.)

—(2) *Gaulanitis*, or the Galilean, a native of the city of Gamala, in that district, and who raised a rebellion in Judea against the enrolment of taxing ordered by Cyrenius, in which he perished. (Acts v. 37.)

—(3) *Iscariot* (*hireling, or a man of Karioth, or Cerioth, to which he belonged*), one of the Apostles of our Lord, and appointed their treasurer. (Matt. x. 4; Mark iii. 19; Luke vi. 16.) He was angry with Mary for anointing our Lord, and wasting the ointment. (John xii. 4.) Christ foretold his treachery. (Matt. xxvi. 21; Mark xiv. 18; Luke xxii. 21; John vi. 71, xiii. 21, 26.) Judas, after this, went and bargained with the Pharisees (Matt. xxvi. 14; Mark xiv. 10; Luke xxii. 3); he then betrayed our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 47; Mark xiv. 43; Luke xxii. 47; John xviii. 3), but repenting of his infamy, he returned the money to the chief priests, and went and hanged himself. (Matt. xxvii. 3; Acts i. 18.)

JUDAS (4) or *Jude*, called also *Lebbeus* (*confessing*), and *Thaddeus* (*confessing*), or the *Zealot*, was the son of Mary and Cleophas, and the brother of James the Less, and consequently one of the brethren of our Lord. (See Appendix A.)

—(5) or *Judah*, a son of Jacob, and a progenitor of Joseph, the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 2, 3; Luke iii. 33.)

JUDEA (*confessing*), a name derived from Juda, and applied not only to the portion of the tribe of Judah, but sometimes to the whole land of Israel; called also Canaan, Palestine, Land of Promise, and the Land of Judea. (Matt. xxiv. 16; Acts i. 8.)

JULIUS (*soft, downy*), the centurion of the Augustan cohort, to whose care Festus committed Paul to be conveyed a prisoner to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 1.) He showed to the Apostle great courtesy (Acts xxvii. 3), suffering him to land at Sidon, and visit his friends there, and saved him from the murderous designs of the soldiers. (Acts xxvii. 43.)

**JUPITER** (*the father that helpeth*), the supreme god of the heathens, whom they regarded as the maker of heaven and earth, and ruler of the universe. (Acts xix. 35.) Jupiter and Mercury the god of *eloquence*, were supposed to be those gods who most frequently assumed the human form; the former was represented as a large, majestic-looking man, and aged, while the latter, who generally attended him, was young, light and active; on which account, when Paul and Barnabas were preaching in and about Lystra in Lycaonia, they made so great an impression as to lead the people to call Barnabas *Jupiter*, and Paul *Mercurius*, because he was the chief speaker. (Acts xiv. 12, 13.)

**JUSTUS** (*just*)—(1) the surname of *Joseph Barsabas*, one of the candidates for the Apostleship vacant by the death of Judas Iscariot, but the lot fell upon Matthias. (Acts i. 23.)

—(2) a Christian in Corinth, converted by Paul, and in whose house the Apostle preached. (Acts xviii. 7), when rejected from the synagogue.

**KIDRON**, or **CEDRON** (*making black, or sad*), a brook running through the valley of Jehoshaphat, on the east side of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives. Our Lord crossed it on His way to the garden of Gethsemane. (John xviii. 1.)

**KISH**, or **CIS** (*hard, straw*), the son of Ner, a Benjamite, and father of king Saul. (Acts xiii. 21.)

**LAMECH** (*poor, smitten*), father of Noah, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Luke iii. 36.)

**LASEA** (*thick, wise*), a city of the isle of Crete, near to the Fair Havens. (Acts xxvii. 8.)

*Laying on of hands*, in blessing (Matt. xix. 15), in healing (Mark v. 23, vi. 5, xvi. 18; Luke iv. 40, xiii. 13; Acts ix. 17, xxviii. 8), in imparting the gifts of the Spirit (Acts viii. 17, 19, xix. 6), in ordaining (Acts vi. 6, xiii. 3).

**LAZARUS** (*help of God*)—(1) the brother of Martha and Mary, living at Bethany, near Jerusalem, and in whose house Christ sometimes lodged. He was taken ill, and died, and after he had been in the grave four days, our Lord raised him to life. (John xi. 2, 5, 11, 14, 43, xii. 17.) After this, six days before Christ's last passover, Lazarus sat at table with Him (John xii. 2), and many people came to see him. (John xii. 9.) What became of Lazarus is not known.

—(2) the poor afflicted man in the parable who sat at the rich man's gate begging, and when dead was received into Abraham's bosom. (Luke xvi. 19-25.)

**LEBBEUS** (*confessing, praising*), one of the twelve Apostles (Matt. x. 3), the same as *Judas* or *Jude*, which see; also Appendix A.

**LEGION**, a body of foot soldiers in the Roman army, comprising ten cohorts, each cohort fifty maniples, and each manipule fifteen men, whence a full legion contained 6,000 men. Jesus cured a demoniac, who called himself "*Legion*," as if possessed by a legion of devils. (Mark v. 9.) Christ told Peter that twelve legions of angels would come to His relief if it were necessary. (Matt. xxvi. 53.)

**LEVI** (*joined*)—(1) one of the twelve Apostles, also called *Matthew*. (Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27, 29.)

—(2) mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 24, 29.)

**LIBERTINES**. The Jews are thought to have been either emancipated slaves from Italy, or their descendants (*Libertini*), or a people from a place in Africa, near Carthage called *Libertina*; they had a synagogue in Jerusalem for their special use, and joined with the Cyrenians and Alexandrians in disputing with Stephen. (Acts vi. 9.)

**LIBYA** (*gross*), a province of Egypt in Africa, from which place many Jews were in Jerusalem on the noted day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 10.)

**LOCUSTS**. The insects of this name are still used for food in the East. There are different ways of preparing them for food. Sometimes they are ground and pounded,

and then mixed with flour and water and made into cakes; or they are salted and then eaten; sometimes smoked, boiled or roasted, stewed, or fried in butter. *Dr. Kitto*, who tasted locusts, says they are more like shrimps than anything else; and an English clergyman, some years ago, cooked some of the green grasshoppers (*Locusta viridissima*), boiling them in water half an hour, throwing away the head, wings and legs, and then sprinkling them with pepper and salt, and adding butter. He found them excellent.

THE LORD'S SUPPER, instituted by Christ just before His death. It is also called the "*Eucharist*," because Christ in the institution of it *gave thanks* unto God. The passages of Scripture particularly recommending this sacrament are Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, x. 16, xi. 23-29; Acts ii. 42, xx. 7.

LOT (*wrapped, joined*), the nephew of Abraham, delivered from the destruction of Sodom by an angel, but his wife looking back became a pillar of salt. The circumstance alluded to by our Lord as a warning. (Luke xvii. 28, 32.)

LUCIUS (*of light*), of Cyrene, one of the prophets of the Christian Church at Antioch (Acts xiii. 1), and by some thought to have been one of the Seventy.

LYCAONIA (*a wolf*), a province of Asia Minor, forming part of Cappadocia; here Paul preached in the cities of Iconium, Derbe and Lystra. (Acts xiv. 6, 11, &c.)

LYCIA, a province of Asia Minor, having Phrygia on the north, and the Mediterranean on the south; Paul landed at the port of Myra, in Lycia, on his journey to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 5.)

LYDDA (*standing water*), a city about 14 miles north-east of Joppa, and 32 north-west from Jerusalem. Peter visited the saints in this place (Acts ix. 32), and cured one Eneas of the palsy (Acts ix. 33, 34), and before he left, they all "turned to the Lord." (Acts ix. 35, 38.)

LYDIA (*standing water*), a woman of Thyatira, a seller of purple, who dwelt at Philippi, in Macedonia. (Acts xvi. 14.) She was a Jewish proselyte, and converted to Christianity by Paul, and herself and family were all baptized. After this she prevailed on the Apostle and his fellow-laborers to make her house their home. (Acts xvi. 15-40.) Lydia was also a country of Asia Minor, peopled by the posterity of Lud.

LYSANIAS (*dissolving, sadness*), a tetrarch of Abilene, a small province of Lebanon. (Luke iii. 1.)

LYSIAS (*dissolving*), the chief captain of the Roman troops in Jerusalem. (Acts xxiii. 26; see Claudius Lysias.)

LYSTRA (*dissolving*), a city of Lycaonia in Asia Minor, 40 miles west of Iconium, and of which place Timothy was a native. (Acts xvi. 1, 2.) Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel here, and having miraculously cured a lame man, they were taken for gods, for the tutelary deities of the city, Jupiter and Mercurius; and sacrifices prepared for them. Jews, however, from Antioch and Iconium excited the people against the Apostles even to stoning them, and Paul was cast out of the city as dead. (Acts xiv. 6, 8, 11; 2 Tim. iii. 11.) Its site is not discoverable.

MAATH (*wiping away, fearing*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 26.)

MACEDONIA (*burning, worshiping, crooked*), a large country of Greece. Paul while at Troas was called in a vision to preach the Gospel in Macedonia (Acts xvi. 9, xix. 21), and there founded the churches of Philippi, and Thessalonica. Silas and Timothy also preached there. (Acts xviii. 5.) The Churches there were very liberal in their contributions to the poor saints.

MAGDALA (*a tower, greatness*), a town and territory placed by some authorities on the eastern side of the Lake of Tiberias, and by others on the western side near Capernaum.

(Matt. xv. 39.) It included Dalmanutha (see Mark viii. 10), and is supposed to have given name to Mary Magdalene.

MAGI, Persian or Arabian philosophers, well versed in the moral and physical sciences; they came to worship the infant Messiah, and are supposed to have come from Arabia, as their gifts of frankincense and myrrh were the produce of that country. (Matt. ii. 1-14.)

MALCHUS (*king, counsellor*), a servant of the high-priest Caiaphas, whose ear Peter cut off when our Lord was betrayed. (John xviii. 10.)

MALELEEL, or *Mahaleel (praising God)*, a progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 37.)

MAMMON, the Syriac word for *riches*. Our Saviour says we cannot devote our lives to the acquirement of riches and in seeking after righteousness at the same time; we cannot serve God and Mammon. (Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 9, 11, 13.)

MANAEN, or *Manahem (comforter, leader)*, Christian prophet in Antioch, brought up and educated with Herod Agrippa I.; some say, with Herod Antipas. (Acts xiii. 1.)

MANASSES, or *Manasseh (forgotten)*, son and successor of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 10.)

MARCUS (*filled, polite*), the son of *Mary*, Barnabas' sister, in whose house the Apostles used to assemble. He is thought to have been converted by Peter, as that Apostle calls him his son. He is the same as John, Mark, or Mark the Evangelist. (Acts xii. 12, 25, xv. 39.)

MARS HILL (*the Arcopagus*), an insulated precipitous rock in the middle of Athens, where was the celebrated seat of judicature so called, opposite to the Acropolis, before which Paul defended himself. (Acts xvii. 22.)

MARTHA (*bitter, provoking*), the sister of Lazarus, and Mary of Bethany. (Luke x. 38; John xi. 1, 5.) She was reproved by our Lord for being too much concerned about temporal matters. (Luke x. 40, 41.) On the death of her brother Lazarus she expostulated with Christ for His delay. (John xi. 20-40.) Subsequently, when Christ was supping at the house of Simon in Bethany, Martha served. (John xii. 2.)

MARY (*exalted bitterness, mistress of the sea*), (1) *the Mother of Our Lord*, and espoused wife of Joseph. She was of the royal line of David, and cousin to Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, the priest. (Matt. i. 16-20, xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3; Luke i. 5, 27, 36.) The angel Gabriel announced to her the birth of Jesus. (Luke i. 26-35.) She visited Elizabeth and offered up a song of thanksgiving, (Luke i. 46-55,) and having gone to Bethlehem, brought forth the Saviour. (Luke ii. 1-7.) The shepherds now visit her (Luke ii. 16-19), she next presented the child in the temple to the Lord (Luke ii. 21-24), and after receiving the visit of the Magi (Matt. ii. 11), and retiring for a short time into Egypt (Matt. ii. 13-21), she went to Nazareth, but came annually with the infant to Jerusalem to the passover. (Luke ii. 41.) On one occasion, however, when Jesus was 12 years old, Mary lost sight of Him. (Luke ii. 42-51.) When Christ had commenced His ministry, she attended Him at the marriage in Cana (John ii. 1), and once, when He was teaching, inquired for Him (Matt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 31; Luke viii. 19). Mary attended our Lord at His crucifixion, when she was committed to the care of John (John xix. 25), and after the ascension of Christ she was with the other disciples. (Acts i. 14.) What became of the mother of our Lord after this is not known.

—(2) *Magdalene*, a woman of Magdala, out of whom our Lord cast seven devils (Luke viii. 2, 3), after which she followed Him and contributed to His maintenance. She witnessed Christ's crucifixion at a distance (Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40; John xix. 25), waited watching at the sepulchre (Matt. xxvii. 61; John xx. 1), and brought spices to embalm his body. (Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1; Luke xxiii. 55, 56); but

Christ had risen, and Mary Magdalene was the first who saw Him after His resurrection. (Mark xvi. 9; John xx. 11-18). and again a second time. (Matt. xxviii. 9; Luke xxiv. 10.) She was a person of some property, but whither she went after this is not known.

— (3) *Mother of James the Less*, and of Joses, wife of Cleophas or (Alphæus), was the sister of the mother of our Lord; she witnessed the crucifixion afar off (Mark xv. 40, 47), and afterward stood by the cross (John xix. 25). She accompanied the other women to the sepulchre (Matt. xxvii. 56, 61, xxviii. 1), having brought spices to embalm Christ's body. (Mark xvi. 1.) Further than this nothing more is known.

MARY (4), *Mother of Mark*, or of John, whose surname is Mark. In her house the Apostles were accustomed to assemble; Peter went there on his escape from prison; (Acts xii. 12.)

— (5) *Sister of Martha and Lazarus*. She listened to our Lord's discourse while Martha served (Luke x. 39-42), and was present when her brother Lazarus was raised to life (John xi. 1-46), at a subsequent period, when Christ supped at Betheny in the house of Simon, she anointed His feet. (John xii. 1-8; Matt. xxvi. 6; Mark xiv. 3. Luke vii. 36.)

MATTIAN (*gift, hope, death of them*), the grandfather of Joseph, the husband of Mary (Matt. i. 15.)

MATTHA (*gift*), mentioned by Luke in the genealogy of our Lord, as the grandfather of Mary. (Luke iii. 24), another (Luke iii. 29).

MATTATHA (*his gift*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 31.)

MATTATHIAS (*gift of the Lord*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 25, 26.)

MATTHIAS (*gift of the Lord*), an Apostle chosen in the room of Judas Iscariot, and thought to have been one of the Seventy. (Acts i. 23, 26.)

MATHUSALA, or *Methuselah (he sent his death)*, the father of Lamech, and progenitor of Christ; he died aged 969 years. (Luke iii. 37.)

MELEA (*supplied*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 31.)

MELCHI (*my king, my counsel*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 24, 28.)

MELITA (*flowing with honey*), now *Malta*, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, on which Paul was wrecked as he was taken to Rome (Acts xxviii. 1, &c.), here he shook the viper from his hand, and healed many of their diseases.

MENAN (*numbered, rewarded*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 31.)

MERCURIUS (*of merchandise*), or *Mercury*, one of the heathen gods, the god of eloquence, and whom the people of Lystra thought Paul to be. (Acts xiv. 12.) See JUPITER.

MESOPOTAMIA (*middle of rivers*), a large country of Asia, between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, anciently styled *Padan-Aram*. (Acts vii. 2.) Jews from here were in Jerusalem on the noted day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 9.)

MILETUM, correctly MILETUS (which see.)

MILETUS (*red kernels*), a city and seaport of Ionia, about thirty miles south of Ephesus, and where Paul directed the elders of the Ephesian Church to meet him. (Acts xx. 15-17.)

MILL. Grinding in the East was performed, as it is now, chiefly by hand. The mill-stones were about two feet in diameter, and half a foot in thickness. The lower one was fixed, and the upper one was turned by a handle or crank. This was done by two persons, who sat opposite to each other. One took hold of the mill-handle, and turned it half way round, the other then seized it, and completed the revolu-

tion. This was done by women, by servants of the lowest order, and was a laborious employment. (See Ex. xi. 5; Job xxxi. 10; Isa. xlvii. 2 Judg. xvi. 21.)

MITYLENE (*assailing, breaking the law*), the capital of the isle of Lesbos, 8 miles from Asia Minor, through which Paul passed on his way from Corinth to Jerusalem. (Acts xx. 14.)

MYNASON (*seeking, remembering*), a Jew of Cyprus, converted by our Lord himself, and who was one of the Seventy. Paul abode at his house in Jerusalem. (Acts xxi. 16.)

MYRA (*flow, weep*), a city of Lycia in Asia, whence Paul embarked for Rome. (Acts xxvii. 5.)

MYRIA (*abominable*), a province of Asia Minor, having Phrygia on the east, and the Hellespont on the west: here Paul preached. (Acts xvi. 7, 8.)

NAAMAN (*fair*), the Syrian, the general of the army of Benhadad, king of Syria, cured of leprosy by Elisha (Eliseus): the case referred to by our Lord. (Luke iv. 27.)

NAASON (*that foretells, a serpent*), a son of Aminadab, and a progenitor of Joseph the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 4; Luke iii. 32.)

NACHOR (*hoarse, angry, dry*), also *Nahor*, the grandfather of Abraham, and a progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 34.)

NAGGE (*light*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 25.)

NAIN (*beauty*), a city of Palestine 2 miles south of Mount Tabor, where Christ raised the widow's son to life. (Luke vii. 11-18.)

NAPHTHALI (*wrestling likeness*), called also *Nephthalim*: the sixth son of Jacob: the inheritance of this tribe lay in the northern part of Canaan, between Mount Lebanon to the north, and the Sea of Cinnereth (Galilee) to the south: Christ's residence here fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. (Isa. ix. 1, 2; Matt. iv. 13-15.)

NATHAN (*given*), a son of David mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 31.)

NATHANAEL (*gift of God*), a disciple of our Lord's, and supposed to be the same as Bartholomew. (John i. 45-50.) He saw Christ after His resurrection. (John xxi. 2.)

NAUM (*comforted*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 25.)

NAZARENE, *Nazareans*, or *Nazarite*, (*kept, a flower*),—(1) an inhabitant or native of Nazareth, whence Christ has been so named. (Matt. ii. 23.)

— (2) A man under a vow either for his whole life, as Samson and John the Baptist, or only for a time, (as those in Num. vi. 18-20; Amos ii. 11, 12), to abstain from wine and intoxicating liquors, to let the hair grow, and not to enter a house where there was a dead corpse, nor be present at a funeral. Paul, or as some say, Aquila, had a vow of this sort in Cenchrea. (Acts xviii. 18.)

— (3) a sect of Judaizing Christians, who held that there could be no salvation without full conformity to the law of Moses. They coincided in a great measure with the Ebionites, and accepted only Matthew's Gospel: they likewise objected to the ceremonial strictness of the Pharisees; and held Paul in high estimation.

— (4) a term applied to the Christians by the Jews and heathens, by way of reproach. Paul in this view is accused by one Tertullus, as being "a ringleader of the sect of Nazarenes." (Acts xxiv. 5.)

NAZARETH is situated among the hills which constitute the south ridges of Lebanon, just before they sink down into the plain of Esdraelon. Of the identification of the ancient site there can be no doubt. The name of the present village is *en Názirah*, the same, therefore, as of old; it is formed on a hill or mountain (Luke iv. 29), it is within the limits of the province of Galilee (Mark i. 9), it is near land, according

to the implication in John ii. 1, 2, 11; a precipice exists in the neighborhood (Luke iv. 29), and, finally, a series of testimonies reach back to Eusebius, the father of church history, which represent the place as having occupied an invariable position. The modern Nazareth belongs to the better class of Eastern villages. It has a population of 3,000 or 4,000, a few are Mohammedans, the rest Latin and Greek Christians. Most of the houses are well built of stone, and have a neat and comfortable appearance. The streets or lanes are narrow and crooked, and after rain are so full of mud and mire as to be almost impassable.

NEAPOLIS (*new city*), a sea-port of Macedonia, a few miles south of Philippi. Paul came here from Samothrace. (Acts xvi. 11.)

*Nephtalim.* See NAPHTALI.

NERI (*light of the Lord, land sown biennially*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 27.)

NICANOR (*victorious*), one of the seven first appointed *deacons* (Acts vi. 3-6); not being further is known of him.

NICODEMUS (*innocent blood, victory of the people*), a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, belonging to the Sanhedrim, and who became a disciple of Christ after his conversation with Him. (John iii. 1, 4, 9.) He subsequently defended our Lord before the Sanhedrim (John vii. 50), and joined with Joseph of Arimathea in His burial. (John xix. 39.)

NICOLAS (*conqueror of the people*), a Jewish proselyte of Antioch, who afterward became a Christian; and on account of his zeal and piety was subsequently appointed a deacon. (Acts vi. 5.) His name is said to have been improperly connected with the sect of the *Nicolaitans* (which see.)

NIGER (*black*), the name of one Simeon, a prophet and teacher of Antioch, who assisted in ordaining Saul and Barnabas for their Apostleship. (Acts xiii. 1.) He is thought to have been one of the Seventy.

NINEVEH (*beautiful, a dwelling-place*), the capital of the ancient kingdom and empire of Assyria. (Jonah iii. 6; 2 Kings xix. 36.) The name appears to be compounded from that of an Assyrian deity, "Nin," corresponding, it is conjectured, with the Greek Hercules, and occurring in the names of several Assyrian kings, as in "Ninus," the mythic founder, according to Greek tradition, of the city. Nineveh is first mentioned in the Old Testament in connection with the primitive dispersements and migrations of the human race. (Gen. x. 11, &c.) It was a city of nineteen miles in length and eleven in breadth, and from forty-eight to sixty miles in circumference, and contained a population of about six hundred thousand. (Jonah iv. 11.) It was surrounded by a wall one hundred feet high, and wide enough for three carriages to go abreast, and was fortified by fifteen hundred towers of two hundred feet in height. For its luxury and wickedness the judgments of God fell upon it. (Neh. iii. 1; Zeph. ii. 13-15.)

NOAH (*rest*), the builder of the ark, in which he and his family alone, with certain animals of every kind, were saved when the world was drowned for its wickedness (Matt. xxiv. 37; Luke iii. 36, xvii. 26.) He was a preacher of righteousness, and his faith is spoken of in Heb. xi. 7.

NOE. See NOAH.

OBED (*a servant*), son of Boaz, and father of Jesse; also a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 5; Luke iii. 32.)

OLIVES, *Mount of*, or OLIVET; is a range of hills extending a mile in length from north to south, having three or four summits: from the center one, which is the highest, and rises out of the Garden of Gethsemane, our Saviour ascended up to heaven (Acts i. 12); on the southern one Solomon built temples to his idols. Olivet is a Sabbath-day's journey (about a mile) eastward of Jerusalem, fronting the temple: it is



separated from the city by the brook Kidron, and the valley of Jehoshaphat; and its districts were named, 1. Gethsemane, the place of oil-presses; 2. Bethany, the house of dates; 3. Bethphage, the house of figs, &c. The mountain takes its name from the luxurious and spontaneous growth of the olive-tree, which continues at this day, and was the scene of many circumstances connected with the life of Christ. (Matt. xxi. 1, xxiv. 3, xxvi. 30; Mark xiii. 3, xiv. 26; Luke xix. 29, 37, xxi. 37, xxii. 39; John viii. 1; Acts i. 12.)

OZIAS, or *Uzziah*, or *Azariah* (*strength of the Lord*), son of Jehoram king of Judah, and progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 8, 9.)

PAMPHYLIA (*nation of every tribe*), a province of Asia Minor, having the Mediterranean on the south, and Pisidia on the north; it is situated opposite to Cyprus, and its chief town is *Perga*. (Acts xxvii. 5.) Paul and Barnabas preached here (Acts xiii. 13, xiv. 24), and it was while they were in this province that Mark left them. (Acts xv. 38.)

PAPHOS, a city on the western coast of Cyprus, where the proconsul Sergius Paulus resided, who was converted by Paul (Acts xiii. 6), and where Bar-Jesus (Elymas) the sorcerer was struck blind for his opposition. (Acts xiii. 6-13.)

PARMENAS (*continuing*), one of the first seven deacons of the Church. (Acts vi. 5, 6.)

PARTHIANS (*flying from fear*), the Persians, or inhabitants between Media and Mesopotamia. Jews from among them were present at Jerusalem at the noted day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 9.)

PASSOVER. There is considerable controversy in respect of the duration of our Lord's ministry. Some reckon it to have been but one year; some, three years; and others more. Dr. Lardner mentions *four* Passovers: the *first* at our Lord's baptism (John ii. 13); the *second*, when Christ healed the cripple at the pool of Bethesda (John v. 1); but that this feast was a passover is much questioned; the *third*, when the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes were performed (John vi. 4); the *fourth*, when the Jews sought to apprehend our Lord. This would make Christ's ministry extend to about *three years and a half*, according to the prophecy of Daniel. (ix. 26.) Very many writers consider the period of the *second passover* to have been just before our Lord went through the corn-fields on the Sabbath day as recorded in Luke vi. 1.

PATARA (*white-livered, bringing death*), a maritime city of Lycia, where Paul going from Philippi to Jerusalem embarked from Phœnicia. (Acts xxi. 1.)

PAUL (*marvelous, rest, little*), the name of Saul of Tarsus. Many writers suppose that *Saul* had from his birth the Gentile name of *Paul*; a not unusual thing with the Jews and others in that age—others say he took the name in honor of his first Gentile convert Sergius Paulus—others, because he was small in stature, or for humility sake, *Paulus* meaning *low, small, little*: be this as it may, he assumed the name of *Paul* to the exclusion of that of *Saul*, on the conversion of *Sergius Paulus*.

PENTECOST, a feast of the Jews held *fifty days* after the departure from Egypt, or after the PASSOVER. Sometimes it was called the *feast of weeks*, because it was kept *seven* weeks after the Passover. The Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles on this day. (Acts ii. 1.)

PERGA (*earthly*), a maritime city of Pamphylia in Asia, upon the river Caystrus, where Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel. (Acts xiii. 13, 14, xiv. 25.)

PETER, *stone or rock*.

PHALEC (*division*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 35.)

PHANUEL (*seeing God*), the father of the prophetess *Anna*, of the tribe of Asher. (Luke ii. 36.)

PHARAOH (*spreading vengeance, a king*), a common name of the kings of Egypt: two of which are referred to in the New Testament. (Acts vii. 13, 21.)

PHARES (*division*), a son of Judah, and a progenitor of Joseph, the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 3; Luke iii. 33.)

**PHARISEES** (*separate*). This was the most celebrated and influential of the Jewish sects in the time of our Lord, including in its numbers the great mass of the people. This appellation is derived from the Hebrew word *Pharas* or *Pharash*, "to separate," from their separating themselves from the rest of the Jews as more devout and religious. They believed in the resurrection of the dead, and in the existence of angels, and spirits, mixed up with some notion of a transmigration of souls; they were also peculiar in attaching the first importance to the traditions of the elders, and in the observance of external rites and ceremonies; they placed also especial reliance on frequent ablutions and fastings, long prayers, and the rigorous observance of the Sabbath. When they had their beginning is not exactly known.

**PHENICE** (*red, purple, palm*), or *Phœnice*, a sea-port on the western shore of Crete. Christianity was introduced here soon after the persecution following the death of Stephen. (Acts xi. 19.) Paul passed it when he was proceeding to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 12.)

**PHENICIA**, or **PHENICE**, or *Phœnicia*, a province of Syria, lying along the Mediterranean, the principal cities of which were Tyre, Sidon and Ptolemais. Paul passed through it in some of his journeys. (Acts xv. 3, xxi. 2.)

**PHILIP** (*lover of horses, a warrior*), (1) a native of Bethsaida, in Galilee, was one of the first called by our Lord (John i. 43, 44), he went and fetched Nathanael (John i. 45-47, 49), and he was afterward numbered among the Apostles. (See Appendix A.)

— (2) the *deacon*, appointed among the first seven (Acts vi. 5), is said to have been a native of Cesarea; at the persecution that broke out on the death of Stephen, Philip retired to Samaria where he performed many miracles, and made and baptized numerous converts, Simon Magus amongst the number. (Acts viii. 5-13.) Some time after, directed by an angel, he met with the Ethiopian eunuch on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza; having preached to him Jesus Christ, the eunuch believed, and was baptized (Acts viii. 26-38); immediately after, the Spirit of the Lord took him away and we find him at Azotus, preaching the Gospel in all the cities till he came to Cesarea. (Acts viii. 39, 40.) Subsequently to this, some twenty years, possibly, he was visited by Paul and his company, who stayed some days, during which Philip's four daughters prophesied. (Acts xxi. 8-10.) Here Philip is thought to have remained and died.

— (3) a son of Herod the Great. (Matt. xiv. 3; Mark vi. 17; Luke iii. 19.) See **HEROD PHILIP**.

— (4) another son of Herod the Great, and tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonitis. (Luke iii. 1.) See under **HEROD**.

**PHILIPPI** (*warlike, lovers of horses*), (1) a city of Macedonia.

— (2) a city near the source of the Jordan, called **CESAREA PHILIPPI**, *which see*.

**PIRYGIA** (*dry, barren*), a large province of Asia Minor, divided into the Greater and the Lesser; it had Bithynia on the north, and Pisidia and Lycia on the south. The chief towns were Laodicea, Hierapolis and Colosse. Paul is said to have introduced Christianity into the province (Acts xvi. 6, xviii. 23); although the Jews from this country were present in Jerusalem at the noted day of Pentecost. (Acts. ii. 10.)

**PHYLACTERIES** (*things to be especially observed*), slips of parchment on which were written certain words of the law, and which the Jews wore on their foreheads, on the wrists of their left arm, and on the hems of their garments, from a mistaken interpretation of Ex. xiii. 9, 16; the Pharisees wore theirs broader than other Jews. (Matt. xxiii. 5.)

**PILATE**, *Pontius* (*a hand, or of the sea; and armed with a dart*), the successor of Gratus in the governorship of Judea, which he held ten years (from about A. D. 26, to A. D. 36). (Luke iii. 1.) His impetuosity and obstinacy excited many disturbances among the Jews; and why he mingled the blood of certain Galileans with their sacrifices is

not known. (Luke xiii. 1.) Christ was brought before this tribunal; and although after examination he found no fault in Him, nor did Herod, and notwithstanding the warning of his wife, yet being willing to content the Jews, he condemned our Lord to be crucified against the dictates of his own conscience. (Matt. xxvii.; Mark xv.; Luke xxiii.; John xviii., xix.; Acts iv. 27, xiii. 28; 1 Tim. vi. 13.) He made five successive attempts, indeed, to release Christ, but when the Jews declared, "if thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend," his fear of the jealousy and suspicion of the Emperor Tiberius prompted him to yield to their malice, and therefore he immediately ordered our Saviour's crucifixion. Some time after this, having put to death a number of innocent Samaritans, he was accused before Vitellius, proconsul of Syria, who ordered him to Rome to answer the charge. Before Pilate arrived, Tiberius died; Caligula, his successor, hearing of the circumstances, banished Pilate to Gaul, where, it is said, on account of extreme indigence he committed suicide, about A. D. 41.

PISIDIA (*black with pitch*), a province of Asia Minor, having Pamphylia on the south and Galatia on the north; its chief town was Antioch: here Paul and Barnabas planted a Christian Church. (Acts xiii. 14, xiv. 24.)

PONTIUS PILATE. See PILATE.

PONTUS (*the sea*), a province of Asia Minor, having the Euxine Sea on the south. Jews from here were in Jerusalem at the noted day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 9); and it was the native place of Aquila (Acts xviii. 2); it is thought that it was converted to Christianity by Peter, since he addresses his first Epistle to them amongst others.

PORCIUS FESTUS (*a festival calf*). See FESTUS.

PRISCA. See PRISCILLA.

PRISCILLA (*ancient*), or *Prisca*; the wife of *Aquila* (Acts xviii. 2, 26), and whose house was so Christianized that Paul called it a Church. They came from Rome to Ephesus when Claudius banished all Jews from there; but returned thither again, as Paul salutes them in his Epistle to the Romans. They subsequently returned to Asia, where it is supposed they died. See *Aquila*.

PROCHORUS OR PROCORUS (*presiding over the choirs*), one of the first seven deacons of the Christian Church. (Acts vi. 5.)

PROCONSUL, the governor of a province attached to the jurisdiction of the Senate of Rome, and who was elected *annually*. Such was Sergius Paulus at Cyprus. The governor of a province belonging to the jurisdiction of the Emperor, and usually calling for the exercise of military power, was termed a "*Proprætor*," or "*Legatus*," or "*Commissioner*," as the Governor of Syria. A subordinate jurisdiction in the Emperor's provinces was assigned to a "*Procurator*," or "*High Steward*," as were Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus. The *Proprætor* held office during the pleasure of the Emperor.

PTOLEMAIS (*assemblage of waters, warlike*), a sea-port town, now *Acre*, on the Mediterranean, at the borders of Galilee, and 27 miles south of Tyre. Paul stayed here one day in his journey from Ephesus to Jerusalem. (Acts xxi. 7.)

PUBLICANS. These were inferior officers, generally Jews, employed as collectors of the Roman revenue. The Roman Senate farmed the direct taxes, and the customs, to capitalists, who undertook to pay a given sum in the treasury (*publicum*), and hence received the name of *publicani*. In the provinces were managing directors, and under them were the *portitores*, the actual custom-house officers. The system was essentially a vicious one. The publicans, through their agents, overcharged when they had an opportunity. (Luke iii. 13.) They brought false charges of smuggling in the hope of extorting hush-money. (Luke xix. 8.) The employment brought out all the besetting vices of the Jewish character. The strong feeling of many Jews as to the absolute unlawfulness of paying tribute at all, made matters worse. Mr. Morier, at Persepolis, observes: "Here is a station of rah-dars, or toll-gatherers, appointed to levy a

toll upon kafilers, or caravans of merchants; and who, in general, exercise their office with so much brutality and extortion, that they are execrated by all travelers. The collections of the tolls are farmed, consequently extortion ensues, and as most of the rah-dars receive no other emolument than what they can exact over and above the prescribed dues from the travelers, their insolence is accounted for, and a cause sufficiently powerful is given for their insolence on the one hand, and the detestation in which they are held on the other." How unpopular the publicans were is evident from the fact that that they were classed with sinners (Matt. ix. 11, xi. 19), with harlots (Matt. xxi. 31, 32), with the heathen (Matt. xviii. 17).

PUBLIUS (*common*), the governor of *Melita* (or Malta), who treated Paul with great kindness when shipwrecked there: the Apostle healed his father. (Acts xxviii. 7, 8.)

PURSE, a sort of girdle which the Hebrews took with them when on a journey, and which is often found at the present day in Eastern countries. It was used by them for carrying their money (Gen. xlii. 35; Prov. i. 14; Isa. xlvi. 6); and if they were merchants, also their weights. (Deut. xxv. 13; Mic. vi. 11.) Ladies wore ornamental purses. (Isa. iii. 23.) A part of the girdle, sufficient to encompass the body, was sewed double, and fastened with a buckle. The residue was wound round above and below the first fold, and tucked under. The first fold had an opening, closed with a leather cover or strap, through which the contents of the purse were passed.

PUTEOLI (*the wells*), a city of Campania in Italy, about 8 miles from Naples. Paul stayed here seven days on his way to Rome. (Acts xxviii. 13.)

RAGAU (*a companion, breaking*), a progenitor of Abraham, and of Christ. (Luke iii. 35.)

РАНАБ, or *Rachab* (*proud, strong, broad*), the harlot, or probably the *innkeeper* of Jericho who concealed the spies sent by Joshua. Paul speaks of her being saved by her faith; and James, by her works. Some consider this woman to be the mother of Boaz, alluded to by Matthew in his genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 5.)

REMPHAN (*prepared*), an idol of the Egyptians carried by the Hebrews, which Amos reprov'd (Amos v. 26); the passage is quoted by Stephen in his argument with the Jews. (Acts vii. 43.)

RHEGIUM (*breaking*), a city of Italy in the kingdom of Naples, at which Paul landed on his way to Rome. (Acts xxviii. 13, 14.)

RHESA (*affection, a head*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 27.)

RHODA (*a rose*), a young maid of the household of Mary the mother of John Mark; she opened the door to Peter on his escape from prison. (Acts xii. 13, 14.)

RHODES (*a rose*), an island, and famous city south of the province of Caria, in Asia Minor, and so called from abounding in roses; it was celebrated for its brazen colossal statue, esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world. Paul visited this island in his last journey to Jerusalem as he came from Miletus. (Acts. xxi. 1.)

РОБОАМ, or *Rehoboam* (*breadth of the people*), the son and successor of Solomon, and a progenitor of our Lord. (Matt. i. 7.)

ROME (*prevailing, mighty*), the chief city of Italy, and in the time of our Lord's ministry, the mistress of the world. Its name, and that of Romans, are not found in the Old Testament. Rome is first met with in the book of the Maccabees (1 Mac. vii. 1, 2), and it is thought to be referred to by Daniel (Dan. ii. 40) as the kingdom of iron. Jews from Rome were at Jerusalem at the noted day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 10), but some few years after, by an edict of Claudius, all Jews were expelled the city (Acts xviii. 2). Paul had long desired to visit Rome (Acts xix. 21, xxiii. 11; Rom. i. 7, 15); but the only times he visited it, the Apostle was a prisoner there, first when he appealed to Cæsar, A. D. 61, when he remained two years (Acts xxviii. 16, 30, 31), and secondly, at the time of his martyrdom, A. D. 65-66. At this last period, Peter was at

Rome also, and suffered death in the same persecution. Peter is said to refer to Rome in one of his Epistles under the name of *Babylon*, a name also adopted by John for the same purpose. The word *ROMAN* is found to refer either (1) to its inhabitants (John xi. 48; Acts xxviii. 17), or (2) to its privileges. (Acts xvi. 21, 37, 38, xxii. 25-29, xxv. 16.)

RUFUS (*red*), the son of Simon, the Cyrenian, who carried the cross of Christ; he is honorably mentioned by Mark (Mark xv. 21), and is thought to have been, as well as his mother, a very intimate friend of Paul's; both of whom the Apostle mentions in the most affectionate terms.

RUTH (*watered, filled*), the wife of Boaz, and referred to by Matthew in his genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 5.)

SABBATH (*rest*), the *seventh* day, on which God rested from the work of creation, and sanctified it as a day of holy rest for man and beast. (Gen. ii. 2.) After the crucifixion of our Lord, it was changed to the *first day* of the week, in commemoration of His having then risen from the dead (Matt. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1; John xx. 19, 26), and was called the "*Lord's day*." (Rev. i. 10.) On this day also the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles. (Acts ii. 1; see also Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 20, xvi. 1, 2 Heb. iv. 9.) The Jews were very strict in their observance of the Sabbath; not making a fire, nor baking bread, nor cooking victuals, all of which was done the day before (Friday), hence called the *Preparation* day.

A *Sabbath day's journey* (Acts i. 12) was reckoned at two thousand cubits, or *one mile*, beyond which distance it was forbidden to journey, on the Sabbath, hence the warning of our Lord in Matt. xxiv. 20.

SADDUCEES (*just*), a sect of the Jews who rejected the traditions of the elders, and bound themselves only by the written law: they maintained that there was no future state of rewards and punishments, no resurrection from the dead, neither angels nor spirits. (Matt. xxii. 23; Acts xxiii. 8.) The Messiah they expected to be a temporal prince, for their views were limited to the enjoyment of the present life; and their great opposition to our Lord, and to His disciples, was the doctrine of a resurrection, and the future judgment. (Acts iv., v. 17.) They took their name from one Sadoc, a follower of Antigonus Sochaus, president of the Sanhedrim, about B. C. 250; but whose doctrines Sadoc completely corrupted.

SADOC (*just*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 14.)

SALA (*sending, spoiling*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 35.)

SALAMIS (*shaken*), afterward *Constantia*, a city on the eastern coast of the island of Cyprus. Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel here for a short time, on their first missionary journey; and at Paphos converted Sergius Paulus. (Acts xiii. 5.)

SALATHIEL (*asked of God*), a grandson of king Josiah, and a progenitor of our Lord (Matt. i. 12.) Also another. (Luke iii. 27.)

SALIM (*foxes, pathways*), some place on the banks of the Jordan now unknown, where John baptized. (John iii. 23.) See Ænon.

SALMON (*peacemaker, perfect*), father of Boaz, and a progenitor of Joseph, the husband of Mary. (Matt. i. 4, 5; Luke iii. 32.)

SALMON (*flowing, commotion*), a sea-port and promontory on the eastern side of the isle of Crete (Candy), passed by Paul when taken to Rome. (Acts xxvii. 7.)

SALOME (*peace*), the wife of Zebedee, and mother of James the Great, and John the Evangelist. (Mark xvi. 1.) She attended our Saviour in His journeys, and ministered to Him; and it was she who requested that her two sons might sit one on our Saviour's right hand, and the other on His left in His kingdom (Matt. xx. 20); she also was at the sepulchre with the other women at our Lord's death. (Matt. xxvii. 55, 56; Mark xv. 40, xvi. 1; Luke xxiii. 55.)

SAMARIA (*keeping, a thorn*), the country between Judea and Galilee, formerly belonging to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh: the city, afterward called *Sebaste*, was the

capital of the kingdom of Israel. Our Lord passed through it (Luke ix. 52), and held conversation with a Samaritan woman (Luke xvii. 11; John iv. 4, 9); and at first the Apostles were forbidden to enter into any village of the Samaritans. (Matt. x. 5.) At the persecution, however, following the death of Stephen, many Christians retired thither (Acts viii. 1, ix. 31); Philip preached the Gospel amongst its inhabitants with great success (Acts viii. 5, 14), and although a strong hatred existed between the Jews and the Samaritans (John iv. 9, viii. 48), yet many of the Samaritans believed. (Luke x. 33, xvii. 16; John iv. 39.)

SAMOS (*full of gravel*), an island in the Mediterranean, off Asia Minor, a few miles south of Ephesus. Paul landed here on his way to Jerusalem, just before reaching Miletus. (Acts xx. 15.)

SAMOTHRACIA (*full of gravel, rough*), an island in the Ægean Sea, peopled by Samians, and Thracians, whence its name. Paul leaving Troas for Macedonia came first to this island. (Acts xvi. 11.)

SAMUEL (*heard or asked of God*), a judge, and prophet of Israel; who anointed King Saul, and his successor David; two of the books of the Old Testament are called after his name. He is spoken of by Peter (Acts iii. 24), and by Paul (Acts xiii. 20; Heb. xi. 32).

SANDALS. The word translated *shoes* (Luke iii. 16), has a signification different from what it has in our language. At first, in order to keep the feet from the sharp stones, or the burning sand, small pieces of wood were fastened to the soles of the feet, called *sandals*. Leather, or skins of beasts dressed, afterward was used. The foot was not covered at all; but the sandal, or piece of leather, or wood, was bound by thongs. The wooden sandal is much worn in Arabia, Judea and Egypt. It has a raised heel and toe, and, though often expensive and neat, it was usually a cheap, coarse and very clumsy article.

SANHEDRIM, the great council of the Jewish nation, comprising 70 or 72 judges or senators, and which originated from the 72 elders appointed at the recommendation of Jethro to assist Moses. Our Lord was brought before it (Matt. xxvii. 1; John xi. 47), and Peter and John (Acts iv. 5-7), and the Apostles (Acts v. 21, 27), and Stephen also (Acts vi. 12-15).

SAPPHIRA (*declaring, fear, handsome*), a Christian woman, and wife of Ananias, who was struck dead with him for lying to the Holy Ghost. (Acts v.) See ANANIAS.

SAREPTA (*perplexity of bread, a goldsmith's shop*), another name for *Zarephath*, a city on the Mediterranean shore between Tyre and Sidon, where the prophet Elijah lodged some time with the widow. (1 Kings xvii. 9.) Our Lord adverted to the fact. (Luke iv. 26.)

SHARON, or SHARON (*plain field*), a fertile region of Palestine, extending between Cesarea and Joppa, proverbially noted for its beauty and fruitfulness, whence the phrase, the "rose of Sharon;" the people of this district were so astonished at Peter's cure of Eneas, that they "all turned to the Lord." (Acts ix. 35.)

SARUCH (*a branch, palm tree*), or *Serug*, a progenitor of Abraham, and of Christ. (Luke iii. 35.)

SAUL (*lent, ditch, sepulchre, death, hell*), (1) the name of Paul before his conversion (Acts vii. 58), and which he retained till after he made a convert of *Sergius Paulus*, the proconsul of Cyprus (Acts xiii. 7-9), in honor of whom, it is said, he took the name of *Paul*. (Acts xiii. 9.)

— (2) also the son of Cis or Kis, anointed king over Israel by the prophet Samuel, and which Paul mentions in his discourse to the people of Antioch in Pisidia. (Acts xiii. 21.)

SCEVA (*in order, prepared*), a ruler of the synagogue at Ephesus, whose seven sons

went about pretending to cast out devils; invoking, however, the name of Jesus, the possessed were more dreadfully afflicted than before. (Acts xix. 14-16.)

SCRIBES (*writers*), originally mere transcribers of the law, but subsequently doctors of the law (whence they were also termed "*lawyers*") (Matt. xxii. 35; Luke x. 25), and expounders of it to the people. The diversity of opinions they gave forth, and their corruptions, misinterpretations, and additions to the written word of God, gave birth to that obstinacy and blindness of the Jews which led them to reject Jesus as the Messiah; from them originated the other sects. (Matt. v. 20; vii. 29; xvi. 21; xvii. 10; xx. 18; xxiii. 2, &c.)

SCRIP. This was a bag in which the shepherds of Palestine carried their food or other necessaries. The scrip of the Galileans, made of skin or coarse cloth, was used especially to carry their food on a journey, and slung over their shoulders.

SELEUCIA (*troubled, broken, flowing over*), a sea-port of Syria on the Mediterranean coast, near the mouth of the Orontes, and about 15 or 16 miles west of Antioch. It takes its name from its founder, Seleucus, and it was also his burying-place; here Paul and Barnabas embarked for Cyprus. (Acts xiii. 4.)

SEM, or *Shem*, (*a name, renowned*), a son of Noah, and progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 36.)

SEMEI (*hearing, obeying*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 26.)

SERGIUS PAULUS (*a net*), a proconsul of Cyprus, converted to Christianity by Paul, notwithstanding the opposition of Elymas, the sorcerer. (Acts xiii. 7-12.)

SETH (*set, put*), son of Adam, and progenitor of Christ. (Luke iii. 38.)

SEVENTY DISCIPLES, sent forth to preach by our Lord. (Luke x. 1—they return. Luke x. 17.)

SHEBA, *Queen of*, (*captivity, encompassing*), Sheba is supposed by some to have been *Arabia*, by others *Ethiopia*. (1 Kings x.; 2 Chron. ix.) Our Lord alludes to her coming so great a distance to hear the wisdom of Solomon as the Queen of the South. (Matt. xii. 42; Luke xi. 31.)

SIDON, or ZIDON (*hunter, ship of judgment*), a celebrated city of Phœnicia on the Mediterranean coast north of Tyre. Many of its inhabitants became followers of our Saviour. (Matt. xi. 21, 22; xv. 21; Mark iii. 8; vii. 24, 31; Luke iv. 26; vi. 17; x. 13, 14). Paul on his way to Rome touched at Sidon. (Acts xxvii. 3). A few years before this they incurred the displeasure of Herod. (Acts xii. 20.)

SILAS (*considering*), one of the chief men among the first disciples, and thought to have been one of the Seventy. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their return to Antioch with the decree of the council of Jerusalem respecting conformity to the Mosaic ritual (Acts xv. 22, 27, 32); he remained here a little time (Acts xv. 34), and then accompanied Paul on his second journey (Acts xv. 40); when at Philippi the unbelieving Jews excited an uproar, which led to Paul and Silas being imprisoned, and put in the stocks (Acts xvi. 19-24); they were miraculously released by an earthquake; and after converting the jailer (Acts xvi. 25-33), they went on to Thessalonica, (Acts xvii. 1), but a disturbance occurring here also, they proceeded to Berea (Acts xvii. 10); Silas stayed a short time (Acts xvii. 14, 15), and followed Paul to Corinth, (Acts xviii. 5), where he joined him, and proceeded with him to Ephesus, Cesarea and Jerusalem. What became of Silas after this is not known. It is generally believed that the name *Silas* is only a contraction of the Latin *Silvanus*, a common practice among the Greeks, and which is strengthened by the fact of the *Silvanus*, mentioned in Paul's Epistles, according exactly as to his position and circumstances with the *Silas* in the Acts. He preached with Paul at Corinth, and was there when Paul wrote his Epistles to the Thessalonians. He appears also to have been esteemed by Peter, for this Apostle sent his Epistle to Silvanus.

SILOAM (*sent, bough, armor*), a pool under the walls of Jerusalem on the east, between

the city and the brook Kidron: it issued from a rock, and formed two reservoirs or pools; at one of these our Lord restored sight to the man born blind, telling him to go and wash in the pool. (John ix. 7.)

SIMEON (*hearing, obedient*), (1) a pious old man of Jerusalem, who expected the coming of Christ for the redemption of Israel, and lived to see Him (Luke ii. 25-28); uttered forth a hymn of thanksgiving (Luke ii. 29-32), and concluded by blessing Joseph and Mary, and giving some intimation of her future trials. (Luke ii. 34, 35.) This is all that is known of him.

— (2) also a teacher of the Church, who from his swarthy complexion was called *Niger*. (Acts xiii. 1.)

— (3) also used for *Simon*; as for *Simon Peter* in Acts xv. 14, referring to what Peter had said in verse 7, &c.

— (4) mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Luke iii. 30.)

ΣΙΜΩΝ (*hearing, obeying*), (1) the *Canaanite*, so called from being born in Cana of Galilee, and likewise named *Zelotes* or “the *Zealous*” (Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13); either from his great *zeal*, or from having been one of the *Zealots* (which see). He was an Apostle (see Appendix A; Matt. x. 4; Mark iii. 18), and is supposed to have been the brother of James the Less, and of Jude; but nothing further is known of him.

— (2) the *Cyrenian*, was the father of Alexander and Rufus; he happened to be passing by when our Lord, exhausted with mental anguish and bodily fatigue, could no longer bear the weight of His cross; the soldiers in consequence stopped Simon, and insisted on his carrying it to the place of execution. (Matt. xxvii. 32; Mark xv. 21; Luke xxiii. 26.) This is all that is known of him.

— (3) the father of *Judas Iscariot*. (John vi. 71, xii. 4, xiii. 2, 26.)

— (4) the *Lepcr*, dwelt at Bethany, and there entertained our Lord at supper, a few days before His passion; Lazarus, and his sisters Martha and Mary were present; and the last took this opportunity of anointing Christ's feet. (Matt. xxvi. 6; Mark xiv. 3; John xi. 2.)

— (5) MAGUS, or the *Sorcerer*, so called from his practice of magic, and his impostures, as well as his skill in astrology, medicine and other sciences; became a professing convert to the Gospel, upon the preaching of Philip the deacon, in Samaria, and was baptized by him. (Acts viii. 5, 9-13.) When the Apostles Peter and John came there to confer upon the new disciples the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Magus offered money to purchase those gifts; Peter severely rebuked him, and urged him to repentance; Magus immediately besought the prayers of the Apostle in his behalf (Acts viii. 18-24), and this is all the information of him afforded us in Scripture. What became of Simon Magus is not exactly known; some say that he went to Rome about eight years after, and died there while performing some piece of magic. (See Appendix A.)

— (6) son of *Mary and Cleophas*. (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.)

— (7) PETER, the Apostle.

— (8) the *Pharisee*, with whom our Lord dined, after he had raised to life the son of the widow of Nain; and at whose house a sinful woman anointed Christ's feet much to the displeasure of Simon. (Luke vii. 36.)

— (9) the *Tanner*, a resident of Joppa, with whom Peter lodged when he visited that place, and raised Tabitha (*Dorcas*) to life. (Acts ix. 43; x. 6, 17, 32.)

SODOM (*secret, heel*), a city of Canaan, destroyed by fire from heaven on account of the wickedness of its inhabitants, at the same time with Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, and which stood where the Dead Sea is. Its fate is alluded to as a warning by our Lord. (Matt. x. 15; xi. 24; Mark vi. 11; Luke x. 12; xvii. 29.)

SOLOMON (*peaceable*), the son of David by Bathsheba; he succeeded his father on the throne of Israel. He built the temple with great splendor, and was renowned for



his wisdom and the prosperity of his kingdom. He was a progenitor of our Lord, (Matt. i. 6); and his great glory is alluded to by Christ. (Matt. vi. 29; xii. 42; Luke xi. 31; xii. 27.)

**SOLOMON'S PORCH**, a kind of terrace, or piazza, standing on the vast structure reared by Solomon, four hundred cubits from the valley beneath, in order to widen the level of the top of the mountain to admit the plan of the temple: and as it was the only work of Solomon's that existed in the second temple, it retained his name. Jesus walked here when he discoursed with the Jews (John x. 23); so did Peter and John after healing the lame man at the gate called "Beautiful" (Acts iii. 11). The other Apostles also did many miracles here. (Acts v. 12.)

**SOSPATER**, or **SOPATER** (*health of his father*), a Christian convert of Berea, called *Sopater* in Acts xx. 4; and saluted by Paul as his kinsman.

**SOSTHENES** (*mighty savior*), chief of the synagogue of Corinth, having succeeded *Crispus*, when the latter became a Christian: he was the accuser of Paul before *Gallio*, the proconsul; but when the Apostle was discharged, the Greeks and others rushed on *Sosthenes* and gave vent to their rage by inflicting on him a sound thrashing. (Acts xviii. 17.)

**STEPHEN** (*crowned*), a Hellenistic Jew; and said to have been brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*: he became a convert to Christianity, and was afterward the chief of the seven primitive deacons. (Acts vi. 5.) He performed many miracles, and defended the doctrines of the Gospel with such learning and zeal that the exasperated Jews stoned him to death. (Acts vi., vii.)

**STOICS** (*a porch*), a sect of heathen philosophers at Athens, the followers of *Zeno*, who held his school in a *porch* of that city, whence their name. They maintained that all things were the result of necessity or fate; that men had no free-will, and ought to be unaffected by the passions; hence they exercised great austerity and apathy, upheld suicide, and denied a future state of rewards and punishments. The Stoics were numerous in Athens when Paul visited that city. (Acts xvii. 18.)

**SUSANNA** (*lily, rose, joyfulness*), a pious woman, who attended our Saviour and administered to His necessities. (Luke viii. 3.)

**SYNAGOGUES** were the Jewish places of public worship. The building was surrounded with seats for the men—the "rulers" occupying the "chief seats," which faced the rest. The women were placed in a gallery, or behind a screen. In the center, conspicuous to all, was the pulpit for the reader, while in the side of the building nearest to Jerusalem was an "ark," in which were deposited the "rolls" of their Scriptures. Worship was begun with prayers in the language of the district, read from a service book, by the "angel" or "apostle" of the synagogue; then was read a portion of the law and of the prophets (Acts xiii. 15), in Hebrew, by the reader, from a roll taken from the ark, and put into his hand by the "minister" (*Chazan*), the reader standing (Luke iv. 16), the congregation sitting. After the book was returned to the minister (Luke iv. 20), and after this followed an exposition of the Scripture read, and then, after a little pause, some one stood up and gave forth a word of exhortation. Our Lord sat during this elucidation. (Luke iv. 20.) At the close came the "benediction," and the "Amen."

**SYRACUSE** (*drawing violently*), the capital of the island of Sicily, on its eastern coast; here Paul spent three days on his way to Rome. (Acts xxviii. 12.)

**SYRIA** (*high, descending, slander*), the country lying between the Euphrates on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west, having Cilicia on the north, Judea, Phœnicia and Arabia on the south. Antioch was the capital, and *Cyrenius* was governor. (Luke ii. 2.) The fame of our Lord reached throughout it. (Matt. iv. 24.) The Apostles sent letters thither (Acts xv. 23), and Paul visited it (Acts xv. 41, xviii. 18, xxi. 3; Gal. i. 21.) *Naaman*, cured of the leprosy by *Elisha*, was of this country. (Luke iv. 27.)

SYRO-PHœNICIAN. Phœnicia, having been conquered by Syria, the latter prefixed *Syria* to its old appellation, whence *Syro-Phœnician*. The Canaanitish woman of Matthew (xv. 22, 24), is called by Mark a Syro-Phœnician (vii. 26); the country originally was peopled by Canaanites.

TABITHA (*a roc-buck*), a Christian woman of Joppa, and renowned for her piety and alms-deeds, and whom Peter restored to life. She was called also *Dorcas* (which see.) (Acts ix. 36, 40.)

TARSUS (*winged*), the capital of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, where Paul was born; it is called also *Tarshish*. (Acts ix. 11. 30, xi. 25, xxi. 39, xxii. 2.)

TAVERNS, *the Three*, (*a city*); some say only an *Inn*, about 33 miles south of Rome, where Paul's friends met him. (Acts xxviii. 15.)

TERTULLUS (*a liar, wondrous*), an advocate employed by the Jews to plead against Paul before Felix, the governor of Judea. (Acts xxiv. 1, 2.)

THAMAR, or *Tamar*, (*a palm-tree*), mother of Phares, and Zara, spoken of by Matthew. (Matt. i. 3.)

THARA (*good, small*), also Terah, the father of Abraham, and a progenitor of Christ (Luke iii. 34.)

THEOPHILUS (*friend of God, devout*), an eminent Christian to whom Luke inscribes his "Gospel," and the "Acts of the Apostles." Some think he was a magistrate; others, that the appellation means any good Christian. (Luke i. 3; Acts i. 1.)

THESSALONICA (*the other victory of God*), a city of Macedonia in which Paul planted a Christian Church.

THEUDAS (*flowing with water*), a seditious impostor, who excited a tumult among the Jews, which ended in himself and four hundred of his followers being slain (Acts v. 36.)

THOMAS (*twin, bottomless depth*), one of the Apostles of our Lord. (See Appendix A.)

THYATIRA (*sweet savor of labor, sacrifice, contrition*), a city of Asia Minor, on the borders of Lycia and Mysia, the native place of Lydia. (Acts xvi. 14.) Here was also one of the seven Churches to the angel of which Christ sent a message.

TIBERIAS (*good vision, navel, breaking asunder*), a city of Galilee on the western shore of the lake of Tiberias. The names of both the sea and the city were given by Herod Antipas, in honor of Tiberias Cæsar. (John vi. 1, 23.)

TIBERIUS, the successor of Augustus in the empire of Rome; he reigned from A. D. 14 to A. D. 37. In the fifteenth year of his reign John the Baptist began to preach. (Luke iii. 1.)

TRACHONITIS (*strong, cruel*), a small barren district south of Damascus, of which Philip was tetrarch. (Luke iii. 1.)

TROAS (*bored through*); a maritime city of Phrygia or Mysia, 25 miles north of Assos.) Paul made several visits here; in his first visit he had a vision inviting him into Macedonia. (Acts xvi. 8, 11.) He immediately sailed thither, and called at Troas many times after. (Acts xx. 5, 6.)

TROGYLLIUM (*a pauntry*), a promontory at the foot of Mount Mycale, opposite to Samos from which it is distant about five miles. (Acts xx. 15.)

TROPHIMUS (*nourished*), a convert of Paul's, and born at Ephesus; he accompanied the Apostle to Jerusalem, and went with him into the temple, which led the Jews to charge Paul with taking Greeks into the temple (Acts xx. 4, xxi. 28, 29); afterward he was taken ill at Miletum, where Paul left him.

TWELVE. "In the Scriptures," says *Prof. Stuart*, "we might naturally expect to find the number of *twelve* often introduced, on account of the twelve tribes of Israel. Thus in Ex. xv. 27, twelve fountains of water at Elim; Ex. xxiv. 4, twelve pillars around the altar; Lev. xxiv. 5, twelve cakes of show-bread; Ex. xxviii. 10, 12, twelve gems

in the breast-plate of the high priest; Num. vii. 3, 87, xxix. 17, offerings of different kinds by twelves; Num. vii. 84-87, various vessels to be made for the temple by twelves; Num. xiii. 3, *seq.*, twelve spies to the land of Canaan; Josh. iv. 3, twelve stones from the Jordan, carried by twelve men, and thrown into a monumental heap; 1 Kings iv. 7, 26, twelve prefects of Solomon's household, and twelve thousand horsemen; 1 Kings vii. 25, twelve brazen oxen, supporting the laver; 1 Kings x. 20, twelve brazen lions near the throne; Ezek. xliii. 16, the altar twelve cubits long and broad; not to mention many other twelves. In the New Testament the twelve Apostles take the lead. In the Apocalypse we have twelve thousand in each of the twelve tribes, who are sealed in the forehead as the servants of God. (Rev. vii. 4, *seq.*) In Rev. xxi. 12, *seq.*, we have an account of the New Jerusalem with twelve gates (comp. Ezek. xlvi. 31, *seq.*), and twelve angels to keep them, and the names of the twelve tribes are written on them. There are also twelve rows of stones in the foundation of the walls on which the names of the twelve Apostles are inscribed. Besides all this, the city measures twelve thousand furlongs, and its walls are twelve times twelve cubits high."

TYCHICUS (*casual*), a Christian of Ephesus, converted by Paul, whom he accompanied to Jerusalem. (Acts xx. 4.) He was very much beloved by the Apostle, and was entrusted with his letters to certain Churches. Paul sent him to Ephesus (Eph. vi. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 12), afterward to Colosse, and subsequently to Titus.

TYRE (*breaking with a flail, siege, binding, singing, strength, rock*), a famous and ancient city and sea-port of Phœnicia, on the Mediterranean coast, about 20 miles south of Sidon. Our Lord alluded to it when reproving the Jews for their unbelief. (Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13). It subsequently excited the anger of Herod. (Acts xii. 20).

ZACCHÆUS (*pure, meat, just*), a chief publican, or farmer-general of the revenue. When Christ passed through Jericho, he was very anxious to see Him, but could not from the smallness of his stature; he therefore climbed up a sycamore tree. Here our Lord saw him, and calling him down, proposed to be his guest. Zacchæus' heart was opened, and he became a sincere believer. (Luke xix. 2-9).

ZACHARIAS (*mindful of the Lord*), also *Zachariah* and *Zechariah*, a priest of the course of Abia, husband of Elizabeth, and father of *John the Baptist*. (Luke i. 5-10). When the angel Gabriel visited him, and announced the birth of a son, he doubted, and consequently was struck dumb till the event was fulfilled. (Luke i. 11-23, 59-64.) He then prophesied concerning the redemption of Israel. (Luke i. 67-79).

ZARA (*rising*), a descendant of Judah alluded to by Matthew. (Matt. i. 3.)

ZEBEDEE (*dowry, endowed*), a fisherman of Galilee, the husband of *Salome*, and father of the Apostles James and John, both of whom left him to follow our Saviour. (Matt. iv. 21; x. 2; xx. 20; xxvi. 37; xxvii. 56; Mark i. 19, 20; iii. 17; x. 35; Luke v. 10; John xxi. 2.) He is thought to have been not a poor man, for he had a ship of his own and hired servants. (Mark i. 20.)

ZEALOTS, A sect in Judea, extremely *zealous* for the exact fulfillment of the Mosaic law; maintaining that religious liberty and the Divine law were to be upheld by force of arms: and that tribute was due to God only, and not to the Romans, nor any foreign power: they therefore continually exhorted the people to shake off the Roman yoke.

ZEBULON (*dwelling place, abiding*), the portion of Galilee allotted to that tribe, and in which it was prophesied by *Isaiah* (Isa. ix. 1, 2), that our Lord's ministry would be exercised. (Matt. iv. 13, 15).

ZELOTES (*full of zeal, zealous*.) See SIMON ZELOTES, ZEALOTS.

ZOROBABEL, or *Zerubbabel*, (*banished*), mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord. (Matt. i. 12, 13; Luke iii. 27.)