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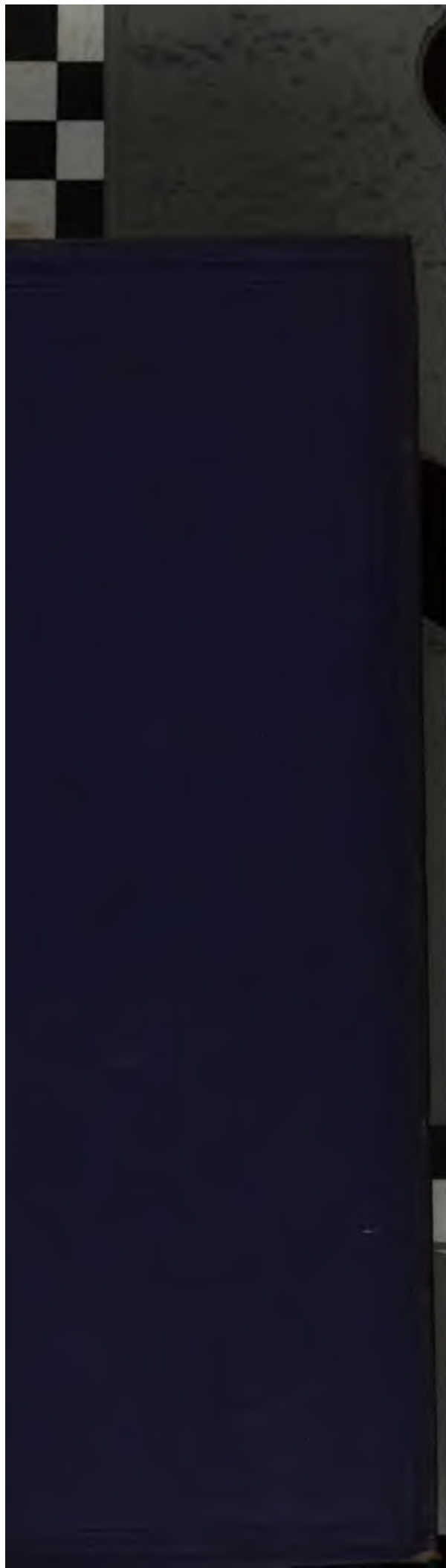
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THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES
WITH A COMMENTARY.

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THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES:
WITH
A COMMENTARY
AND
PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS

FOR READERS AND STUDENTS OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

BY
THE REV. F. C. COOK, M.A.

CANON OF EXETER, ETC.
LATE ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORS OF CHURCH SCHOOLS.

NEW EDITION.



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PREFACE.

MY OBJECTS in preparing this edition of the Acts have been, first, to supply whatever information may be required by the English reader, in order to understand the text ; and, secondly, to assist him in drawing practical inferences from the Word that was given to make us ‘ wise unto salvation.’

I believe that it will be admitted that most commentaries on this book are either too exclusively intended for the use of scholars to be interesting or intelligible to general readers, or, on the other hand, too superficial to meet the wants of well-educated persons, who may not have leisure to study the original language, but are sincerely anxious to read with the spirit, and with the understanding also. A commentary intended for such persons should present, in a condensed and intelligible form, the substance of whatever information is contained in works accessible to scholars, and should give an interpretation of all disputed passages, in accordance with the teaching of Holy Scripture. The English reader ought, as far as possible, to be put into the position of a well-informed person living in the time and speaking the language of the original writer of the book. The allusions, which were then understood by all, should be carefully explained ; manners and customs illustrated by reference to contemporary



authors; and the forms in which the faculties of the human mind were then moulded and developed by the schools of philosophy and religion, should be compared and contrasted with those of our own age. It would be presumptuous to hope that this commentary will satisfy these conditions, but I may venture to assert that they have been constantly present to my mind, and that the attempt to meet these wants has been made conscientiously and diligently, considering that this has been not the work, but the recreation of days passed in active duties. The hours devoted to its execution have been few and interrupted, but sufficient to enable me to give the results of some years' thoughtful study of this interesting portion of Holy Scripture. I may also state, that frequent examinations of school teachers have made me aware of the peculiar difficulties which this book presents to intelligent English readers, and of the misapprehensions into which they are apt to fall.

I have felt it necessary to append practical and devotional suggestions to each chapter. There is considerable danger lest even the study of Holy Scripture should degenerate into a mere exercise of the intellect or memory. In the well-meant endeavour to acquire clear notions about the topography, history, and manners which the author describes, the reader is sometimes apt practically to lose sight of the fact, that every word and thought is recorded for his spiritual improvement, and that the Holy Scriptures must not only be marked and learned, but inwardly digested. I should have been most unwilling to incur the responsibility of putting forth a book which might seem in any degree to encourage a tendency, which, I have reason to fear, is both common and

increasing. It might, perhaps, have been more prudent to make a selection from the writings of divines, than to present my own reflections to the reader, but this part of my work has been truly a labour of love; and I trust there is no presumption in hoping that thoughts, suggested by a careful study of Holy Scripture, may not be unprofitable to my brethren. I have not failed to read what has been written by great and holy men on the subject, nor have I hesitated to adopt any suggestions from their writings, which appeared calculated to assist the reader in discovering the treasures deposited in these pages of inspiration.

May that Spirit, whose work is especially manifested in this narrative of St. Luke, be at once a sun and a shield to thoughtful readers, preserving them from the prejudices and ignorances of human interpreters, and casting light upon those mysteries which appertain to the perfect development of the inner man in Christ.





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INTRODUCTION.

1. The authorship of the book, and the life and character of St. Luke.
2. The time and place in which the book was composed, and the sources from which St. Luke derived his information.
3. The internal evidences of the authenticity of the book.
4. The leading object and plan of the history.
5. Its present uses to the Church.
6. The chronology, including an inquiry into the result of St. Paul's trial before Nero.
7. The principal works which have been consulted in the preparation of this commentary.

1. There are few points upon which biblical critics are so generally¹ unanimous as that the Acts of the Apostles was written by St. Luke, the writer of the Gospel which bears his name. The author's own statement (Acts i. 1) implies that his work is intended to be the continuation or completion of a former treatise, containing an account of the actions and discourses of Our Lord from the beginning, and thus directs our attention at once to the Gospels. Nor can any doubt remain upon the mind even of the unlearned reader, who inquires fairly into the subject, that the former treatise in question can be none other than the Gospel according to St. Luke. The composition and arrangement of the Acts are strikingly dissimilar to those of St. Matthew and St. Mark on the one hand, and of St. John on the other, while they are

¹ The chief exceptions are found among the rationalists of the Tübingen school. M. E. Renan accepts and defends the authorship by St. Luke, in his work just published, *Les Apôtres*.

as strikingly similar to those of St. Luke. The author is evidently not a Hebrew writing for Hebrews, like St. Matthew; his narrative, unlike that of St. Mark, is free and copious; and his style has neither the sententious brevity, nor the somewhat constrained, though deeply impressive tone of the beloved disciple. The first impression of every reader identifies the author of the Acts with the evangelist St. Luke.

This impression is fully borne out by the fullest investigation. The internal evidence is so strong, that critics of the most opposite schools have concurred in the opinion that the vast number of words and phrases which are peculiar to these two books, and other minute coincidences of style, can only be accounted for by assuming the identity of authorship, and would suffice to prove this point, if no external testimony could be adduced.¹

On the other hand, the external evidence is equally clear. The early Church unanimously attributed both works to St. Luke. Irenæus,² Clement of Alexandria,³ and Tertullian,⁴ expressly name him as the author; and Eusebius records the universal belief of the Fathers in the following important statement: 'Luke, a native of Antioch, by profession a physician, was for the most part a companion of St. Paul, but had no slight acquaintance with the other Apostles also. He has left us examples of the art of healing souls, which he learned from them, in two divinely-inspired books; in the Gospel written, as he declares, according to accounts delivered to him by men, who from the beginning had been eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word, and whom he had himself followed from the first; and in the Acts of the Apostles, which he composed, not like the former book, from hearsay, but from what he had observed with his own eyes.'⁵

In accordance with this testimony, Jerome assigns the work to St. Luke in his list of ecclesiastical authors, and most ancient manuscripts name him as the writer in the inscription or appendix. It was one of those books about which no doubt was

¹ The internal evidence is very fairly stated by Davidson, *Introduction to New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 4-8.

² *Adv. Hæc.* 111. 14. i.

³ *Strom.* v.

⁴ *De Baptismo*, 10.

⁵ Eusebius, *H. E.* iii. 4.

raised in the early centuries among orthodox Christians. The fact, that some of the most ignorant and fanatic heretics rejected or underrated its authority, is far from diminishing the value of such testimony. It is clearly shown that they opposed it simply because it condemned their corrupt doctrines,¹ while the incidental notices elicited by their objections prove that the question was fully considered, and decided upon the most satisfactory evidence.

It is equally certain that St. Luke, the author of both these books, was the companion of St. Paul. This conviction also forces itself upon every unprejudiced reader of the Acts, and no doubts have been entertained by any divine or critic, whose opinion deserves consideration, since the time of Irenæus, who confirms the tradition of the Church by a plain statement of the internal evidence. 'That Luke was inseparable from Paul, and his fellow-worker in the Gospel, he has himself clearly shown, not in an ostentatious manner, but led on by the simple truth. "For," saith he, "when both Barnabas and John, who is surnamed Mark, were separated from Paul, and had sailed away to Cyprus, *we* came to Troas (Acts xv. 39); and when Paul had seen in a dream a man of Macedonia, saying Come over into Macedonia and help us, Paul; immediately," he says, "*we* endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called *us* to preach the Gospel to them; therefore, loosing from Troas, we came in a straight course to Samothracia" (Acts xvi. 8, &c.). And afterwards he accurately describes all their course until their arrival at Philippi, and the purport of their first discourse. "For we sat down," saith he, "and spake to the women who had assembled" (ver. 13); and he states what and how many persons believed. And again he says, "But we sailed, after the days of unleavened bread, from Philippi, and came

¹ For instance, the Ebionites rejected the Acts because they opposed the admission of the Gentiles into the Church (Epiphanius, *Hæreses*. xxx. 16. See Introduction to Acts xv.); the Marcionites because they denied that the God of the Old Testament was the Father of our Lord (Tertullian, c. v.,

Marc. v. 2), and the Manicheans because they held the heresiarch Manes to be the promised comforter (Augustine, *Epistles*. 237). It is remarkable that the extreme opinions of the Gnostics and Ebionites are represented in rationalistic Germany. (See Baur, *Paulus*. p. vii.)

to Troas, where we also remained seven days' (Acts xx. 6). And he relates all other things, in order, which occurred while he accompanied Paul.'¹

As might be expected, St. Luke is named by the Apostle as one of his most faithful and attached companions; in the Epistle to the Colossians, iv. 14, he is styled the beloved physician; and from 2 Timothy, iv. 11, we learn that he remained with St. Paul during the last trying scenes of his imprisonment at Rome.

From statements of early writers which are in harmony with Holy Writ, the following additional facts may be received with more or less of certainty. He is said² to have been a native of Antioch, in which city he would have abundant opportunities of acquiring that knowledge of the Greek language and literature, which his writings prove him to have possessed. Some writers suppose that he was a 'Grecian,' or Hellenistic Jew; but from the passage where his name occurs (Col. iv. 11, 14) it is inferred, and indeed appears certain, that he was of Gentile origin. St. Paul there sends salutations from several persons, Aristarchus, Marcus, and Jesus Justus, and adds that they were of the circumcision, thus separating them from those whose names follow, among whom is Luke. The task assigned to St. Luke by the Holy Spirit must have been peculiarly interesting to him as a Gentile,—perhaps one of the earliest who were converted at Antioch. It seems evident that he had been a Christian some years when he joined St. Paul at Troas, and very probable that he was a minister of the Church. From his words on that occasion it appears that he was consulted by the Apostle, and he remained at Philippi apparently in order to complete the organisation of that important community. (See note, Acts xvi. 40.) It is said that he was one of the seventy disciples,³ but this scarcely agrees with the statement in the introduction to his Gospel, nor with the passage of Eusebius quoted above. We know from St. Paul's own words that he was a physician; and both in the Gospel and Acts there are

¹ Adv. Hær. l. 111, c. 14. § i.

² Ps. Origen. v. i. 806; and Epi-

³ By Jerome, Eusebius, and Nicophorus, H. E., ii. 43.

phan. Hær. 51. 11.

many indications that the writer was well acquainted both with the peculiarities of diseases, and with the technical terms in which they were described by the physicians of his own age.¹ Some writers have conjectured that he was a freedman, or manumitted slave,—a conjecture that is quite unsupported by any ancient authority, and highly improbable. It is true that Romans of distinction sometimes trained intelligent slaves to be surgeons; but this was not the case in Greece or Asia, where the profession was highly esteemed, and followed by men of liberal birth and education.² The tradition that he was a painter of portraits is found only in late writers,³ and originated probably in the ninth century, when the controversy about image-worship was at its height. It would then be of some importance to show that one of the inspired writers was himself an artist; and some portraits of our blessed Lord and the Virgin Mary were attributed to St. Luke. The inventor of the tradition certainly displayed some tact in fixing upon this evangelist, for, as it has been well observed, his writings lead us to attribute to him just that habit of minute observation which would be encouraged by the occupation of an artist, and which in an historian produces what is called a graphic style of writing.⁴

We have no certain account of the latter part of his life. He is said to have remained with St. Paul until his martyrdom, and to have survived him many years. According to some Fathers⁵ he preached the Gospel chiefly in Gaul, where the Church was in close connection with that of Asia Minor, and suffered martyrdom at an advanced age in Greece⁶ or in Bithynia.⁷ There is not any very ancient authority for these

¹ See notes on chap. iii. 7, xii. 23, xiii. 11, xxviii. 8.

² The schools of medicine in Asia Minor were famous in St. Luke's age, and supplied Rome with its most distinguished physicians, Themiston, Thalassus, and Galen.

³ Simeon Metaphrastes, and Nicephorus, l. c.

⁴ Humphry.

⁵ Ephiphanus, l. c. I am disposed to attach more weight to this testimony

than appears usual at present. Ephiphanus is a tedious and prejudiced writer, but not untruthful: the point was one on which he might easily get information, and which he certainly had no reason to misrepresent. It has been conjectured, and seems probable, that he followed Hegesioppos, an excellent authority.

⁶ Nicephorus, l. c.

⁷ Isidorus de Ortú Patr. c. 82.

points; but there is no improbability in the conjecture that he returned to the scene of his early labours, and fell a victim to the persecutions begun by Nero, and continued by his successors.

2. It cannot be stated with certainty at what time and place St. Luke wrote this book, but it seems probable that it occupied his leisure during St. Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea; that time could not be more profitably employed than in writing the Gospel, and at the same time collecting materials for the early portion of the narrative, from old converts and members of the Church of Jerusalem, with whom he must have had abundant opportunities of intercourse: his notes on St. Paul's own history might then be prepared under the apostle's guidance, and the work then begun would of course be continued at Rome. It must have been completed previously to the termination of his trial. I believe that a sufficient reason may be assigned why the book should not conclude with a full account of that important event; but it can hardly be supposed that, had St. Luke written at a subsequent period, he would have omitted to state the result. I have little doubt that he was moved by the Holy Spirit to complete this work while he had daily access to St. Paul, and while the facts which he had himself witnessed were fresh in his memory. It may still appear singular that he did not employ some part of his later life in giving an account of the transactions at Rome, supposing that he survived the apostle; but we must remember that he spoke and wrote not as human feelings suggested, but as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, and that his object was to glorify not Paul, but Christ.¹

Some question has been raised as to the sources from which

¹ It is morally certain that if the book had been written by an uninspired author, and with the apologetic intention attributed to him by Schneckenburger (*Ueber den Zweck der Apostelgeschichte*) and Baur, the trial of Paul before Nero, and his subsequent martyrdom, would have formed a pro-

minent and most interesting part of the narrative. It may further be added that if the book were of later origin, it would undoubtedly have concluded with a description of the deaths of St. Paul and St. Peter, who, in the second century, were believed to have suffered martyrdom at the same time.

St. Luke derived his full and accurate knowledge of the events which he records ; nor is such an inquiry superseded by the fact of his inspiration. It is certain that the Holy Spirit taught the sacred writers to make a right use of means, and not to dispense with them altogether. Hence there is a manifest difference between those portions of Holy Writ which proceed from annalists, and from those who record their own observations, and were personally concerned in the events which they describe. It is obvious that the greater part of this book belongs to the latter class of writings, as has been remarked by Eusebius. From the time when Luke joined St. Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem (see chap. xx. 5), and during some part of a previous journey, he describes transactions that occurred under his own eyes ; and the natural and graphic tone of the narrative, together with the vast number of minute coincidences which may be traced in every chapter, have convinced even prejudiced unbelievers of the general veracity and knowledge of the writer. He had also ample opportunity of obtaining full information about the previous periods. He lived a considerable time in company with Timotheus, who had joined the apostle at Lystra ; with Titus, who had accompanied him previously to Judæa, and was personally interested in the important discussions which arose upon the admission of Gentile converts (see chap. xv., and Gal. ii. 1, 2) ; and with Silas, who had previously attained a distinguished rank among the ministers and prophets of the Church in Jerusalem. From these persons, and from the apostle, he would obtain full information concerning the events that had occurred in Asia Minor, Syria, and Judæa, from the date of St. Paul's conversion. It can scarcely be doubted that he received the account of St. Stephen's trial from the apostle's own mouth. The striking resemblance between those discourses of St. Paul, which were addressed to his own countrymen, and that of St. Stephen, has been frequently remarked ; and it is certain that the words of the protomartyr made a deep impression upon the mind of St. Paul, and were not likely to be erased from his memory. For that portion of the history, it is unreasonable to suppose

that St. Luke would have recourse to written documents, with the exception of the epistle containing the decrees of the apostolic council. It is, however, supposed¹ that the first chapters may have been compiled from existing histories or memoirs, but even this supposition rests on no sufficient grounds. It is most probable that he had conversed with St. Barnabas, and other Christians from Jerusalem, long before he joined St. Paul, and it is not impossible that he was present himself at the first day of Pentecost. The narrative, though concise and partial, is full of life and energy, and many passages were evidently written or dictated by an eye-witness. It is true that Hebraisms are more common in the first seven chapters than in the remaining part of the book; but the fact is sufficiently accounted for, and might be expected, since he there relates the discourses of Hebrews. The narrative is also less copious and fluent, which might also have been anticipated, when he describes events which he had not witnessed throughout. But there are no traces of another hand in the composition, and certainly not of another mind. With the exception of a few formal documents (such as are found in the 15th and 21st chapters), I am convinced that we have throughout the testimony of eye-witnesses of the word recorded by a well-informed historian, under the enlightening and controlling influence of the Spirit of God.

3. The preceding considerations suffice to show that St. Luke had abundant opportunities of ascertaining the truth: it is therefore evident that the credibility of his narrative can only be questioned by those who doubt his veracity. It is not my object to enter upon any lengthened refutation of speculations which have lately found their way into England from a neighbouring country; but it may be well to point out to the English reader the grounds upon which the fidelity of the historian can be maintained against assailants. They are such as have not only furnished the advocates of religion with some of their most convincing arguments, but have silenced the cavils of many infidels.

¹ Schwanbeck, Meyer, &c.

The first argument arises from the vast number of coincidences between the narrative of the Acts and the accounts of ancient writers. Many of these coincidences are so minute, and require so much research to discover them, that no suspicion can be entertained by the most cautious inquirer as to their undesignedness. St. Luke touches upon an infinite variety of facts connected with the constitution, the laws, the politics, the manners of nations speaking different languages, of distinct origin, and separated by prejudices originating in mutual ignorance, and sustained by mutual hatred. His accounts sometimes contradict received notions, and present peculiar difficulties to unlearned inquirers. But the deeper and more searching the investigations have been, the more exactly have those accounts been proved to tally with the facts ascertained by other evidence. Some pains have been taken in the following notes to lay specimens of this evidence before the English reader. Its force depends upon the great variety and perpetual recurrence of such coincidences, and the full effect may not be produced upon minds unaccustomed to the discipline of historical studies; but the reader will be well requited for any pains he may bestow upon such researches, which at once serve to illustrate the sacred narrative, and to defend it from infidel objections.¹

The second proof is derived from the agreement between the Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul. On comparing them closely, it is found that an immense number of facts alluded to in the latter are confirmed by statements in the former, and that each of the Epistles, of which the time and place of composition can be ascertained, presupposes circumstances which are described in this book. This proof becomes much more striking when it is found that, so far from any deliberate attempt being made by the writers to bring their state-

¹ In the 6th chapter of the 2nd part of Paley's Evidences, that great author shows that the conformity which exists in the relation of facts, and the state of things, between the writings of the New Testament and the writings of Jews and Heathens, proves that the authors of the New Testament must

have possessed that species of local knowledge, which could only belong to an inhabitant of that country, and one living in that age. Of the forty-one instances of this conformity which he there adduces, no less than thirty are taken from the Acts.

ments into harmony with each other, by far the greater number of such coincidences are discoverable only upon a careful and even ingenious research. Once pointed out, they produce the liveliest conviction, arising both from the clearness of the agreement, and from the certainty that it was undesigned and unobserved by the authors. The great work of Dr. Paley, entitled the '*Horæ Paulinæ*,' has established these points to the perfect satisfaction of critics, and should be in the hand of every reader of the Acts. The following brief summary of the evidence deduced from the comparison of one Epistle and the Acts may suffice to show the nature of the argument:—

Romans i. 13; xv. 23: compare Acts xix. 21. In both these passages the apostle declares his wish and intention to visit Rome.

Chap. xv. ver. 30; Acts xx. 22, 23. In the former the apostle requests the prayers of the Church that he may be delivered from the danger which he anticipates in the latter.

Chap. xv. ver. 24, 26; Acts xxiv. 17, 19. In both passages reference is made incidentally to the contributions which St. Paul collected and brought to Jerusalem on his last visit. This is the more striking, inasmuch as St. Luke omits to mention the fact in the regular course of his narrative. Compare also Acts xx. 22; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4; 2 Cor. viii. 1-4. and ix. 2.

Chap. xvi. 3: compare Acts xviii. 2, 18, 26. The accounts of Aquila and Priscilla tally in a very singular manner. From the Acts we learn that they came from Rome, became Christians, were eminent for piety and hospitality; from the Epistles, that they returned to Rome, and there had a church in their house.

Chap. xvi. 21; Acts xx. 4. Timothy and Sosipater, or Sopater, are named in both as companions of St. Paul at the same time.

I should not omit to state, that in addition to the positive evidence adduced by Paley, a very considerable number of less palpable coincidences are brought to light by a searching criticism of the time and circumstances under which the Epistles of St. Paul were respectively composed. The work

of Dr. Wieseler on the Chronology of the Acts,¹ to which frequent reference is made in my notes, is especially valuable for the learning and ingenuity which he has brought to bear upon this important argument.

I do not hesitate to affirm that this argument is so powerful and convincing, that no person who is capable of appreciating historical evidence can entertain any doubt as to the authenticity and genuineness of works in which such coincidences are to be traced.

A third argument has always been recognised as weighty, but has lately been brought out with remarkable force; that which arises from the exact correspondence of St. Luke's descriptions with the topography and scenery of the places which he has occasion to mention. The countries and cities which he visited, and the seas which he traversed, have been explored by numbers of inquiring travellers, and everywhere bear witness to his scrupulous accuracy. In addition to the information which the reader will find in a condensed form in the following notes, he will do well to consult Biscoe's *Dissertations on the Acts*; and for the latter part of the book the interesting treatise of Mr. Smith on the *Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*. I have availed myself freely of this book; but the force of the argument cannot be fully perceived without reference to more particulars than could be introduced in this commentary. Mr. Smith is quite justified in representing his work as a most important link in the chain of evidence which establishes the authenticity of the Acts.

A fourth argument arises from the discourses of St. Stephen, St. Peter, and St. Paul, which are of such a character that it is impossible not to conclude them to be exact transcripts of what the speaker uttered. They are perfectly adapted to the circumstances, and pervaded by the feelings, which must have stirred the hearts of persons on such occasions as are described. The style and language, the mode of thought and feeling, vary so much that it is evident the discourses must have been uttered by persons not only differing in character, but in education, social position and habits of mind. St. Peter

¹ *Chronologie des apostolischen Zeitalters*, von Dr. Karl Wieseler. Göttingen, 1848.

speaks as a Hebrew of strong affections and ready sympathies; St. Stephen as one conversant with the views and traditions of the Hellenistic Jews; St. James with the simple but authoritative tone which characterises his Epistle, and is peculiarly suitable to his dignified office; while the speeches of St. Paul are such as could have belonged to none but one whose powerful and versatile genius had received the peculiar development which, at that time, could only have been attained in the school of Gamaliel, and who had retained the learning of the Rabbins when emancipated from their prejudices by a living faith in Christ. It is further to be remarked, that while the discourses addressed by our apostle to his countrymen (although bearing the impress of his fervid temperament), are strikingly similar to those of St. Stephen and St. Peter in the topics and general arrangement, yet those speeches which he made to Gentile audiences are as strikingly dissimilar. He speaks to the people of Lystra simply as a missionary, reasons with the Athenians as a philosopher, addresses the Roman magistrates with the dignity of an injured citizen, refutes the charges of the hired calumniator with the arguments of an advocate, and puts forth all the powers of a consummate orator in that address which won the admiration of Festus, and almost persuaded Agrippa to be a Christian. What Jerome says of his epistle is equally true of these discourses. 'Some words appear simple, as if proceeding from a plain countryman, who can neither devise nor elude an artifice; but whenever you trace their effects, they are as thunderbolts. He keeps close to his cause; masters whatever he attempts; turns his back that he may conquer; feigns retreat that he may slay his enemy.'¹ They vindicate the judgment of Longinus, who ranks Paul of Tarsus with Demosthenes and other great names, which he adduces as the summit of all eloquence and of Grecian genius.

Now it is not to be supposed that any historian could have invented such discourses, or have compiled them from imperfect documents. The greatest art and genius in uninspired writers has never enabled them to accomplish far less difficult

¹ Pro Libris adv. Jovinian, vol. ii. p. 73.

tasks successfully. There is a manifest uniformity in the speeches composed by the Greek and Roman historians,—there are obvious anachronisms in style and costume, from which the most consummate skill has not preserved either ancient or modern writers. And so far from there being any appearance of art in St. Luke, it is impossible to conceive any style less artificial, and more evidently the reflex of an observant, but a strictly truthful mind. It is equally incredible that he should have attempted or could have executed such a work.¹

These arguments might be sustained by reference to the natural, so to speak, and artless touches which perpetually remind us that the narrative is that of an eye-witness; to the candour displayed by the writer in describing the character and actions of the opponents of Christianity; and to the absence of any attempt to exaggerate the labours or sufferings of the apostles. The object of these remarks is, however, not to make a complete statement of the internal evidences, but to direct the student's attention to points which will amply reward the most persevering inquiries, if pursued in humility, with a single eye to God's glory in the illustration and defence of His written Word.

4. We will now proceed to inquire what is the leading object of St. Luke in this book. It may seem almost a superfluous question, decided by the title—the Acts of the Apostles. This title is certainly very ancient; it is the only one known to the early Fathers, nor does there seem to be any strong ground for the assertion that it was not originally given by the writer. Some critics, however, consider that it is not appropriate, being, as they assert, at once too comprehensive, since it does not record the actions of all the apostles; and too narrow, because accounts are given of individual teachers of Christianity who were not apostles.² Without concurring in

¹ It is a singular fact, that one of the most successful attempts to show the bearings of St. Stephen's discourse upon the questions at issue between him and the Jews, and its perfect adaptation to the circumstances under

which it was spoken, is to be found in the writings of that critic who has been most reckless and audacious in his attacks upon the authenticity of the book. (Baur's Paulus, p. 42-54).

² Davidson Introd. N. T. vol. ii. p. 65.

this criticism, which is rather ingenious than just, we may admit that some fuller statement is required, especially since considerable differences of opinion prevail among biblical critics on the subject.¹ Some assert that the object of St. Luke was simply to give Theophilus information concerning the most important transactions in the Church, from the date of the Ascension to the time when the history was written.² Others, that he wrote chiefly to prove that the Gentiles had an equal claim with the Hebrews to all the privileges of the Christian Church;³ and some have even ventured to assert that the whole work is a laboured and ingenious attempt to reconcile the apparent contradictions between the principles and conduct of St. Paul and of the original apostles.⁴ Each of these views is both partial and incomplete, and the last is a most perverted misrepresentation of the fact, that the history does, and naturally must, show the substantial unity that binds together all living members of Christ in one body and in one spirit, and which underlies and harmonises all apparent discrepancies in outward form. The leading object and general plan of the book is far more comprehensive than either, or all of these, while it includes and completes all that they contain of truth. It is one which could not have been mistaken if critics had consulted the writer himself, instead of aiming at originality, and seeking to impose their peculiar views upon their readers. If we refer to the introduction to the Gospel, we find that St. Luke there states his general object in terms evidently no less applicable to this book, which forms in fact but a second part of one great work.⁵ That object was, that Theophilus, and doubtless all sincere converts, might know the certainty of those things in which they had been instructed; in other words, that the knowledge of Christian doctrine which they had acquired from oral communications as catechumens, might be extended and confirmed by a complete history of the establishment of Christianity. The history is divided into two distinct treatises. About the

¹ See Guerike, *Einleitung* in N. T., p. 321; Davidson, &c.

² Kuinoel.

³ Luther, *Michaelis*.

⁴ Schneckenburger über den Zweck Apostelgeschichte; and Baur, *Paulus der Apostel Jesu Christi*.

⁵ Guerike, p. 317.

object of the former there is no question. It was to write in order an account of what occurred in the beginning—‘of all that Jesus began to do and to teach,’—an expression which must be understood to mean the actions and doctrines which our Lord performed and revealed during His earthly manifestation.¹ St. Luke does not say in so many words what is the object of his second treatise, but he intimates it very distinctly. It is evidently to describe the continuation and completion of the same work by the disciples of Jesus; to state what they did and taught after His Ascension: not of course all their actions and words, but all the most important, and, so to speak, epochal transactions, by which they fulfilled the works which He entrusted to them previous to His departure. That work is expressed fully in the eighth verse: ‘Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.’ This commandment is accompanied with the promise that they should receive power, that is, be fully enabled to perform that work, by the descent of the Holy Ghost.

The plan of this book accurately corresponds with this leading, or, as I believe, sole object of the inspired writer. After a brief introduction, in which he describes the Ascension of Christ and the appointment of an apostle in place of Judas, he commences with an account of the witness borne to Jesus by the apostles in Jerusalem, which coincides with the coming of the Holy Ghost. The power was then given, and the work was then begun. In the following chapter St. Luke describes the miracles and discourses by which the witness was supported and illustrated, the effects which it produced upon those who received it, and the opposition which it encountered from those who rejected it in Jerusalem. From this part of the book we derive, incidentally, much information about the early constitution of the Church, the habits and feelings of its members, and the state of parties in Jerusalem at that critical epoch which preceded the dissolution of the Hebrew polity; but the direct object of St. Luke is to show how the first part of the work of the apostles was performed in Jerusalem and in all Judæa. (See chap. v. 16.) The 6th and 7th

¹ See note, Acts i. 1.

chapters are transitional. They serve to illustrate the position and feelings of the Jews in reference to Christians, and the mutual bearings of the Old and New Covenants; and they introduce the second part, in which the witness is extended to Samaria and the adjacent territories of Palestine. The persecution which arose on the death of Stephen dispersed the believers, and marked the second great epoch in the propagation of the Gospel. This second division extends from the 8th to the 13th chapter. The first event recorded is the preaching of the Gospel in Samaria, and the establishment of the Church in that province under the apostles St. Peter and St. John. The remaining chapters show the peculiar difficulties which the apostles surmounted within the limits of Palestine, and also clear the way for the wider extension which was to follow. The conversion of Saul and the persecution of the Christians bring the Gospel to bear directly upon the Gentiles of the adjoining districts. But before that extension took place, it was necessary that the conditions upon which the privileges of the Church might be accorded to aliens should be definitively settled, and the most important part of this section is undoubtedly the revelation made to St. Peter, and the admission of Cornelius to the rite of baptism.

The last and most extensive division of the book, from the 13th to the 28th chapter, describes the propagation of the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth; that is, it shows in what manner, by what agencies, and with what effects, it was introduced into different countries. It is not a systematic history in the common acceptance of the term, since it does not give a summary, much less a detailed account, of the proceedings of the apostolic body; but it gives, what is of far more importance, an exact and lively idea of the peculiar difficulties which they all encountered in their respective fields of labour. They had either to bear witness in the presence of mixed congregations of Hebrews and Gentiles, as at Antioch in Pisidia; of ignorant barbarians, as at Lystra; of superstitious fanatics, as at Philippi; of licentious voluptuaries, as at Corinth; of haughty or mocking philosophers, as at Athens; or of magistrates and princes, such as Gallio, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, who would view them with suspicion or con-

tempt. They were to encounter trials, temptations, persecutions, ignominy and martyrdom. Now, there were but two ways in which a clear impression could be conveyed as to the mode in which such a work was fulfilled, and St. Luke was inspired to adopt that which is by far the most interesting and intelligible to all readers, and, indeed, is the only one that ordinary Christians could understand. He gives an example of every thing that was done by each and all of the apostles, in a personal narrative of what was accomplished by one, who was peculiarly called to commence, and we may almost say virtually to achieve, the conversion of the Gentile world. I look upon every event related in the last chapters simply as illustrative of this leading object of the writer. The bearings of the 15th chapter are indicated in the introduction; and although the lengthened account of St. Paul's journey to Rome may at first sight appear somewhat extraneous to this general object, yet a closer inquiry will show that it both illustrates the manner in which the Gospel penetrated, as it were incidentally, into many isolated and unfrequented localities, and also explains how St. Paul acquired that influence over the hearts of his companions, which opened a way for the Gospel into the metropolitan city of the heathen world.

It appears to me that omissions, otherwise not to be accounted for, are satisfactorily explained by this plan of the work. On the one hand, we see why St. Luke does not enter into any details touching the other apostles; their work is partly included in the general history of the Church in Judæa, and their missionary journeys either commenced at a period subsequent to the composition of this book, or may be concluded to have so far resembled those of St. Paul, as not to require separate consideration. St. Luke gives only one example of each movement in the advance of Christianity. Each discourse recorded in this book, and each action, must be regarded as a specimen of what was spoken or done, under similar circumstances, by all those who received power from on high by the coming of the Holy Ghost. On the other hand, we thus find a sufficient reason for omissions touching the life and works of St. Paul. Had the object of St. Luke been to write a biography of that apostle, and to set forth his

peculiar claims to the admiration of Christians, he would certainly not have passed over the visit to Arabia—the interference of Aretas—the work performed in Cilicia during St. Paul's residence—the private transactions at Jerusalem, when St. Paul was recognised by St. Peter, James, and John as the apostle of the Gentiles—the churches established by him in various countries, scarcely alluded to, or altogether unnoticed in the Acts, e.g. Galatia and Crete—nor the great variety of sufferings, labours, and persecutions to which the apostle himself refers in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, xi. 23–33. (See also 1 Cor. xv. 32.) I have already stated my conviction that the termination of the history providentially and designedly coincides with the preaching of the Gospel in the central city of the world, and the virtual fulfilment of the commandment given by the Lord Jesus to His apostles. It was perhaps precisely because the history of the apostle's trial and martyrdom would interest the human feelings, and excite the sympathies of Christians so strongly, that it was not to be recorded by inspiration.

5. The use of this book, however, is not restricted to the valuable information which it directly conveys. Many points of vital importance to the Church in all ages, and especially in this, are incidentally touched upon, and stated with more or less distinctness in every chapter. They may be arranged under three heads, accordingly as they illustrate the constitution, the doctrine, or the practice of the Church. I have endeavoured to indicate these points, both in my commentary and practical suggestions, and refer to them at present rather with a view to direct the reader's attention to the subject than to discuss them at such length as would be necessary in order to prove and illustrate them.

With regard to the constitution of the Church, it is evident, in the first place, that all power emanated from above, and descended by regular gradations to all orders of the ministry. It is not merely apparent that both legislative and administrative authority was derived, not from the community, but from the Head, but also that the subordinate officers of the Church exercised their functions under the control of the

higher officers, and were entirely dependent upon them. The whole Church forms one organised body, of which Christ is the sole head, and of which the members are mutually 'joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part' (Eph. iv. 16.) The apostles receive power immediately from Christ, which they communicate by imposition of hands to the inferior ministers, whom they appoint, control, and direct in their administrations. When the selection is left to the community, it is not in virtue of any right inherent in it, but simply permissive. The deacons are on one occasion chosen by the people at the request of the apostles; in all other cases they are both selected and appointed by themselves. There is no instance in this book either of a minister acting with independent authority, nor of a congregation maintaining a separate and isolated existence. The object of St. Luke is not to describe the constitution of the Church, which was well known to all his readers; but he has frequent occasion to allude to it, and we find it everywhere in substantial harmony with that under which we have the privilege of living. Governed at first by the apostles, we soon find the Church of Jerusalem under its own bishop; in the absence of the apostles, we find them appointing delegates and representatives; in every city we hear of their ordaining presbyters and deacons, the latter not being secular ministers, but combining attendance on the apostles with the administration of the sacrament of baptism, and the preaching of the Word.¹

The leading doctrines of the Church might also be established with sufficient evidence from this book, had it been the only one preserved for our reading. The great fundamental doctrine of the Trinity may be deduced with absolute certainty from the texts which prove the Godhead of the Son, to whom worship is offered, supplications addressed, and the attributes of omniscience and omnipotence are ascribed,² combined with those which are equally explicit as to the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit.³ The other doctrines which flow from this

¹ See notes, chap. i. 20, 21, 22., vi. 2, 3, xi. 22, 30, xii. 17 and 25.

² See notes, i. 24, ii. 36, iii. 6, vii. 59, &c.

³ See notes, v. 4, xiii. 2, &c.

central truth, combined with that of the Incarnation, especially the nature and effects of the Atonement, and conditions upon which its benefits are conferred upon believers, are either explicitly stated, or evidently assumed throughout, and especially in the two discourses of St. Peter, and those of St. Paul at Antioch in Pisidia, chap. xiii., and at Miletus in his farewell charge to the elders of the Ephesian Church, chap. xx. There was an ancient tradition that the apostles, before they separated, composed the Apostles' Creed for the guidance of the Church, each contributing a clause. This may be a legend, yet it represents a great truth,¹ and aptly symbolises the harmonious co-operation of the apostolic body; and it is satisfactory to observe that not only every one of the articles of that creed, but almost every phrase, may be vindicated from the book of the Acts, as is shown by these references:²—1. I believe, &c., iv. 24. 2. And in, &c., viii. 37. Our Lord, i. 21. 3. Who was conceived, &c., x. 38. Born, &c., i. 14. 4. Suffered, &c., i. 3; ii. 23; xiii. 28. 5. He descended, ii. 31. 6. He arose again, ii. 32. He ascended, i. 11. 7. From thence he shall come, i. 11. To judge both quick and dead, x. 42. 8. The Holy Ghost, ii. 4; v. 3, 4. 9. Holy Catholic Church, xx. 28; ii. 39, 42, 47. 10. Forgiveness of sin, ii. 38. 11. Resurrection, iv. 2. 12. Life everlasting, xiii. 46.

The practice of the early Christians is described generally in the 2nd and 4th chapters;³ but many additional facts are stated incidentally throughout the book. The principal difficulty is to distinguish between the principles upon which the practices are founded, which are of course of universal and perpetual application, and the peculiar forms under which they manifested themselves, which must necessarily vary according to the circumstances of the Church. It is, however, highly important to observe, that those customs which our Church found and retained at the period of the Reformation, are vindicated by the example of the primitive Church. The

¹ The Creed is, in fact, but an expansion of the baptismal formula. See Dörner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi*, v. i. p. 276.

² See the pamphlet entitled 'A few

words on the Athanasian Creed,' &c., by a Bishop's Chaplain, quoted by the Rev. W. G. Humphry. *Acts*, Introduction, p. xiv.

³ See notes, ii. 42, 47.

observance of the Lord's-day;¹ regular habits of common prayer, probably according to a liturgical or precomposed form;² careful exposition of the Holy Scriptures;³ baptism of adults and of whole families by sprinkling as well as immersion;⁴ the rite of confirmation performed exclusively by the governors of the Church;⁵ solemn prayer, accompanied with private and public fastings, on great occasions, especially on the ordination of ministers;⁶ frequent celebration of the Eucharist;⁷ collections for the poor administered by subordinate officers of the Church;⁸ missions sent forth with the authority of the Church;⁹ these and other observances, which will occur to the attentive reader, were then practised, as they are still enjoined, by the Church. On the other hand, satisfactory reasons can be assigned for the discontinuance of a few practices which were evidently the result of peculiar circumstances, and were not at any time considered to be binding upon Christians.¹⁰ The study of this book has deepened and confirmed my reverence for those great and holy men to whom we are indebted, under Divine grace, for the restitution of the formularies and constitution of the English Church to their original apostolic purity; and I entertain a strong hope that somewhat of the same impression will be communicated to my readers. It is indeed principally on this account that I believe that the Acts of the Apostles ought to receive, and is likely to receive, more attention than in any preceding age. In the first three centuries it was comparatively neglected.¹¹ On the one hand, no questions had arisen among orthodox Christians about the constitution of the Church, and other points which it definitively settles, and heretics without her pale were little disposed to admit its authority.¹² On the other hand, far more interest was felt, by the generality of Christians, in the Gospels

¹ Notes, ii. 1, xx. 7.

² Note, iv. 24.

³ See especially the discourses of St. Peter, St. Stephen, St. James, and St. Paul.

⁴ Notes, ii. 41, xvi. 15, 23.

⁵ Note, viii. 15-17.

⁶ Notes, ix. 9, x. 30, xiii. 2, and

P. & D. Suggestions, xiv. 23.

⁷ Notes, ii. 42, and xx. 7.

⁸ Note, vii.

⁹ See Introduction, chap. xiii.

¹⁰ Notes, ii. 42, 44, xii. 12.

¹¹ Meyer, &c.

¹² As the Ebionites, Marcionites, and Manicheans, see above, p. ix.

which contain the words and acts of the incarnate Son of God, and by controversialists in the Epistles, which convey the instructions of His Apostles, and their decisions on various points of doctrine and practice. Men did not sufficiently appreciate this book as a record of the work of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, indwelling in His Church, and continuing and completing what He had begun in the flesh. Hence we find comparatively few quotations in the early Fathers;¹ and in the time of Chrysostom, who composed the first commentary upon it, we are told by himself that it was scarcely known by name to unlearned believers. At present, however, all parties are aware of its importance; attempts are constantly made to explain away and dilute its plain practical statements; commentaries written under the influences of sectarian prejudices, or by rationalising and sceptical critics, are found in the school-room and the study; and whatever may become of this attempt, there can be no doubt that a correct interpretation of the import and teaching of the book is imperatively called for in the present circumstances of the Church.

6. The chronology of the Acts is involved in great difficulties, and the systems of ancient and modern critics² present remarkable differences. But considerable light has been thrown upon this subject by late investigations; and although comparatively few dates can be certainly established by external evidence, yet the principal epochs have been fixed with a high degree of probability, and the arrangement of the intermediate events has been ascertained within certain limits. It is of great importance that the reader should have a chronological chart to assist his observations and memory. I have therefore prepared the following, adhering, with few devia-

¹ The references and quotations are, however, quite sufficient to prove its universal reception by the Church from the beginning. They are to be found in Polycarp, Ignatius, Tatian, Justin Martyr, and in all the Fathers after that early age. See Guerike, *Einl. N. T.*, p. 324-6.

² The principal works on the Chronology of the Acts are those by R.

Anger (*De temporum in Actis Apostolorum ratione*, Lips. 1833), and Wieseler (see p. xvii.). Mr. Lewin's important and most valuable work on sacred chronology, *Fasti Sacri*, has lately appeared, when this edition was nearly ready for the press. It has however, been consulted throughout, and many of his conclusions have been unhesitatingly adopted.

tions, to that proposed by Dr. Wieseler, whose work is very frequently referred to in my notes. The limits, and, indeed, the character of this work, will not allow me to state fully the grounds upon which the determination of so many dates depends; but if the reader find that they differ from those to which he is accustomed, he may be assured that they have not been adopted without a careful and repeated sifting of the evidence.

A.D.

33. The crucifixion of our Lord took place on Friday, the 15th of Nisan, the 7th of April. The ascension, therefore, was on Thursday, the 17th of May. The day of Pentecost was fully come on Sunday the 27th.¹

The events recorded, Acts iii.-vii., occupied four years, but the dates cannot be exactly determined. It is probable that the imprisonment of the apostles (chap. v.) took place A.D. 34, and the appointment of the seven deacons the following year, A.D. 35.

36. Pontius Pilate was deposed, towards the end of this year, by L. Vitellius, Præfect of Syria.

37. Several important events this year favoured an outburst of hostility against the Church, which had increased rapidly and now counted vast numbers of adherents in Jerusalem. The Emperor Tiberius died on the 16th of March. His successor, Caligula, was the warm friend of Herod Agrippa, upon whose patronage the Jewish leaders would always confide. There were two changes in the High Priesthood. Caiaphas was deposed early in the year, and, after a short interval, Jonathan, his brother, who succeeded him, was also removed by Vitellius, who then appointed Theophilus, son-in-law of Annas, and brother-in-law of Caiaphas, a bitter and unscrupulous enemy of the Christians. After appointing Theophilus, Vitellius

¹ I have adopted Mr. Lewin's date for these events (correcting what appears to be a misprint, 14th and 24th of May), See *Fasti Sacri*, A.D. 33. The

date assigned by Dr. Wieseler is not generally accepted, although it appears to rest on very careful calculations.

- A.D. left Jerusalem, during the festival of Pentecost. The martyrdom of St. Stephen probably took place immediately afterwards. It was followed by the first general persecution of the Church.

The conversion of Saul took place probably between the festivals of Pentecost and Tabernacles. He received his commission from Theophilus, a fact satisfactorily proved by Mr. Lewin, F.S. 1515.

Nero was born this year, on the 15th of December.

39. The return of St. Paul to Jerusalem took place three years (or, as Mr. Lewin shows, probably in the third year current), after his conversion, about the Feast of Tabernacles.

During this year, the persecution of the Christians appears to have ceased altogether. This may have been owing to the interposition of the Roman governor, Petronius. Both he and the Jewish authorities were fully occupied by attempts to frustrate the mad project of Caligula, to set up his own image in the Temple; and they would be equally anxious to avoid giving any pretext for severity by local disturbances.

40. St. Peter visits the churches in the south-west of Palestine.

The baptism of Cornelius.

41. Caligula was assassinated on the 24th January, and succeeded by Claudius. Agrippa, who had taken an active part in this transaction, was rewarded by the grant of Judæa and Samaria, with other provinces.

In the course of this year the Gospel was first preached to Greeks at Antioch, chap. xi., 20.

42. Agrippa takes up his residence at Jerusalem. He deposes Theophilus, the High Priest, and appoints, first, Simon, and then Matthias, the brother of Jonathan (who refused the office) and of Theophilus.

The mission of Barnabas to Antioch, chap. xi., 22.

43. Barnabas goes from Antioch to Tarsus, and brings Saul back with him. This took place in the spring, a full year before the journey to Jerusalem.

- A.D. Agabus predicts the approaching famine.
44. Barnabas and Paul visit Jerusalem. St. Paul's vision was vouchsafed at this time, in the fourteenth year before the second Epistle to the Corinthians was written. The martyrdom of St. James, the arrest and deliverance of St. Peter, take place in April. In the same month Agrippa celebrates games at Cæsarea, to commemorate the safe return of Claudius from Britain, and dies immediately afterwards.
45. The first missionary journey of St. Paul and St. Barnabas. This year and the two following were passed in Cyprus and Asia Minor.
47. In this year it appears probable, from a speech of Claudius, that Christianity was making progress at Rome. See Lewin, § 1714. St. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch a considerable time before the arrival of Jewish proselytisers from Jerusalem, probably early this year.
- 49.¹ Mission of St. Paul and St. Barnabas to Jerusalem. The Apostolical Council. St. James presides as Bishop of Jerusalem.
50. The second missionary journey of St. Paul, accompanied by Silas, probably began this year.
51. The Gospel preached in Europe, at Philippi, Berea, Thessalonica and Athens.
52. St. Paul arrives at Corinth, where he remains one year and a half.
The first Epistle to the Thessalonians, and, after a short interval, the second, were written at Corinth, either this year or early in 53.
53. Gallio, pro-consul of Achaia, arrives at Corinth, probably about June. Soon afterwards the Jews bring St. Paul before his tribunal, but are rebuffed.
The visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem (chap. xviii., 19, 21)

¹ This date is not certain. Lewin fixes it A.D. 48, Wieseler A.D. 50.

- A.D. is supposed by Mr. Lewin to have taken place this year. Leaving Corinth in August, touching on his way at Ephesus, he would thus reach Jerusalem in time for the feast of Tabernacles, which began on the 15th of September. From Jerusalem St. Paul returns to Antioch, where he passes some time.
54. St. Paul sets out on his third missionary journey from Antioch. He passes through Galatia and Phrygia, and reaches Ephesus about May, where he remains three years. During the first three months he preached to the Jews, then to the Gentiles.
55. The Epistle to the Galatians.¹
56. Timothy and Erastus are sent to Macedonia.²
57. The first Epistle to the Corinthians was written at Ephesus, about Easter, certainly some time before Pentecost.
- The riot at Ephesus, and the consequent departure of St. Paul, took place in May.
- St. Paul passes through Macedonia, where, in the autumn of this year, he writes the second Epistle to the Corinthians. Before the winter he preaches up to the borders of Illyricum. He reached Corinth about the end of November.
58. At Corinth, in January or February, St. Paul writes the Epistle to the Romans. He leaves Corinth early in the year and passes Easter at Philippi. The Passover began at sunset on the 27th of March. St. Luke was with him at that time. St. Paul preaches at Troas on Sunday the 16th of April, addresses the presbyters and bishops at Miletus, on Sunday the 23rd, and arrives at Jerusalem on the 17th of May. He is arrested on the 22nd, and on the 30th is accused before Felix.
60. Felix was recalled and succeeded by Festus, who arrived

¹ This date is satisfactorily proved by Mr. Lewin, § 1824.

² On the question whether the first

Epistle to Timothy, and that to Titus, could have been written this year see note, p. xlvii.

- A.D. in Judæa about midsummer. St. Paul's departure from Judæa took place probably in August. The shipwreck at Malta on the 1st of November.
61. St. Paul reaches Rome in March, in the eighth year of Nero's reign. Burrus was at that time Prætorian Præfect.
62. Burrus, the Prætorian Præfect, died in January. He was succeeded by Tigellinus, and Fenius Rufus. In the early summer, Nero divorced Octavia and married Poppæa. Octavia was murdered in June. James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, was stoned, together with other Christians, at Passover, under Ananus, son of Annas, the High Priest. This took place, like other outrages of the same kind, in the absence of the Roman governor; it was also against the will of the younger Agrippa.

The Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were written, and sent at the same time to Asia by Tychicus, at the time St. Paul expected to be released.

63. Very early this year St. Paul writes the Epistle to the Philippians; in the anticipation of an immediate deliverance from captivity, he promises to send Timothy. The Epistle was carried by Epaphroditus. Assuming the correctness of the preceding dates, upon which the best authorities¹ are agreed, the termination of the two years' military custody took place in March.

The narrative of St. Luke thus closes in March, A.D. 63; nor have we any sufficient data either from Holy Scripture, or from the writings of the early Fathers, to determine the order of events between that date and the martyrdom of St. Paul, which undoubtedly took place at Rome, though considerable differences of opinion exist as to the year in which he suffered.

¹ See Wieseler's comparative table at the end of his *Chronology of the Acts*, and Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*.

In the former edition of this work I stated my own opinion that St. Paul was probably detained in prison after his first examination before Nero, and that after an interval (which may have lasted some twelve months) he was condemned and executed.

The reasons on which that conclusion was grounded still appear to me very weighty; during the two years of St. Paul's detention the Jewish authorities had ample time to bring together accusers from all places in which the apostle had preached the Gospel; nor would it be very difficult for them to work upon the fears and passions of Nero. The influence of Poppæa in the beginning of this year (A.D. 63) was at its culminating point; she then bore a daughter to the Emperor, who conferred both upon the mother and child the title of Augusta. Poppæa was not merely favourable to the Jews, but, according to Josephus, she was a proselyte,¹ and had previously used her influence successfully on their behalf. Tigellinus, one of the Prætorian Præfects, a man of infamous character, and all-powerful with Nero, was soon afterwards a bitter persecutor of the Christians. The gentle treatment which St. Paul experienced during the two years was probably owing at first to Burrus, and after his death to Fenius Rufus, the colleague of Tigellinus, who bore so high a character among the people and the soldiery that it gave umbrage to Nero.² The fact that many members of the imperial household (see Phil. iv. 22), probably no small number of the Prætorian guards, who had been brought necessarily into contact with the apostle, had become converts to Christianity, could scarcely have been unknown to the Emperor; and it is impossible under any circumstances that he should have regarded Christianity with favour. Poppæa must have taught him to look on its professors with suspicion or hatred. That he should acquit St. Paul, and set him at liberty, without any further inquiry, at the first examination, appears to me so improbable, that nothing short of distinct statements of the inspired writers, or the early Fathers, or very strong arguments drawn from St. Paul's Epistles written subsequently to the trial, would induce me to accept it as an established fact.

¹ *Θεοπροσβίη*, Ant., xx. 8, 11.

² Tac. Ann. xiv. 51.

The statements of the early Fathers are far from conclusive. The first, and by far the most important, is found in the Epistle of St. Clement of Rome to the Corinthians. He was a contemporary of St. Paul, nor can any doubt attach to his testimony. I quote the passage at length: it is interesting in its bearings upon the history of the Acts. 'Let us set before our eyes the holy apostles: Peter, by unjust envy, underwent not one or two, but many sufferings, till at last, being martyred,¹ he went to the place of glory that was due unto him. For the same cause did Paul in like manner receive the reward of his patience. Seven times he was in bonds; he was scourged,² was stoned; he preached both in the east and the west, and won the illustrious report of his faith, having taught the whole world righteousness; *and having come to the boundary* of the west, and borne witness before the governors, he thus departed from the world, and went unto the holy place, having become a most eminent example of patient endurance.'

In this passage the whole question hangs on the meaning of the words in italics, '*the boundary of the west.*' Several critics, among them scholars wholly unprejudiced, hold that St. Clement is speaking of Rome, and that he connects the arrival of St. Paul with his death. Such is indeed the natural impression, if the words can bear the meaning.³ I think they can.³ If so, St. Clement would be a witness, not for, but against the deliverance of St. Paul. On the other hand, there is a great weight of authority for the assumption that St. Clement means, not merely that St. Paul preached both in the east and west, but that he actually proceeded to the western boundary or coast of Spain. Nor, supposing that interpretation to be correct, would it be impossible that Britain might be included in the term, a country to which the eyes of Chris-

¹ Or 'having borne witness,' as further on. The word took the technical signification of martyrdom very early and probably in this epistle.

² Or 'banished.' The reading is conjectural.

³ See note infra. Τὸ τέγμα τῆς δόξης cannot mean 'the highest power of the west,' as Wieseler supposes, and his

conjectural alteration of ἐπέ for ἐπέ is rejected on the authority of the manuscript by Dr. Jacobson; but the words may, and probably do mean, the western capital, or the capital in the west of the world. Τέγμα is properly 'a goal,' the culminating point or object of a man's desires and exertions.



tians were directed at a very early period, and from which some converts named by St. Paul as residents at Rome are supposed to have come.¹ There is one other early notice,² from the middle of the second century, which seems to allude to St. Paul's journey to Spain as a well-known fact; but the passage is obscure and perhaps mutilated.

No other positive testimony can be quoted before the fourth century. From that time, however, the Fathers are unanimous in the opinion that St. Paul actually visited Spain. Athanasius³ speaks of it as a point about which no doubt is felt. Eusebius both asserts it and supports it by arguments, which, though of little weight,⁴ show the strength of his conviction. Statements to the same effect are found in Jerome and Chrysostom. It has, indeed, been shown that the opinion of Eusebius, who is implicitly followed in such matters by the later Fathers, rests upon a chronological calculation which is irreconcilable with Holy Scripture. It is also probable that all, and certain that some, of the Fathers took the journey to Spain for granted as a fulfilment of St. Paul's intention expressed in the Epistle to the Romans, chap. xv. 4. Still, the opinions of so many great men, all coinciding in the general conclusion, cannot be disregarded; they add greatly to the force of arguments drawn from indirect notices in the New Testament.

The argument from the Epistles is unquestionably very strong; by most of our own critical writers it is held to be conclusive. Dr. Wieseler has indeed shown that the circumstances under which the first Epistle to Timothy and that to Titus may be reconciled with the narrative in the Acts, if it is assumed that St. Paul visited Crete and undertook a journey into Macedonia during his three years' sojourn at Ephesus. St. Luke was not with him at that time, and it is certain, from the

¹ See the Treatise on Claudia and Pudens, by Williams, and a remarkably clear and interesting note in Conybeare and Howson, vol. ii. p. 500.

² In the fragment commonly known as the Canon of Muratori. See Rowth. *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, tom 1.

³ In the epistle to Dracontius.

⁴ In fact, they tell in the opposite

direction, for he assumes that as St. Paul was tried while Nero was gentle and clement, he was probably acquitted; Eusebius would therefore have inferred that St. Paul must have been condemned by Nero, after the murder of mother and wife. See Eus. H. E. ii. 22.

second Epistle to the Corinthians, that St. Paul undertook several journeys which are wholly unnoticed by his historian, and for some of which no time can be pointed as equally suitable. The omission of all reference is, therefore, far from being fatal to the hypothesis, which is supported by many ingenious arguments and apparent coincidences. It must, however, be admitted that Wieseler's arguments prove, at the utmost, the possibility of the assumed date, but leave very serious doubt as to the probability. On the other hand, it is generally admitted that the notices of parties and opinions found in both these Epistles indicate a more advanced stage of organisation in the Church, and of heretical development in its opponents, than are found in the Pauline Epistles written before the apostle's imprisonment at Rome. This argument is one which requires a very careful study of Christian antiquity to appreciate; but it is a fact that nearly all writers who maintain the authenticity of the pastoral Epistles accept it as conclusive. The argument from the Epistle to the Hebrews is even stronger, assuming it to be the composition of St. Paul, a point which, though questioned by critics of undoubted soundness in the faith, is generally maintained by the Church. That Epistle was probably written in Italy, at a time when the apostle was apparently at liberty, and when Timothy had already left him. It is inferred¹ that this must have been after the end of his imprisonment.

The second Epistle to Timothy was written shortly before the apostle's death. In it he says that Erastus remained at Corinth, and that he left Trophimus at Miletus, sick. It is very difficult to reconcile these statements with the facts which are certainly known from St. Luke's narration, on the supposition that St. Paul wrote to Timothy during the first imprisonment.

It is also a point of great importance that, with very few exceptions, the German critics, who hold that St. Paul was not set free after his first trial, reject the Epistles in question as spurious; and also that among ourselves, those who defend them with the greatest ability consider that they must have been written after that event.

¹ None of these points are certain. See note p. xlvii.



Taking all these grounds into consideration, I feel it right to set before my readers that account of the order of events which appears on the whole most natural and probable, assuming that the defence of St. Paul, as he certainly anticipated, was successful. Nero may possibly have left the examination to his council, or if present have acquiesced in their decision. St. Paul may then, as he had purposed, have visited Spain, though the distinct statement of a Bishop of Rome (Innocent I., A.D. 416), that no church was founded there by St. Paul, implies that he remained but a short time, hastening doubtless to fulfil his promises to the Eastern Churches. Early in the summer he may have visited Crete, leaving Titus there as the bishop, thence proceeding to Ephesus, where he finds Timotheus, and leaves him in charge of the church. Then follows a journey to Macedonia, where he may have written the first Epistle to Timothy, and, somewhat later (when about to set out for Nicopolis), the Epistle to Titus. From the second Epistle to Timothy, it would seem that he returned in the late autumn or winter to Troas (travelling so hastily that he left there his books and MSS.), touched at Miletus, where he left Trophimus, passed by Corinth (where Erastus remained, as it would seem unwilling to incur the danger of imprisonment), and thence proceeded to Rome. Whether he was arrested at Corinth by order of the emperor, or by the local authorities, is quite uncertain, but there can be little doubt that he came as a prisoner. The interval between his deliverance and return to Rome is supposed, by most writers, to have lasted three or four years; by others, with whom I entirely agree, supposing that he ever left Italy, it lasted from the beginning of A.D. 63 to March A.D. 64.

The circumstances of his trial are gathered from incidental notices in the second Epistle to Timothy. From that we learn that on a preliminary examination St. Paul confronted his accusers unsupported by friends, upon whose presence and support he had counted. 'At my first answer (or defence) no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge; chap. iv. 16. Among those who thus for-

¹ In this I differ most decidedly from Dr. Howson and Mr. Lewin: all the arguments from Christian antiquity

in favour of a second imprisonment fall to the ground if the visit to Spain is abandoned.

sook him Demas is named specially, as influenced by selfish motives, and a shadow rests on the fair fame of Crescens, and even Titus.¹ St. Luke alone was with the Apostle. The accusation appears to have been conducted with great energy. Among the foremost of his accusers, Alexander the coppersmith, is mentioned. This name occurs in two other places. In the first Epistle to Timothy (chap. i. 20) we read that he was excommunicated by St. Paul for having put away faith and a sound conscience, and made shipwreck of the faith. When the uproar took place at Ephesus, Alexander, a Jew, was put forward by the Jews. These notices harmonise in all points, and sufficiently account for his presence and animosity, and for the effect of his representations. The immediate result, however, was favourable. St. Paul says that he was strengthened and supported by the Lord, and delivered from the mouth of the lion, and apparently once more, though still in bonds (see chap. i. 8), at liberty to preach to the Gentiles. From the expression 'the mouth of the lion,' it has been inferred that this examination took place before Nero; but the words may apply to the hired advocate who probably conducted the proceedings on the part of the Jews. The date of this trial is uncertain, but the partial acquittal of St. Paul makes it, to say the least, highly probable that it occurred before the persecution of the Christians, which began in July A.D. 68. After that time it would have been scarcely necessary to institute a legal inquiry into St. Paul's proceedings: it would have sufficed for his conviction and condemnation that he was a Christian. Nero may have had his attention first drawn to the rapid progress of the new sect and to the character of its teachings by the trial of St. Paul. The account which Tacitus gives of the events which followed shows that the Christians were already detested by the Roman populace, both because they were looked upon as a sect of the Jews, odious for their bigotry, and were reported to be atheists, or calumniators and enemies of the gods. The historian says, 'But neither these exertions, nor his largesses to the people, nor his offerings to the gods, did away with the infamous imputation under which Nero lay of having ordered the city

¹ Titus is here said to have been sent into Dalmatia.

to be set on fire.' To put an end, therefore, to this report, he laid the guilt, and inflicted the most cruel punishments, upon a set of people who were holden in abhorrence for their crimes, and were called by the vulgar 'Christians.' The founder of this name was Christ, who suffered death in the time of Tiberius, under his procurator Pontius Pilate. This pernicious superstition, thus checked for a while, broke out again, and spread, not only over Judæa, where the evil originated, but through Rome also, whither everything bad upon earth finds its way and is practised. Some who confessed their sect were first seized, and afterwards, by their information, a vast multitude were apprehended, who were convicted, not so much of the crime of burning Rome, as of hatred to mankind. Their sufferings at their execution were aggravated by insult and mockery, for some were disguised in the skins of wild beasts, and worried to death by dogs; some were crucified; and others were wrapped in pitched shirts, and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve as lights to illuminate the night. Nero lent his own gardens for these executions, and exhibited, at the same time, a mock Circensian entertainment, being a spectator of the whole, in the dress of a charioteer, sometimes mingling with the crowd on foot, and sometimes viewing the spectacle from his car. This conduct made the sufferers pitied, and though they were criminals, and deserving the severest punishments, yet they were considered as sacrificed not so much out of a regard to the public good, as to gratify the cruelty of one man."¹ This persecution was followed by an edict, in which Christianity was expressly condemned as an illicit religion, opposed to the fundamental principles of the Roman polity and faith.

After the first examination all is dark and matter of conjecture. Whether St. Paul was confined in the Mamertine prison until his execution; whether his martyrdom took place before or after the general persecution in which, as all ancient authorities agree,² St. Peter was crucified, cannot be determined.

¹ Ann. xv. 44.

² Compare Clem. R. c. v.; Dionys. Corinth ap.; Eus. H. E. ii. 25; Iren.

adv. H. iii. and iv. 19.; Tertullian, c. M. iv. 5. See article on St. Peter, in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

No account of a second trial is recorded. He may have perished without a formal condemnation, but no doubt rests on the fact that he was beheaded by the order of Nero, thus undergoing the death of a Roman citizen, on the road to Ostia, where the place of his martyrdom is marked by the great basilica which now bears his name.¹

¹ I have given the account which, on the whole, seems to me most probable, on the assumption that St. Paul's first examination issued in his release. I have not thought it fair to those readers who have not sufficient means of weighing all the evidence which is adduced on either side, to reject that assumption altogether; but I confess that I do not feel satisfied with the present state of the question. I would suggest to the more critical reader that a further inquiry into the following points, some of which are completely overlooked by one and all the able and learned writers who have dealt with the question, may ultimately lead to a different conclusion.

1. The notice of St. Clement of Rome is not positively settled. If τὸ τρίτον τῆς δόξης means either Italy or Rome, as many critics of very different schools believe (Fell, Ruchat, Ilgenfeld, Lipsius, and Schaff, quoted by Dr. Jacobson: to these may be 'added Baur, Shenkel and Schrader ap. Dressel), and as distinguished Greek scholars, whom I have myself consulted, think very probable, the authority of Clement would be adverse to the common opinion. If he means 'Spain,' his authority cannot be claimed by those who, with Dr. Howson and Mr. Lewin, suppose that St. Paul never visited that country.

2. It is quite clear, from Acts xx. 25 and 38, that when St. Luke completed his work, which could not be before the end of the two years' imprisonment, and probably not before the

first examination or trial of St. Paul, he was convinced that the Apostle would never return to Asia Minor. As he was with St. Paul when he wrote the second Epistle to Timothy, he knew absolutely whether this conviction was or was not justified by the event. It is difficult to suppose that he would have left the narration in its present form had he known that it was not justified. It is still more difficult to reconcile St. Paul's positive declaration, '*I know that ye all will see my face no more,*' with the supposition that he *did see them all* within three years. This may not be held conclusive, but considering that the apostle is not (as in other passages quoted in favour of that supposition) speaking of hopes, or wishes, or intentions, but of a future event known to him (and how known save by an inward revelation?), it comes very near to positive evidence.

3. The notice of the departure of Titus into Dalmatia, before the trial of St. Paul, is difficult to reconcile with the supposition that he was left at Crete shortly before the apostles' arrival at Rome. On the other hand, it is quite reconcileable with the assumption that he remained there for a season, when St. Paul returned to Ephesus A.D. 55 or 56. I attach also some weight to the notices of Alexander. In the first Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul says, that he excommunicated him. What more natural than that he should afterwards be put forward by the Jews at the uproar at Ephesus and take a foremost place among his accusers at Rome?

7. Some words may be necessary to explain the references which the reader will find beneath the notes in each chapter.

4. The arguments drawn from the style and general character of the three pastoral Epistles are not materially affected by assigning a later date. They are best met by proofs of their essentially Pauline tone of thought and feeling—by the remarkable flexibility of St. Paul's mind, whose language in all his epistles and discourses varies according to the persons whom he addresses and the subjects which he discusses. The arguments from the organisation of the Church are exceedingly weak. The first care of the Apostles in every church was to appoint presbyters and other subordinate officers. The injunction not to appoint new converts was quite as necessary when the Church of Ephesus was going through its first struggles, and converts of wealth and influence might be thrust forward, as at any later period; old converts were to be found there, if not in abundance, yet in sufficient numbers to supply the district: the elders and bishops whom St. Paul addressed but two or three years later at Miletus were certainly no neophytes. The argument from the development of gnostic doctrines is weighty, but not conclusive. The Epistles to the Corinthians show that the distinctive features to which allusion is made, had been completely developed at Corinth, at the time when Wieseler assumes these Epistles to have been written; indeed it is quite clear that the apostle's mind would be just then especially drawn to the subject.

5. The argument from Timothy's age is rather evaded than met by late writers. Timothy joined St. Paul A.D. 49. He was then a disciple, so well known that his character was testified by the disciples both in Lystra

and Iconium. Acts xvi. 12. Nothing is there said of his age, and such a character implies that he must already have been actively engaged in Christian works when St. Paul found him. This is irreconcilable with Dr. Howson's conjecture that he may have been seventeen or eighteen years old. I cannot suppose that he was less than twenty, and think it far more probable that he was twenty-five or even thirty years of age. St. Paul couples him with Silvanus, as having preached the Gospel in Macedonia, that is, in the year 51. If the first Epistle was addressed to him A.D. 55 or 56, as Wieseler supposes, the allusion to his youth is natural, considering the high importance of the duty imposed upon him; but, ten years later, he could not have been far short of forty years of age; an age at which no one certainly would have been likely to despise his youth. The reference to youthful lusts, in the second epistle, is of course, so far as it goes, in favour of the earlier date which, with Wieseler and Huther, I have assigned to the apostle's death. I fully admit the difficulty of adjusting the incidental notices in these Epistles to the narration of the Acts; but too much stress appears to be laid upon this point. St. Luke passes over long intervals with comparatively short notice: this is especially the case with that period when, as during St. Paul's stay at Ephesus, he was not with the apostle. We know from St. Paul's own testimony (2 Cor. xi. 25), that in A.D. 57 he had thrice suffered shipwreck, and had passed a day and night in the deep. No indication of these things is found in the Acts: When they occurred is quite uncertain, but they coincide remarkably with the hypothesis of a voyage to Crete, and

I considered that it would be more convenient for English readers to have the commentary unencumbered by words which they might not understand, but did not think myself justified in using other men's labours without acknowledgment, the more especially since the works from which a large proportion of the notes are condensed or extracted, are unknown in this country save to a few biblical students.

Among the ancient commentaries, I have consulted throughout and used freely that of *Chrysostom*, which may not be equal to his works on other portions of the New Testament, yet is in every respect superior to any commentary written by the Fathers. It is remarkable for good sense, clear perception of the general meaning of the writer, and exegetical tact in the interpretation. I have used the *Benedictine* edition, but have not generally referred to the pages, since the passages

a journey to Macedonia, within the three years of the apostle's residence at Ephesus. The difficulty of adjusting such a statement to St. Luke's narration should teach us to be cautious in dealing with a supposition which is avowedly adopted, if not framed, in order to get rid of a similar, and hardly a greater difficulty, in the case of the pastoral Epistles. In fact, the notice of Trophimus is the only one of which no tolerably satisfactory explanation can be given. There is, indeed, some variation in the reading. We find Melitos in the best MSS. the Arabic version (ar^m of Tischendorf), has Melite, i.e. Malta, a conjecture of Beza, approved by Grotius; but little or no weight can be attached to this. I cannot, however, see any absolute impossibility in the supposition that St. Paul (who merely wished to account for the absence of Trophimus, and thus exempt him from blame) should condense two statements in one, and remark incidentally that he had left him behind at Ephesus, meaning that he had left him behind on his voyage, and that at the

time when the Epistle was written he was staying at Ephesus.

6. Supposing such a place to be found for the first Epistle to Timothy and that to Titus, the whole series of events proceeds naturally and in accordance with all the known circumstances of the times. The first examination resulted not in an acquittal, but a postponement of the trial. This is quite in accordance with Roman customs. The apostle's imprisonment would be no more in his own hired house; but his friends and attendants would for a time have access to him, as had been the case at Cæsarea. At this time St. Luke might complete his narrative, not impossibly without a view to its effect upon persons interested in a transaction of so much importance in all its bearings. I cannot, indeed, comprehend that St. Luke could possibly have left his narrative in the present form had he afterwards accompanied the Apostle on his journey to Ephesus and Miletus, or known of that journey, as he must have done from St. Paul, with whom he remained to the last.

can be found without difficulty by any person who may wish to verify a quotation.

I have also referred occasionally to the ancient *Greek Catena, or selected Commentary from the Greek Fathers*, edited by Dr. Cramer, Oxf. 1838.

The editions of *Wetstein*, *Rosenmüller*, and *Kuinoel* have been consulted chiefly for the sake of the copious references to classical authors. *Kuinoel* has condensed the information contained in the learned annotations of *Wolf*, *Raphelius*, *Elsner*, *Kypke*, *Heinrich*, and *Fritsche*. His commentary is deeply tinged with the unhappy rationalism long prevalent in Germany. This is also the case with *Rosenmüller*.

Lightfoot and *Schoetgen* have supplied the references which I have made to Talmudical and other Hebrew writers.

Whitby, *Hammond*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, *Diodati*, have been consulted. They are too well known to require more than a reference.

I have also to acknowledge my obligations to the following works, among others, which are quoted in the notes :—

Dr. Burton's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History of the first Three Centuries.

Dr. Hind's (Bishop of Norwich) History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity.

Bishop Blomfield's Lectures on the Acts.

Archbishop Sumner's Exposition of the Acts.

Humphry's Commentary on the Acts.

Dr. Bloomfield's Synopsis Criticorum.

The Commentaries of the Dean of Canterbury and Archdeacon Wordsworth.

A. Barnes, Notes Explanatory and Practical on the Acts of the Apostles. Barnes is an industrious and careful writer : he has given a fair summary of the information contained in the notes of *Kuinoel* and *Rosenmüller*, and his practical observations are serious and devout. But he is a prejudiced sectarian, and systematically writes against the constitution and ordinances of the Episcopal Church.

The History and Writings of St. Paul, by *Conybeare* and *Howson*, has taken its place as one of the most important additions to theological literature, combining the research and

comprehensive views of the best German school, with the sobriety of judgment and steadfastness of faith that have hitherto characterised divines of the Church of England.

The latest commentaries in German which I have used are those by Olshausen, Meyer, and Baumgarten. The former is well known in England, and is a very instructive writer. But his notes on this book are meagre and superficial compared with those on the Gospels, and he rather eludes than clears up the difficulties, which ought to be thoroughly investigated in such a work. Olshausen is one of the least objectionable of the German theologians. He is a sincere believer, and though not wholly free from the tendencies of his nation, always writes in a reverential and devout tone. Meyer is a writer of high and peculiar merit, and taken as a whole his commentary on the New Testament is by far the best which has appeared on the Continent. He was educated in the school of rationalism, but, as he says himself in his introduction to the Romans, reclaimed by a careful study of St. Paul's epistles. I have made constant use of the Notes on the Acts,¹ because they are critically accurate, throw great light upon the construction, and completely overthrow many sophistical attempts to explain away the plain meaning of St. Luke. Meyer proves more convincingly than any late writer on the Continent, that the book of Acts implies throughout the active agency of a Divine power in the preachers and ministers of the Word.²

The commentary of De Wette is chiefly remarkable for the rashness which characterises all the works of that able but mischievous writer.

The following works have supplied much valuable information :—

Neander, Geschichte, der Pflanzung u.s.w. der Christlichen Kirche. There can be no doubt of the piety of this learned and ingenious author, nor of his reverence for some of the great fundamental truths of the Gospel ; but his theology is defective,

¹ Kritisch exegetisches Handbuch über die Apostelgeschichte.

² Meyer and Baur show great ingenuity in exposing the semi-rationalistic

interpretations suggested or adopted by Neander, and other followers of Schleiermacher, and too often countenanced by Olshausen.

and his view of the authority of Scripture is so low, that it is almost tantamount to a denial of its inspiration. His *Life of Jesus*, and the work to which I have referred frequently in this commentary, are likely to unsettle the convictions of young and undisciplined minds, more especially by suggesting explanations of the passages in St. Luke, which refer to miraculous agencies. To a scholar and divine they abound in valuable information; and they are peculiarly remarkable for a profound and comprehensive view of the state of thought and feeling in the heathen world, and of the great transformation which was effected by the infusion of Christian principles, and the spiritual influences by which they were accompanied and enforced.

Hemsen, Der Apostel Paulus. A learned and orthodox biography of St. Paul, with a copious analysis of the Epistles in chronological order.

Works similar to this in plan, but very widely differing in spirit, have been written by Schrader, Baur, Schwegler, and other rationalists, a school which cannot be better described than in the words of an early Father, quoted by Eusebius (H. E. V. near the end). They either do not believe that the Holy Scriptures were utterances of the Holy Spirit, and are faithless, or they consider themselves wiser than the Holy Spirit; and if so, what can be said of them but that they are beside themselves?

Germany has, however, produced many works of a very high character on this as on all other departments of sacred literature. Here it may suffice to refer to the names of Lange, Lechler, Ritschl, Rothe, and Wieseler, whose writings have cast great light upon the development of the Church in the apostolic age. A sound work, however, presenting a complete and impartial account of that age, is still a great desideratum of our times.

Winer, Realwörterbuch. This encyclopædia of facts pertaining to the criticism and interpretation of the Bible is not written in a good spirit, but is learned and accurate. I have used it freely; but the English reader will find most of the facts, for which I have referred to this author, in the *Biblical Encyclopædia of Dr. Kitto*, and in the *Dictionary of the Bible* edited by Dr. W. Smith.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

CHAPTER I.

The Evangelists begin their narratives severally with the circumstances that attended our Lord's coming from heaven into a world of sin and shame; in the Acts, on the contrary, St. Luke commences with His departure from earth and His return to heaven.¹ That departure was, however, in a true sense, a second coming, being an entrance into a state where He exercises a real dominion over the Church, which He sustains, quickens, and develops by His spiritual indwelling. The first division of the Acts contains a brief summary of the earliest transactions of the Christian Church. In this chapter we have an account of the ascension (6—11), and of the appointment of an apostle in the place of Judas Iscariot.

A.D. 33.

1. THE former treatise have I made, O ^aTheophilus, ^a Luke 1. 3. of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ^b Mark 16.
2. ^bUntil the day in which he was taken up, after ^c Luke 9. 51. & 24. 51. ver. 9. 1 Tim. 3. 16.

1. '*Treatise*,'—narrative, historical discourse.² St. Luke speaks of his gospel, which he had composed at an earlier period, probably during the imprisonment of St. Paul at Cæsarea.³

'*Theophilus*,' to whom St. Luke addressed his gospel, was a Christian convert, probably a man of rank; and, if an old tradition may be received, a native of Alexandria.⁴

'*Of all*,' that is, of all the most important events which St. Luke had ascertained, or had been inspired to record.

'*Began both to do and teach*.' The word began is not redundant or superfluous.⁵ It is used significantly, to distinguish the works and teaching of our Lord during His sojourn upon earth from the continuation and completion of both by the apostles, under the influence of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord laid the foundation of the Church in the flesh, and completed the building in the Spirit.

2. '*He was taken up*,'—He was received up into glory. 1 Tim. iii. 16. The ascension of our Lord is thus

¹ Olshausen.

² Not 'book.' See Meyer.

³ Burton, Lect. U. E. viii. p. 235.

⁴ Bar Bahlul ap. Castell. Lex. Hept. c. 3859.

⁵ Meyer and Olshausen.

- * Matt. 28. that he through the Holy Ghost *had given command-
 19. Mark ments unto the apostles whom he had chosen :
 16. 15.
 John 20. 21. 3. *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his
 ch. 10. 41, passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them
 42. forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to
 * Mark 16. the kingdom of God :
 14. Luke
 24. 36.
 John 20. 19, 26. & 21. 1, the kingdom of God :
 14. 1 Cor.
 15. 5. 4. *And, [being assembled together with *them*, com-
 * Luke 24. 43, 49.
 1 Cor. eating

represented as the conclusion of His work on earth, previous to which He had completed His instructions and commands to the apostles.

'Through the Holy Ghost.' The Holy Ghost is the agent by whom the commandments of Jesus are effectually impressed on the heart of man. Our Lord imparted the Holy Spirit to the apostles by the symbolical act of breathing on them, when He gave them their commission. John xx 22, 23.

'Commandments.' These commandments were to preach the Gospel to every creature ; to preach repentance and remission of sins ; to baptize all nations in the name of the Holy Trinity ; and to teach them to observe all the precepts and ordinances of Christ. See Mark xvi. 15, 16 ; Matt. xxviii. 18—20 ; Luke xxiv. 47.

'Whom he had chosen.' These words are added emphatically, to point out the full dignity of the apostolic office. Because they were elected and commissioned by Jesus they were made 'able ministers' by the Holy Ghost.

3. *'To whom also,' &c.* This verse points out another qualification of the apostles. They were eye-witnesses, if not of the act of His resurrection, yet of His restoration to life, and triumph over death. He showed himself alive after His passion, that is, His death of agony and shame. The word properly means 'suffering,' and includes the notion of the last suffering, death, as in the Litany, 'by Thy cross and passion.'

'Infallible proofs,' in which there could be no deception. The word in the original denotes a certain proof, or ground of argument by which a fact may be ascertained. The apostles saw our Lord after the resurrection on no less than thirteen recorded occasions, and under circumstances that made all illusion impossible. See especially the last two chapters of St. John's gospel.

'Being seen.' The word used by St. Luke does not mean that our Lord was seen continually, but that he was occasionally, or frequently manifested to them.

'Forty days.' A period marked out as mysterious by several of the most important transactions in the Old and New Testament, as the deluge, the giving of the law, and the fast of our Saviour. This is the only passage where the interval between the resurrection and ascension is exactly specified, but the narratives of the evangelists imply that it was of some length.

'The kingdom of God.' The kingdom in which God is recognised and worshipped in the fulness of His attributes, and in which He reigns and dwells as the Giver of life and bliss. The visible Church of Christ is that kingdom in its transitional and militant form on earth. Our Saviour instructed the apostles, during those forty days, in the principles according to which the Church should be established, organised, and administered.

4. *'Being assembled together with*

manded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, 'which; ^{together with them.} Luke 24. 49. John 14. 16, 26, 27. & 15. 26. & 16. 7. ch. 2. 28. ^{saith he, ye have heard of me.}

5. ⁵ For John truly baptized with water; ⁶ but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. ⁷ Matt. 3. 11. ch. 11. 16. & 19. 4. ⁸ Joel 3. 18. ch. 2. 4. & 11. 15.

6. When they therefore were come together, they

them. This meeting of our Lord with His disciples evidently took place at Jerusalem, immediately after their return from Galilee, and probably a few days before the ascension. The marginal reading, 'eating together,' is derived from the ancient versions. It is probable that our Lord met His apostles while they were 'breaking bread,' according to His ordinance, but the word in the original means simply, 'being assembled with.'

'Should not depart.' This may refer to the interval between the ascension and Pentecost, but the apostles appear to have remained at Jerusalem many years; according to a very old tradition, twelve years. See note on c. viii. 1.

'The promise.' 'That they should be endued with power from on high.' Luke xxiv. 49. That promise refers to the complete outpouring of the Holy Ghost, the personal coming of the Comforter. His influence had been communicated partially to the disciples previously.

'Which ye have heard of me.' The transition from the third to the first person gives great liveliness and force to the narrative, and is not uncommon in the sacred writings. See Luke v. 14; Acts xxiii. 22. The words 'saith he' are inserted, because the transition might seem too abrupt in our language. Our Lord refers to the discourses recorded, Luke xxiv. 49; John xiv. 16; xv. 26.

5. 'John.' John the Baptist. Our Lord evidently refers to John's own declaration, in which his baptism by water is contrasted with the baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire, which was to be given by Christ, Matt. iii. 11; John, i. 33. This prediction was now to be fulfilled by the descent of the Comforter.

'Not many days hence.' This assembling probably took place on the Sunday before Ascension, so that only fourteen days would intervene between this promise and its fulfilment.

6. 'When they therefore were come together.' These words refer to a second meeting,² as is plain from St. Luke's gospel, xxiv. 49, 50. It took place in the district of Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, whither our Lord led out His disciples on the day of His ascension.

'Wilt thou at this time,' &c. The apostles knew from many clear prophecies in the Old Testament that a mighty outpouring of the Holy Ghost would take place in the days of Messiah. See Joel ii. 28, 29; Acts ii. 16. They presumed, therefore, that the promise of their Lord, upon which they must have meditated deeply in the interval between the last meeting and this solemn day, was an indirect prediction of the immediate fulfilment of the other prophecies, which refer to the inauguration of Messiah's kingdom. See Isaiah i. 26; Dan. vii. 27. That kingdom is described by the

¹ Hesychius ap. Meyer.

² Olshausen.

¹ Matt. 24. 3. asked of him, saying, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time
² Isai. 1. 26.
 Dan. 7. 27. ³ restore again the kingdom to Israel?

⁴ Amos. 9. 11.
⁵ Matt. 24.
 36. Mark
 13. 32. 7. And he said unto them, 'It is not for you to
⁶ 1 Thess. 5. 1. know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath
⁷ ch. 2. 1, 4. put in his own power.
⁸ Or, the

⁹ power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.
¹⁰ Luke 24. 49. 8. ¹¹ But ye shall receive ¹² power, ¹³ after that the
¹⁴ Luke 24. Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ¹⁵ ye shall be wit-
¹⁶ John 15. 27. ver. nesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea,
¹⁷ 22. ch. 2. 32. and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the
 earth.

prophet Micah (iv. 8) as a restoration: 'Unto them shall it come, even the first dominion: the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.' The apostles at that time undoubtedly expected that the Messiah would deliver their countrymen from temporal bondage, restore the throne of David, and extend the empire of Israel over the whole earth. They were not yet fully aware of the exclusively spiritual character of that intermediate dispensation between the first and second advent of Christ, of which they were to be the ministers.

7. '*It is not for you to know,*' &c. The answer of our Lord does not imply that the kingdom was never to be restored to Israel, but it checks all curious speculations as to the unrevealed purposes of God. Compare a similar answer, Matt. xxiv. 36. On both occasions our Saviour directed the attention of His disciples to their own work and duty. Chrysostom remarks, 'A good teacher informs his disciples, not of what they wish, but of what it is profitable for them to learn.'

'*The times and seasons.*' 'Times' means any period; 'seasons' a limited and definite time, and includes the notion of fitness.¹ The former word may be understood of the duration of the present dispensation; the latter, of the date of Messiah's second ad-

vent, when the spiritual glory of the Church will become visible, in the manifestation of the sons of God. See Rom. viii. 19.

'*The Father hath put in his own power,*' or, 'kept in His own power;' i.e. constituted them so as to be subject exclusively to His own authority. These words are generally compared with our Lord's declaration, Mark xiii. 32: That not even the Son knoweth of that day and of that hour. But our Lord there spake, as we may reverentially conjecture, of His human nature in His state of voluntary humiliation. This passage, on the contrary, belongs to the time of His exaltation, and it cannot be doubted that what the Father knoweth is known in all the fulness of the word to the Son. The meaning of the words seems to be that the determination of that time forms no part of the scheme of Providence, which is a subject of revelation, and that it depends unconditionally upon the secret will of God, into which man is not encouraged or permitted to enquire.

8. '*Ye shall receive power.*' This second part of our Lord's answer gives the disciples full information as to their own prospects. When the kingdom was to come they might not learn, but they were immediately to receive that power which would qualify them to prepare the way for the king.

¹ Meyer, Tittman. Synon. N. T. p. 41.

9. ¹ And when he had spoken these things, while ² they beheld, ³ he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

¹ Luke 24.
² John 6.
³ ver. 2.

10. And while they looked stedfastly toward

'Power.' The version in the text is more correct than that in the margin. They were to receive power on and by the descent of the Holy Ghost.

'Witnesses unto me.' It was the duty of the apostles, in a special sense, to bear witness to the life, doctrines, suffering, resurrection, and ascension of their Lord. They were to bear witness by proclaiming the truth, and, when called upon, by sealing their testimony with their blood. The word 'witness' is the same as 'martyr.'

'In Jerusalem—uttermost part of the earth.' These words designate the sphere of operations assigned to the apostles, in its beginning, progress, and ultimate extent.¹ In the Acts we read how far that commandment was fulfilled by the apostles. The history of the Church describes the continuation of that work by their successors. The apostles did not, at that time, fully understand the extent of their commission, but believed that they were to preach the gospel to their countrymen² only, whether in Judæa or in foreign lands. The last words of our Saviour asserted the universality of His kingdom.

9. 'While they beheld.' It is important to observe that the ascension took place in open day, in the sight of the apostles. They could bear witness to the resurrection, because they saw Him afterwards in the flesh; but they could only bear personal testimony to the ascension, because He was taken up while they beheld.³

'A cloud.' This must be under-

stood as a luminous cloud, a symbol of the Divine Presence, the same as the Shechinah, which rested on the mercy-seat, on the consecration of the first temple. It was a visible representation of the triumphant, resurrection of the glory which Christ had laid aside on His entrance into the world. The chief historical types of this great event are Enoch, Moses, and Elijah: the great ceremonial type was the yearly entrance of the High Priest⁴ into the holy of holies on the day of atonement. The most important prophecies are Psalm xxiv. 7, xlvii. 5, lxviii. 18; Micah ii. 13;⁵ Dan. vii. 10—13.

10. 'Looked stedfastly.' These words, which exactly express the sense of the original,⁶ indicate the intense feelings of interest, amazement, and affection, with which the apostles gazed on the departing form of their dear Lord. They could not reconcile themselves to His departure, even though it was into a state of glory.

'He went up.' Our Redeemer is not said to have been lifted up in a chariot, or by an angel: because He who had made all things was elevated above all things by His own power. *St. Gregory.*

'Two men stood by them.' That is, appeared suddenly standing by them. The angels appear in the form of men on most occasions recorded in the Old and New Testament, in order, as we may presume, to moderate the awe and dread which the presence of heavenly beings must cause to sinners.

'White apparel.' Garments of light,

¹ Meyer.

² Notes on Acts IX.

³ Pearson on the Creed, art. vi. Stier, *Reden Jesu*, vol. vi. p. 1016.

⁴ Levit. xvi.

⁵ Pearson on the Creed, art. vi. p. 46, note.

⁶ Meyer on Matt. p. 78.

* Matt. 28. 3. heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them
 Mark 16. 5. 'in white apparel;
 Luke 24. 4.
 John 20. 12.
 ch. 10. 3, 30.
 * ch. 2. 7. &
 13. 31.
 * Dan. 7. 13.
 Matt. 24. 30.
 Mark 13. 26.
 Luke 21. 27.
 John 14. 3.
 1 Thess. 1.
 10. & 4. 16.
 2 Thess. 1.
 10. Rev. 1. 7.
 * Luke 24.
 52.

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.

12. 'Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

a symbol of purity and holiness. See Rev. iii. 4; iv. 4; viii. 9, 13, 14. Compare also John xx. 12.

11. '*Also*' is used emphatically—they not only appeared, but they addressed the disciples—

'*Ye men of Galilee.*' Christians were afterwards called Galileans by the heathen, as a term of reproach: here the addition of the word 'men' gives a courteous turn to the expression.

'*Why stand ye.*' This question appears to imply that the apostles were henceforth no more to indulge the feelings of natural regret which they experienced on losing the bodily presence of our Lord, but were to fix their mind and heart upon the future appearing of Christ, and upon their own work in the meantime.

'*Gazing.*' The word in the original means to gaze intently, fastening the eyes upon an object. It is used frequently by St. Luke, and only by him and by St. Paul.

'*This same Jesus.*' An important text for the apostles, and for all the people of Jesus, proving that the humanity of Jesus is not absorbed into the divine nature, but remains perfect and whole, with all the sympathies, though without the infirmities, of sinless manhood. He is perfect man as well as perfect God, 'One al-

together, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.'

'*In like manner.*' He will come as He departed, suddenly (Luke xxi. 35; Matt. xxiv. 44), mysteriously (Matt. xxiv. 26—28), with power and great glory (Matt. xxiv. 30), in the clouds of heaven (ib.), and attended by His mighty angels (2 Thess. i. 7).

12. '*Olivet.*' The Mount of Olives, on the north-east of Jerusalem, has three summits, the highest of which, about 3,000 feet above the level of the sea, commands a view of the Mediterranean on the west, of Ebal and Gerizim on the north, and of the mountains of Moab, beyond the Dead Sea, on the east. The olives, which give it its name, have now nearly disappeared, but some still remain, of very great age, on the western declivity. The appearance of this most interesting of all mountains is strikingly picturesque.

'*A sabbath day's journey,*' according to the Rabbins, two thousand cubits, about eight furlongs. The distance from Jerusalem to the foot of Olivet is five furlongs. The ascent to the nearest summit, on which the Ascension took place, is not above a mile. The present Church of the Ascension probably indicates the true site. It is not much more than six furlongs from the city.

¹ Meyer.

13. And when they were come in, they went up
 *into an upper room, where abode both †Peter, and †ch. 9. 37,
 James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, †39. & 20. 8.
 Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Al- †Matt. 10.
 pheus, and *Simon Zelotes, and *Judas *the brother of* †Luke 6. 15.
 James. †Jude 1.

14. †These all continued with one accord in prayer †ch. 2. 1, 46.
 and supplication, with †the women, and Mary the †Luke 28.
 mother of Jesus, and with †his brethren. †49, 55, & 24.
 10.
 †Matt. 13.
 55.

15. ¶ And in those days Peter stood up in the

13. '*An upper room.*' Rather, *the* upper room. This was, most probably, in a private house, where the disciples were in the habit of assembling, and where they had partaken of the Last Supper. The upper room, immediately under the flat roof of most residences, was used for prayer and meetings on solemn occasions. Although chambers in the temple were open to parties of worshippers, it is not probable that the disciples would be allowed to occupy one permanently at that time. The passage in St. Luke's gospel, xxiv. 53, may be understood of regular attendance at the temple service.

'*Judas "the brother."*' The relationship between James and Judas is not specified in the original, but assumed to be well known. It was sufficient to name James in order to distinguish this Judas from the traitor.

14. '*Continued.*' The word so rendered means earnest persevering attention.

'*With one accord.*' This applies not merely to their unanimity in meeting, but to their unity in devotion and faith. They were moved by one spirit, and had one heart.

'*The women.*' Those who had followed Jesus, among whom were Mary

Magdalene, Salome, Joanna, the wife of Chuza, and Susanna.

'*And Mary, the mother of Jesus.*' This is the last time the blessed Virgin is named in the holy scriptures. She is markedly distinguished¹ from the other women then present, but, like them, she is steadfast in prayer, not an object of adoration.

'*His brethren.*' His near male relatives, the sons, most probably, of Joseph or of the sister of Mary. They had been slow to believe (John vii. 5), but were doubtless convinced by His resurrection. It was the universal opinion of the early fathers that our Lord had no brother or sister in the literal sense of the word.² Had indeed the Virgin a son at the time of our Lord's death He would not have committed her to the care of St. John. This argument is often overlooked, but it is, in fact, conclusive.

15. '*In those days.*' Between the ascension and Pentecost. This interval would seem to have been selected for the appointment of an apostle, in order to show that the Church was invested with authority to complete its external organisation under the special guidance of its Head.

'*Peter.*' During the ministry of

¹ Meyer and Fritzsch on Mark, p. 11.

² Pearson on the Creed, art. Virgin Mary.

* Rev. 2. 4. midst of the disciples, and said, (the number * of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

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.

our Lord, and for a considerable time after His departure, we find Peter foremost in speech and action among the apostles; but we never find that he claims or exercises any authority over them, or independently of them.¹

'Of names.' Of persons² whose names were recorded as distinguished members of the Church.

'An hundred and twenty.' It is doubtful whether this number included all the public professors of Christianity who were at Jerusalem at that time; our Saviour had certainly made many more converts in that city during His ministry, though some had probably fallen away when He was crucified, and others who may have been prepared to receive the truth when preached fully by His apostles, may not yet have become His avowed adherents. It is more probable that this number consisted of the heads of families, or of persons who had accompanied Jesus from the beginning of His ministry. The same number made up Ezra's great synagogue.³

16. 'Men and brethren.' This form of address is more courteous than if the word 'men' were omitted. It is equivalent to 'sirs, brethren.'

'This scripture.' The passage alluded to is supposed to be Psalm xli. 9; but the 18th and 19th verses are parenthetical,⁴ and St. Peter quotes the scripture, which he has in view, in the 20th verse.

'Must needs.' All predictions made

by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost must needs be fulfilled, since they proceed from Him who is omniscient and omnipotent. 'Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.' It is, however, equally certain that no individual commits a sinful act but in consequence of the depravity of his own will, which is essentially and necessarily free. We must accept both truths, though we may not be able to reconcile the apparent contradiction between them in the imperfect state of our knowledge and reason. St. Peter and all truly religious persons feel a deep and true consolation in reflecting that all events are absolutely controlled by Him who is all-wise and all-good.

'By the mouth of David.' A strong testimony to the inspiration of the book of Psalms. Compare 2 Peter i. 21; Mark xii. 36.

'Concerning Judas.' Ahitophel, who is alluded to in the 109th Psalm, was a type of Judas in his treason and in his suicide. The words of David, being given by the Holy Spirit, apply at once to the type and to the antitype. Maledictions denounced against persons who have committed any special crime, are applied, by the same Spirit who dictated them at first, to others guilty in the same or in a higher degree. Judas, as the arch traitor, is reached by all denunciations against murderers and traitors.

¹ Potter on Church Government, p. 66; and Cyprian, De Unit. Ecclesiae.

² Meyer, Suicer. Thes. ii. 492.

³ Lightfoot and Burton, p. 42.

⁴ Meyer.

17. For ^bhe was numbered with us, and had ^bobtained part of ^bthis ministry. ^bMatt. 10. 4. Luke 6. 16.

18. ^bNow this man purchased a field with ^bthe reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst ^basunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. ^bMatt. 27. 5, 7, 8. ^bMatt. 26. 15. ^bPet. 2. 15.

19. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

20. For it is written in the book of Psalms, ^mLet = Ps. 69. 25.

17. '*Part of this ministry.*' The word for 'part' in the original is *clerus*, which means, first, a lot, then, that which is given by lot, and then, generally, a possession, or office. The last signification is most appropriate in this passage. Judas held the office of this (apostolical) ministry. The words clerical, clergy, are derived from *clerus*.

'*Ministry.*' The word in the original, *diaconia*, was used in a more restricted sense after the establishment of the *diaconate*.

18. '*Purchased.*' As, in the Old Testament, men are said to purchase to themselves shame,—that being the result, not the intention, of their action, so is Judas here said to purchase this field by the wages of his iniquity, though he neither intended this, nor was instrumental to it.¹ The field was purchased by the priests, as we learn from St. Matthew, xxvii. 5—10.

'*Falling headlong.*' This account of the death of Judas is supplementary to that given by St. Matthew.² The wretched suicide did not cast away life without a manifest token of the divine wrath. As he fell strangled with his face downwards, his body

burst, and his entrails gushed out. This awful circumstance was calculated to make a deep impression upon the minds of those who were assembled to appoint his successor. St. Peter does not speak of the fact that Judas hanged himself previously, that being well known to all present.

19. This verse appears not to have been a part of St. Peter's address, but inserted by St. Luke for the information of his readers. St. Peter, of course, would have used the Syro-Chaldaic word *Aceldama*, without interpreting it. Tradition points out a spot on the south of Mount Zion as the field of blood. It was used as a burying-place in the time of Jerome.

20. '*The book of Psalms.*' The first passage from the 69th Psalm applies primarily to the betrayer of David, and that from the 109th Psalm to Doeg, the wicked informer, and murderer of Ahimelech, the high priest, and his brethren. See 1 Samuel xxi. and xxii. See note on verse 16. Both passages were generally understood by Christians to be, if not prophetic of, yet specially applicable to, the crime and punishment of Judas.

'*Bishoprick.*' The word, both in

¹ Whitby. See Dr. Wordsworth.

² Casaubon, Exerc. Antib. xvi. 527; Alberti Obs. p. 222; Kuinoel and Fritzsche on Matt. A singular

legend of Papias is given by Apollinarius (see Cramer, Caten. p. 12), which illustrates the difference between fiction and truth.

Pa. 109. 8. his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and ¹his ²bishoprick let another take.

¹ Or, office, or, charge.

21. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

³ Mark 1. 1. 22. ⁴ Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that ⁵he was taken up from us, must one be ordained ⁶to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

⁷ ch. 15. 22. 23. And they appointed two, Joseph called ⁸Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

the Greek and Hebrew, means 'office of overseer and superintendent.'¹ In temporal matters it designates specially the office of a provincial governor or viceroy; in ecclesiastical, of a governor of the Church. It was restricted at a very early period to the bishops of churches, who were in all essential points the same as those in our own Church. The apostles were the first bishops, and, in process of time, gave episcopal authority to others, first as their delegates, and then as their successors in this part of their office.²

21. '*Wherefore.*' That is, since the Holy Ghost in that prophecy ordains it.

'*These men who have companied with us.*' It is probable that St. Peter refers specially to the seventy disciples. Luke x. 1, 2. A perfect knowledge of what the Lord had taught and done was a necessary qualification, humanly speaking, of an apostle who was to teach mankind to 'observe all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded.'

'*Went in and out.*' A Hebraism, denoting a public and official manner of life or ministry.³ See Deut. xxxi. 2; 1 Chron. i. 10. Compare John x. 9.

22. '*Beginning—from us.*' This is

a parenthesis, and refers to the whole ministry of Jesus.

'*Be ordained.*' Literally 'become.'

'*A witness.*' It was a special and peculiar duty of the apostles to bear personal testimony to the fact of the resurrection, but the ordination of Matthias put him into participation of their full authority as governors and founders of the Church.

23. '*Appointed.*' Or presented, nominated. The nomination appears then to have rested with the whole body of Christians, but the selection of the individual in this case was referred to the Lord, and the ordination was made, unquestionably, by the imposition of the apostles' hands.⁴

'*Barsabas.*' A patronymic, meaning son of Sabas. Justus, a Roman name. It was customary among the Jews to take a second name. No more is known of this person; there are no grounds for the supposition that he was Barnabas.

'*Matthias.*' We have no certain account of the after-life of this apostle. He is said to have preached the gospel, and to have suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia. The name signifies Gift of

¹ Meyer. See Hooker, lib. vii. c. ii. 2, and c. iv. 1.

² See Clem. Rom. Ep. § 1 Cor. xlv.

³ Meyer, Kuinoel.

⁴ Hind's Rise and Progress of Christianity, p. 121.

24. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, *which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

* 1 Sam. 16.
7. 1 Chron.
28. 9. & 29.
17. Jer. 11.
20. & 17. 10.
ch. 15. 8.
Rev. 2. 23.
† ver. 17.

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.

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

God. He is said by Eusebius¹ to have been one of the seventy disciples.

24. '*Thou, Lord.*' The apostles address their prayer to the Lord Jesus because they were themselves chosen by Him, and were to be His witnesses. The word Lord invariably denotes God the Son in the New Testament, unless the Father or the Holy Spirit is expressly mentioned. 'Searcher of hearts' is an appellation of Jehovah. Jeremiah xvii. 10.

'*Ministry and apostleship.*' The latter word explains and restricts the former. This ministry, even that of an apostle.²

'*His own place.*' That place³ which he had earned and made his own by his sin; like the angels who

kept not their first estate. It is called gehenna, or hell. We must remember that St. Peter spoke as an inspired apostle, and that our Lord had declared Judas to be a son of perdition, and had said that it had been better for him that he had never been born.

26. Mosheim⁴ has endeavoured to prove that the disciples did not cast lots on this occasion, but simply gave their votes. It is, however, the general opinion of divines, that the apostles adopted that mode of solemnly referring the decision to the Lord. This was in accordance with the law (see Numbers xvii. 1-3; 1 Chron. xxiv. 5); but it was never repeated after the coming of the Spirit, nor has it been imitated by the Church.⁵

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

v. 1—4. The first duty of a believer is to study the history of our Lord with especial reference to the example which He showed us, and to the truths which He hath revealed. His last act before the ascension will not only impress us with gratitude for His watchful care until the end, but call to our minds the agency by which His law is written in the hearts of His chosen. It is through the Holy Ghost that He gives effectual commandments. That agency, however, does not supersede the use of human reason. He gives infallible proofs, not only to the inner man by spiritual illumination, but to the understanding by

¹ H. E. i. 12. 1. See also iii. 25. 3.

² Not a hendiadys. See Fritzsche on Matt. p. 856.

³ Lightfoot, Whitby, and Kuinoel.

⁴ De reb. a. Const. i. 14. n. 5.

⁵ Chrysostom.

external evidence. To seekers after truth God vouchsafes always that species of evidence which is best adapted to their faculties. To the apostles Christ showed Himself at intervals during forty days; to the Church He attested His power in the beginning by miraculous manifestations; to us He speaks, by proofs equally infallible, by the accomplishment of prophecy, and by the works of grace and love which He continually achieves. He spoke to the apostles of that kingdom, which was then future, an object of faith and hope; to us, if we be enrolled among its true subjects, it is a present and glorious reality, an object of gratitude and love. For the promise which they then expected has been fulfilled, not for a season, but for a perpetuity, to all who have been cleansed, renewed, and sanctified by the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

6—8. The best men are naturally disposed to value spiritual privileges as pledges of external advantages. The question of the apostles should teach us to mistrust ourselves. The answer of our Lord directs us, on the one hand, to repress all idle and curious enquiry into those things which are not revealed, and, on the other, to watch anxiously for the fulfilment of those promises which assure us individually that we shall have light and grace to do our duty, and to walk as witnesses unto Him in that state whereunto He may call us.

9. Let us not read this brief account of our Lord's ascension without pausing to consider that event in its various aspects and bearings. We must meditate upon it as (1) the completion and seal of the work of the incarnate Son of God; (2) the glorification of His human nature; (3) the restoration of His divine nature to the majesty which He had laid aside; (4) the inauguration and enthronement of the God-man in His heavenly kingdom. We must remember that though absent, as man, in the body, He is omnipresent, as God, in and by His Spirit;—that He ascended (1) to prepare a place for His followers; (2) to receive from the Father, and to bestow upon man, all graces, gifts, and powers, needed for the building, maintenance, and extension of His Church; (3) to be our King, ruling the Church by His law, and defending her by His might; (4) to be our Prophet, enlightening our minds, both as to the actual duties and future prospects of the Church, by His divinely inspired and divinely interpreted Word; (5) and to be our Priest, making perpetual intercession, offering an all-sufficient sacrifice on our behalf, and both sanctifying and presenting our prayers. We may remark, that those who had shared His humiliation witnessed His exaltation; and we should ever bear in mind, that as the Church is spiritually one with her Head, and is enthroned with Him, so the souls of all the faithful, which are risen with Christ, must earnestly seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

10, 11. Heavenly communications are vouchsafed to those who look steadfastly to Jesus; and spiritual contemplation prepares them for the mystery and glory of His second advent.

12—14. The Christian has two homes; one with his Lord in heaven, which he seeks in spiritual retirement; the other with the brotherhood on earth, where he continues in prayer and supplication. The strength which he receives and matures at home must be employed abroad in doing the work of His Father.

15. The number of the disciples was small, but each bore a name that was written not only on the rolls of the Church, but in the book of life. We see the Church in its infancy, but it is the infancy as of a Prince of God. That was a living faith, indeed, which directed their minds, in a moment of bereave-

ment and affliction, not to selfish and timid considerations, but to the care of the Church, and to the choice of a minister, whose first duty would be to proclaim a truth which would redouble the rage of their persecutors.

16. In this discourse we remark the source from which St. Peter derived his deep insight into the things of God. He was conversant with the prophetic scriptures, and there he found all the events foretold, which might otherwise have confounded or perplexed him. To a mind so enlightened under the teaching of the Spirit, occurrences which shake the souls of the unstable serve but to confirm and increase faith.

16, 17. The guilt of Judas is fearfully enhanced by the greatness of his spiritual privileges. The denunciations which St. Peter applies to him will be found equally applicable at the last day to all, whom covetousness, deceit, and treachery teach to hate and malign Christ, should they, like Judas, die in impenitent despair. 'There is a warning conscience and a gnawing conscience. The warning conscience cometh before sin; the gnawing conscience followeth after sin. The warning conscience is often lulled asleep; but the gnawing conscience waketh her again. If there be any hell in the world, they which feel the worm of conscience gnawing in their hearts may say they have felt the torments of hell'—*Dr. H. Smith*. Do Thou, O Lord, cleanse us from our secret sins; and give us true and hearty repentance, that our place may not be with Thine enemies.

24. He who does not know Christ as the Searcher of hearts, does not know Him savingly. That knowledge alone quickens the conscience, subdues all rebellious struggles, and constrains us to pour out our soul in supplication and prayer, that we may be assured of our calling and election.

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter, from the first to the forty-seventh verse, we have a brief, but clear and complete account of the occurrences of that day on which the promise of the Redeemer was fulfilled, and His apostles were endued with power from on high to establish and edify that Church, which they were to govern as representatives of Christ, and as instruments of the Holy Ghost. This day of Pentecost is the epoch of the inauguration of the Comforter, and the birthday of the Church ;¹ and henceforth the history of the Church is that of the work of the Holy Spirit.

A.D. 33, SUNDAY, 24th MAY.

^a Lev. 23. 15. **I. AND** when ^athe day of Pentecost was fully come,
^bthey were all with one accord in one place.
^c ch. 1. 14.

1. '*The day of Pentecost.*' The word Pentecost means fiftieth, but is used as a substantive.² In the Old Testament it is called the Feast of Weeks, and was kept at the end of seven weeks, i.e. a week of weeks, or fifty days, including the day of the festival, after the Passover. As the Hebrew festival was instituted as a season of rejoicing and thanksgiving for the harvest, it was also called the feast of ingathering and first-fruits, or of harvest. Two loaves made of new meal were then offered in the temple as first-fruits. Levit. xxiii. 17—20; Numb. xxviii. 27—29. So the Christian festival, which we term Whitsuntide, commemorates the ingathering of the first converts, whom 'God begat of His own will with the word of truth, that they should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.' James i. 18. The Hebrews also celebrated the giving of the law on Mount

Sinai, on the last day of the seven weeks; and latterly they called the festival 'the rejoicing of the law.'³ We have to commemorate the complete and effectual revelation of that law, which was henceforth written by the Holy Ghost, not on tables of stone, but on the 'fleshy tablets' of regenerate hearts.

'*Was fully come.*' According to the law (Levit. xxiii. 15), the fifty days were reckoned from the end of the first day of Easter, or the sixteenth of Nisan, on which the Pascal lamb was slain. In the year of our Lord's passion the sixteenth of Nisan began on Thursday evening, at six o'clock, and lasted until the same hour on Friday. This day of Pentecost, therefore, began at six o'clock on the Saturday of the seventh week, and was fully come on the Sunday morning.⁴ So that this day, which the Lord hath

¹ Olshausen.

² Meyer. Compare 2 Maccab. xii.

³

⁴ Schoetgen, Hor. Hebr., and Wetstein.

⁴ Olshausen. This calculation is adopted by Wordsworth: it removes all the difficulties as to the day which are stated by Neander, Meyer, and others.

2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and ^{ch. 4. 81.} it filled all the house where they were sitting.

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

made, is consecrated by the two most important events in the history of the world, the resurrection of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Ghost.

'All.' All the Christians, viz. the 120 mentioned in the first chapter.

'In one place.' The place where the disciples were assembled must have been the temple.¹ In the first place, it was the third hour of the day (v. 15), i.e. nine o'clock in the morning, the hour of the morning sacrifice, when none of them were likely to be absent from the temple, even on a common day (see v. 46), and certainly not on the great day of the festival. This reason appears conclusive. In the next place, it is not probable that the multitude of devout persons mentioned (v. 9) would have been assembled in any other part of Jerusalem. 'The house in which they were sitting' (v. 2) was probably one of the large rooms of which, as we learn from Josephus² (who calls them houses), there were thirty adjoining the great court of the temple, and which appear to have been open to any worshippers who might wish to assemble for devotional purposes. Thus the solemn inauguration of the Church of Christ took place in the sanctuary of the ancient covenant.³ On the other hand, it must be admitted that Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, states that the place was an apartment afterwards converted into a church, probably the upper chamber (chap. i. 13), but the rea-

sons above given still appear to be of more weight than a tradition which is hardly reconcilable with what history records of the utter destruction of Jerusalem.

2. 'A sound.' It does not appear from the following words that the air was agitated, but rather that there was such a sound as might be produced by a mighty rushing wind. The miraculous origin of this sound was, doubtless, more awfully impressed upon their souls by the absence of all apparent physical cause. Its direction also from heaven, not like earthly storms which blow sideways, and its suddenness, would deepen the impression. They would remember that a mighty wind was itself often a symbol of the divine presence (Psalm xviii. 10, civ. 3, 4), and was typical of the power, the mystery, and the cleansing, quickening operations of the Spirit of God. In the language of inspiration, the same word signifies wind and spirit.

3. 'Cloven tongues.' Lambent and bright flashes of divine light were dispersed through the room, and lighted on the heads of all the disciples. The shape of tongues symbolised the gift of language, as the fire did the spiritual operation in their hearts, viz. the baptism by fire which had been predicted by the Baptist, and promised by the Redeemer. The word 'cloven' means divided and may be understood of the form,⁴ but more probably applies to the dispersion⁵ of the flames. One

¹ Olshausen. See also Wieseler.

² Ant. viii. 3. 2.

³ Olshausen.

⁴ Meyer.

⁵ So the Vulgate, and most of the ancient versions. The Syriac is doubtful.

- ^a ch. 1. 5. 4. And ^dthey were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began ^eto speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
- ^b Mark 16. 17. ch. 10. 46. & 19. 6. 1 Cor. 12. 10, 28, 30. & 13. 1. & 14. 2, &c. 5. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

of the fathers ¹ gives this explanation : 'At first there appeared not tongues, but a great flame, which then distributed itself and became divided into the form of tongues.'

4. '*Filled with the Holy Ghost.*' Their whole being was pervaded, elevated and transformed by the influence of the Holy Spirit. This does not intimate a state of trance, or a suspension of personal consciousness, but one of ecstasy, in which the human spirit is expanded, and made capable of receiving the communications of the Divine Spirit. The expression is peculiar to St. Luke, and is only used on extraordinary occasions.

'*Began to speak.*' On this occasion they received for the first time that gift, which Jesus had promised. Mark xvi. 17. The word rendered 'speak' has a special force, meaning 'to speak out audibly,' to utter sentences.

'*With other tongues.*' In other languages. This is the plain meaning of St. Luke,² confirmed by the equally clear and unambiguous expression, v. 8 and 11. The word in the original is the clearest which could have been employed.

'*As the Spirit gave them utterance.*' This means, apparently, that the words and sentences which they uttered were given by the Spirit—so that they were merely passive instruments, if we may so speak.

These words however corresponded to the impressions made upon their hearts simultaneously by the same Spirit, and described the wonderful works of God, as we may be assured, with special reference to His manifestation in Christ. It is not stated, nor is it by any means certain, that they retained, or indeed were then endowed with, the faculty of speaking different languages on all occasions. It was an extraordinary and miraculous gift, vouchsafed, as it would seem, only on solemn occasions, and for mighty ends. Here it was at once the most effectual and significant of all imaginable miracles. It arrested attention and enforced conviction. As the confusion of tongues at Babel was occasioned by the sin of man, and was followed by discord, ignorance, and polytheism, so the first miraculous work of the Holy Ghost was a temporary suspension of that confusion,³ representing the inward harmony and mutual understanding of believers. It is to be regarded both as a symbol, and prophetic intimation, of the diffusion of the new divine life among nations of all languages, and of the reception and absorption of all national peculiarities in the central life of Christianity.⁴

5. '*And there were dwelling,*' &c. This expression includes both ^a those Jews from foreign countries who were dwelling at Jerusalem, and those who

¹ Severus ap. Cramer, Caten. in Act. Ap. p. 20.

² Meyer, who completely overthrows the expositions of Bleek, Neander, &c. Olshausen, as usual, takes the true

scriptural view.

³ Severus, Severus of Antioch, and other fathers, in Cramer, Cat. p. 20, 21.

⁴ Neander.

⁵ Meyer.

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. †Gr. when this voice was made. ‖Or, troubled in mind.

7. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying

were sojourning there for the festival: most of them probably had been present at Easter.

'*Jews.*' Members of all the tribes. The expression seems to be used in distinction from Galileans,¹ who had hitherto constituted the majority of the Church. See v. 7.

'*Devout men.*' Their presence at Jerusalem indicated their zeal for religion. They were devout, and pious men, according to their degree of light. The word is generally used in the New Testament of persons who feared the Lord, but had not yet known Him in Christ.

'*Out of every nation under heaven.*' A classical² expression for the inhabitants of the whole world. There were three classes of dispersed Hebrews:—1. Those who were led into captivity by Shalmanezzer, most of whom were in Parthia, Media, and Elamitis; 2, by Nebuchadnezzar, who were chiefly in Mesopotamia; 3, and by Ptolemy Lagus, who carried away the inhabitants of Jerusalem into Egypt. In addition to these, vast numbers of Jews had settled in various countries, especially at the great marts of commerce. Most of these Jews forgot their own language, and spoke that of their adopted country, as is the case at present in France, Germany, &c. The septuagint Greek version of the Bible was exclusively used by the Jews in Alexandria and most of the adjacent countries.

6. '*When this was noised abroad.*'

The meaning of the original is, when this (mighty) sound³ had been made. The awful sound was heard by the multitude in the court adjoining the house, or hall where the disciples were assembled.

'*Were confounded.*' Were utterly perplexed and bewildered. The sound could not be accounted for, inasmuch as there was no other appearance of a storm; but the miracle, to which that sound directed their attention, was still more unaccountable and awful.

'*In his own language.*' His own peculiar dialect.⁴ These persons did not all speak distinct languages, but many of them spoke different dialects of the same language. The expression used by St. Luke is singularly precise and accurate. Each person present heard his own dialect spoken in its purity. It is evident that the Spirit controlled and employed the organs of speech as His instrument in the inspired disciples, so that each spoke the language which the person to whom he immediately addressed himself would understand.

7. '*Were amazed and marvelled.*' The former word describes the sudden sensation, the latter the permanent effect, of astonishment.⁵

'*Galileans.*' It does not appear that the term was used contemptuously. They were astonished that persons who all belonged to one province should speak so many languages:⁶ no amount of cultivation in the people would have made the

¹ Meyer.

² Kuinoel, Valck. Call. p. 138.

³ Meyer. St. John (iii. 8) uses the

same word for the sound of wind.

⁴ Meyer.

⁵ Meyer.

⁶ Meyer.

one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak
'ch. i. 11. 'Galileans?

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 Cappa-
docia, in Pontus, and Asia,

10. Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the

miracle less marvellous. The Galileans were, however, proverbially rude and uneducated.¹

8. '*And how.*' To what cause can this be attributed?

'*In our own tongue.*' Or dialect, that which we have spoken from infancy, our mother tongue. St. Luke uses every variety of expression to prevent misapprehension.

9. The catalogue of nations in this and the following verse, with two exceptions, the Cretes and Arabians, is arranged regularly, beginning with the east, then proceeding to the north, then south, and, lastly, west.

'*Parthians and Medes.*' These people spoke various dialects of the old Persian, a language radically distinct from the Hebrew. Parthia proper lay to the east of Media and Persia, Media to the south-east of the Caspian Sea. At that time, however, the Parthians occupied Babylon, and Dr. Wordsworth observes that they who dwelt in that region in which had been built the Tower of Babel, i.e. of confusion, are named first among those who are brought to the Christian Sion, the City of Unity. Elymais (now called Khusistan), named from Elam, the first-born of Shem, was separated from Persia by the Eulæus, or Ulai. The Elamites here mentioned were, however, probably

settled on the Orontes,² near the Caspian Sea. Their original language would be Semitic.

'*Mesopotamia,*' the Padan-Aram, or Aram-Naharaim, of Genesis; bounded on the north by Armenia, on the east and west by the Tigris and Euphrates. The inhabitants spoke dialects of Syriac and Chaldee.

'*In Judea.*' St. Luke wrote at Rome, and names Judea as a matter of course. The people of Jerusalem would, however, be astonished to hear Galileans³ speak the dialect of Judea with purity.

'*Cappadocia,*' on the Euxine or Black Sea.

'*Pontus,*' a part of Cappadocia, divided by Alexander.

'*Asia,*' that part of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital. The extent of this province varied at different times. Here it is probably to be understood as including the provinces on the western coast of Asia Minor, from Mysia to Caria.⁴

10. '*Phrygia, and Pamphylia.*' See notes on chap. xvi. The Jews who were settled in the five last-named countries most probably spoke Greek, with some variations of dialect. The country people retained old, barbarous languages of uncertain origin.

¹ Lightfoot; Schoetgen; and Winer, i. 388.

² Winer, vol. i.

³ Matt. xxvi. 73; Mark xiv. 70; Schoetgen, Hor. Heb. i. 235.

⁴ Winer, i. 110; Meyer.

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.

12. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

'In Egypt.' The Jews in Egypt were nearly all settled in Alexandria and the north. They spoke Greek. If there were sojourners from other parts of Egypt, they might speak the Coptic, or old Egyptian language.

'Libya about Cyrene.' Cyrene was a Greek settlement, and no other language but Greek was likely to be spoken by the Jewish settlers there, who form a considerable portion of the population. See note, Acts xi. 20. Libya is a general name for northern Africa.

'Strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes.' Great numbers of Jews generally resided at Rome, where, according to Josephus, they had eight synagogues. We learn from Tacitus,¹ and other profane writers, that the Jews made there a great number of proselytes, who were banished by Tiberius, A.D. 23.

11. *'Cretes.'* From Crete or Candia. The Cretans were probably of Egyptian origin, but the language at that time spoken throughout the island appears to have been Greek.

'Arabians.' Great numbers of Jews were settled at an early period in various parts of Arabia, where they occupied whole districts, had many fortified castles, and some cities, in the time before Mahomet. They spoke and wrote the Arabian language (which is nearly allied to the Hebrew) with fluency and elegance.²

'In our tongues.' The languages of the three great divisions of mankind were thus represented. The Japhetic by those who spoke varieties of the old Persian, Greek, and Latin; the Hamitic by those from Upper Egypt and Libya; the Semitic by most of the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Arabia, and by the native Jews. The manifest signification of this miracle was, as hath been already intimated, that henceforth the kingdom of God would not be restricted to one people, as under the old theocracy, but would include all nations; that every language would henceforth be sanctified by the utterance of divine and spiritual impressions; and that the prophecy of Noah (Genesis ix. 25—27), and the promise made to Abraham, would be fulfilled. The direct and practical effects of the miracle were the immediate conversion of thousands, and the preparation, by their instrumentality, for the establishment of the gospel in various lands.

'The wonderful works of God.' Doubtless the great works lately accomplished in the exaltation of His Son.

12. *'Were in doubt.'* This word is hardly strong enough to express the original. They were thoroughly at a loss; the fact could not be accounted for, even on the supposition of magic, to which many would perhaps have resorted at once, had not this occurred in the temple.

¹ Ann. ii. 85.

² Many of their poems are preserved in the Hamasa.

13. Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

14. ¶ 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, ¹ *Thom. A.* ² seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.

16. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

13. '*Others.*' Persons hostile to Christianity, who had already resisted the evidence of miracles and the power of the Holy Ghost. They were probably of the hierarchical party, and, as native Jews (see v. 14), would be insensible to the most astounding part of the miracle. From their words it is evident that they heard what seemed to them to be a confusion of strange sounds; and they are thus unwilling, but very convincing, witnesses to the objective reality of the miracle.

'*New wine.*' This mode of accounting for the miracle was in every way absurd. There was no new wine, or must,¹ until the vintage, which took place much later in the year. It was, however, apparently a mere senseless scoff.²

14. '*Peter, standing up.*' Peter speaks as the foreman and leader of the apostles, a position which is invariably assigned to him in the four gospels. We have here the first Christian sermon, contemporaneous with the first great outpouring of the Spirit, and the establishment of the Christian Church.³

'*Ye men of Judea, and all,*' &c. St. Peter uses the most courteous form of

address, in accordance with the principle which he has himself laid down. ¹ Peter iii. 15.

15. '*The third hour.*' It was not lawful for a Jew to drink or to eat before the morning sacrifice, and, as we learn from Josephus, they did not taste food on Sabbaths and festivals until mid-day.⁴ The Arabians consider it highly indecorous to eat early in the morning. St. Peter deems it unnecessary to take further notice of a charge which was as incredible as it was uncharitable.

16. '*But this is that.*' This fact, which ye have misjudged or misconceived, is the fulfilment of ancient prophecy.

'*Which was spoken by,*' &c. Spoken by⁵ the prophet, as the organ or instrument of the Spirit of God. St. Peter does not quote word for word, but gives the sense of the passage. The prophet describes the signs which are to usher in the kingdom of Messiah. Joel ii. 28—31. It is observable that St. Peter dwells very fully upon the accomplishment of prophecy in his epistles. ¹ Peter i. 10—12; ii. 7, 10, 25; ² Peter i. 19; ii. 24; iii. 20, 21.⁶

¹ Schoetgen, Hor. Heb.

² The expression seems to have been proverbial. See Lightfoot, Exercit. *in loc.*

³ Olshausen.

⁴ Kuinoel and Lightfoot.

⁵ Meyer.

⁶ Dörner, Entw. vol. i. p. 97.

17. ^bAnd it shall come to pass in the last days, ^bIsa. 44. 3. saith God, ^cI will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: ^cEzek. 11. 19. & 36. 27. and your sons and ^kyour daughters shall prophesy, ^dJoel 2. 28, 29. Zech. 12. 10, and your young men shall see visions, and your old ^eJohn 7. 38. men shall dream dreams: ^fch. 10. 45. ^gch. 21. 9.

17. '*In the last days.*' This is rather an interpretation than a literal translation of the Hebrew. The last days is an expression used in the same sense (viz. of the Messianic time, or final temporal dispensation) by Isaiah, ii. 2, Micah iv. 1, and gives the true meaning and application of the words of Joel. The Jewish commentators admit that the latter days, or future times, are to be understood generally, if not always, in this sense. The last day,¹ not the last days, designates the day of judgment. Both Hebrews and Christians have always believed that the days of Messiah's mediatorial kingdom would be of considerable duration.

'*I will pour out of my Spirit.*' The outpouring indicates the fulness and copiousness of the spiritual influences. Compare Titus iii. 5, 6. *Of* is used distributively,² and explains the original 'my Spirit.' The general outpouring reached each individual.

'*Upon all flesh.*' Upon persons of all ages and conditions, who are fit subjects of spiritual communications. The old prophets are full of anticipations of a time when that light which revealed the glory of Christ to them but partially and occasionally, would shine with unclouded splendour upon all mankind. See Isaiah xxxii. 15; xlii. 3; Ezekiel xxxvi. 25; xxxix. 29. St. Peter selects this prophecy specially because it describes not only a general outpouring of the Spirit, but its effects, and in such a manner as to

explain the phenomena which were then witnessed.³

'*Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.*' Among the Christians present were several women (Acts i. 14), who were probably pointed out by St. Peter. Women were not allowed to prophesy, as teachers, in the Church; but many shared this gift of the Holy Spirit. See Acts xxi. 9. Compare also Exodus xv. 20, Miriam the prophetess; Judges iv. 4, Deborah a prophetess; 2 Kings xxii. 14; Luke ii. 36.

'*Prophecy*' means to speak as a declarer and interpreter of the divine will. In the Old Testament those declarations generally, but not always, referred to the future. In the New Testament, on the contrary, more frequently to the actual dispensations of God. Judaism was a religion of hope and anticipation; Christianity of completion and fulfilment. St. Peter applies the term 'prophecy' with reference to the subject matter (v. 11) and the inspiration of the utterances of the disciples, of which the form, viz. the language, was a miraculous evidence.

'*Visions.*' Manifestations of the Lord to the waking sense, as to Cornelius, Ananias, St. Peter, and St. Paul, on various occasions recorded in this book.

'*Dreams.*' This mode of communication was frequent in the early times, but is not often mentioned in the New Testament. See, however, Matt. i. 20; ii. 12, 13, 19, 22; xxvii. 19.

¹ John vi. 39; xi. 24.

² Meyer.

³ Olshausen.

- ¹ ch. 21. 4, 9, 10. 18. And on my servants and on my handmaidens
¹ Cor. 12. I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; 'and they
 10. 28. & 14. shall prophesy:
 1, &c.
^m Joel 2. 30, 31. 19. ^mAnd I will shew wonders in heaven above,
 and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and
 vapour of smoke:
ⁿ Matt. 24. 20. ⁿThe sun shall be turned into darkness, and the
 29. Mark moon into blood, before that great and notable day of
 13. 24. the Lord come:
 Luke 21. 25.
^o Rom. 10. 13. 21. And it shall come to pass, *that* ^owhosoever
 shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

18. '*My servants and my handmaidens.*' The prophet evidently means persons of servile condition. St. Peter, speaking under the influence of the same Spirit, inserts '*my,*' in order, as it would seem, to show that the special grace of God would be vouchsafed to them. Henceforth, though the servitude to man was to continue, yet it would merge and be forgotten in the honourable servitude to their Heavenly Father. See 1 Cor. vii. 21, 22.

19. '*And I will shew wonders,*' &c. As the preceding verses describe the work of the Holy Spirit in those who should receive Him, so this and the following point out the penalties which await those who should reject Him, and whose portion would be with the world in its impending visitations.

'*Wonders in heaven above.*' These are specified in the next verse. It is supposed by many commentators that these expressions are to be understood as metaphors, and that the sun and moon are symbols of the ecclesiastical and political establishments which were overthrown previous to the fall of Jerusalem. But that event was but a type of the coming of the day of the Lord; nor can it be easily determined how far the words of Joel, and their application by St. Peter, are to be in-

terpreted of one or of the other. The most satisfactory investigation of this difficult subject is to be found in Archdeacon Harrison's '*Lectures on Prophecy.*'

'*On the earth beneath.*' These signs correspond very remarkably with the description which Josephus gives of the signs and wonders, the dreadful storms and earthquakes, the frightful massacres and conflagrations, which preceded the fall of Jerusalem and the dissolution of the Hebrew polity. Still the words seem to demand a larger and more universal interpretation. The day of Pentecost was the beginning of a series of spiritual wonders, which would extend until the second coming of Messiah.

'*Notable.*' In the Hebrew '*terrible.*'

21. '*Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord,*' shall invoke God by the true name, which He reveals to His elect. The name of God is the manifestation of His attributes. Christians invoke Him as the Father, by the Son, and in the Spirit. But the name here specially meant is that of the Lord Jesus.

'*Shall be saved.*' The Christians remembering and obeying our Lord's injunctions, fled from Jerusalem, when the Romans set up their standard on Mount Olivet, and they were saved.

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

22. '*Ye men of Israel.*' Having shown that the miracle which the Jews witnessed was a fulfilment of prophecy, and a token of the harmony between the old and new dispensation, St. Peter now addresses himself directly to the conscience of his hearers.

'*Jesus of Nazareth.*' St. Peter uses this expression as the ordinary and well-known designation of our Lord. Mark xvi. 6; John xviii. 5, &c.

'*A man approved of God.*' Designated, and pointed out, having received, as it were, his credentials from God.¹

'*By miracles, and wonders, and signs.*' The first word means powers, the exertions or puttings forth of a divine power; 'wonders,' astonishing events, and 'signs,' tokens and indications of the near presence of God.² The three words together describe miracles in their origin, effect, and use.

'*Which God did by him.*' Our Lord always traces the origin of the power, which was inherent in Him, to the Father; but St. Peter's object here is to point out that God wrought by Jesus, who was therefore His attested representative.

'*Ye yourselves also know.*' The Jews did not doubt that our Lord wrought miracles. We know from their own writers,³ as well as from the sacred historians, that they ad-

mitted the facts, but referred them to magic. Superstition was then, and has always been, the antagonist of faith, and colleague of infidelity.

23. '*Him being delivered.*' Delivered, or surrendered, refers to the treason of Judas, and also to the criminal weakness of Pontius Pilate, who gave Him up to the will of the Jews.

'*Determinate.*' Definite, fixed, and immutable.⁴ The same word is used Luke xxii. 22: 'The Son of man goeth, as it was determined.' '*Counsel and foreknowledge.*' The will and prescience of the Omnipotent are inseparable. The object of St. Peter is to convince the Jews that our Lord's death was not the result of any weakness in Him, or of the power of His enemies,⁵ but that their wickedness served only to carry into effect the predetermination of God. He thus answers, without noticing, the objections which their hearts might suggest against the Lord Jesus.

'*Ye have taken,*' &c. It is to be remarked, that St. Peter charges all present with the guilt of our Lord's murder. Many of them had, most probably, been present at the feast of the passover, and had openly approved or acquiesced in the act of their rulers. The Sanhedrim condemned our Saviour, and procured His death, in the name, and as representatives, of the whole nation, and their acts were

¹ Olshausen, Meyer, &c.

² Trench on the Miracles, p. 2—6; and Lücke on John, vol. i. p. 548.

³ Even in the Tholdoth Jeschu.

See Basnage, Hist. des Juifs, and Burton.

⁴ Elsner, Hesychius.

⁵ Chrysostom.

- ^r ch. 5. 30. counsel and foreknowledge of God, ^rye have taken,
^s ver. 32. and by wicked hands have crucified and slain :
 ch. 3. 15. &
 4. 10. & 10. 24. ^{24.} 'Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the
 40 & 13. 30. pains of death : because it was not possible that he
 34. & 17. 31. should be holden of it.
 Rom. 4. 24. & 8. 11.
 1 Cor. 6. 14. ^{25.} For David speaketh concerning him, 'I fore-
 & 15. 15. saw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my
 2 Cor. 4. 14. right hand, that I should not be moved :
 Gal. 1. 1. ^{26.} Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue
 Ephes. 1. 20. saw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my
 Col. 2. 12. right hand, that I should not be moved :
 1 Thess. 1. 10. Heb. ^{26.} Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue
 13. 20. ^{26.} Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue
 1 Pet. 1. 21. was glad ; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope :
 1 Ps. 16. 8.

chargeable upon every individual who did not remonstrate against them. They did not deny the charge, as we shall find v. 37. It is possible, however, that the words of Peter had a wider meaning and application. They were guilty, generally, as sinners, for whose guilt our Lord suffered, and who, so far as they are not renewed by grace, hate holiness, and Christ, who is the impersonation of holiness. Now he who hates Him is His murderer, guilty by intention of His death.¹

^{24.} 'Whom God hath raised up.' The resurrection is here viewed as a testimony that Jesus was approved of God. St. Peter confines himself strictly to the main point of his argument. That Christ rose by His own power is stated on other occasions with equal distinctness, when the object of the sacred writers is to show His nature.

'Having loosed the pains.' Or bonds. The word in the original has both meanings, cruel, excruciating pangs, and cords or bands. The expression here signifies that God delivered the humanity of Jesus from that grave, into which He entered after so much agony, and where, according to the common law of nature,

His body would have remained, as it were, in bondage to death.

'Because it was impossible.' Impossible, because it was contrary to God's purpose, and promise, as well as to the nature of the Son, to whom the Father had given to have life in Himself. John v. 26.

^{25.} 'For David.' The proof that it was contrary to God's promise is found in prophecy. St. Peter, as is customary with the apostles, quotes one prophecy and applies it at length. The 16th Psalm was not generally admitted by the Rabbis at that time to refer to the Messiah.² It is, however, not to be supposed that this was the only passage adduced by the apostles and disciples on this great occasion.

'I foresaw.' This is used in the sense, I looked up to, contemplated, and fixed my attention stedfastly upon the Lord.

'On my right hand.' As protector and helper. The metaphor is taken from courts of justice, where the advocate stood at the right hand of his client.³ Psalm cix. 31.

^{26.} 'Did my heart rejoice.' The heart is represented as the seat of the conscience and affections.

¹ Olahausen.

² Schoetgen, Hor. Heb.

³ Meyer.

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.

29. Men *and* brethren, ||let me freely speak unto | Or, *I may*.

'*My tongue was glad.*' The Hebrew, 'my glory exults.' Glory rather applies to the soul,¹ but the tongue expresses its sentiments; and as the organ of language, the distinctive characteristic of man, may be called his glory.²

'*Moreover also my flesh.*' Even the lower and corruptible part of my nature, that which was derived from man, and formed from the dust. It is this word especially which points the application of the psalm.

'*In hope.*' In sure and certain hope of the resurrection from the dead. The Hebrew word means in security and confidence.

27. '*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.*' Thou wilt not permit my soul to remain, separate from the body, in the intermediate state. The word here translated hell never means the place of torment. Hades, answering to the Hebrew Sheol, may sometimes be a synonym for the grave, but it generally, if not always, signifies the abode of departed spirits. The word Gehenna is used in such passages as Matt. v. 22; Luke xii. 5; Mark xxiii. 15 and 33. Our English word hell originally corresponded very accurately with the Greek. It is derived from 'helan,' to cover, and means a dark covered place.

'*Thine Holy One.*' David expresses two hopes, realized in Christ, that his flesh should not suffer corruption, and

that his soul should be speedily reunited to it.

'*Corruption.*' The same word is used in Job: 'I have said to corruption, Thou art my father,' xvii. 14.

28. '*The ways of life.*' The way by which I may enter into everlasting life.

'*With thy countenance.*' In Thy presence, before Thy face. The resurrection will be followed by the ascension into glory.

From the preceding notes it will appear that St. Peter interprets the psalm throughout as directly, and, we shall now see, as primarily applicable to Christ. This does not exclude, however, a true and literal application to David himself, who was at once a type, and spiritually, as an Elect of God, a member of Christ. What was true of him as a type is true in a fuller and higher sense of the anti-type; and what is true of Christ, as the head, is true by imputation and communication of each and all His members.

29. '*Men and brethren.*' A form of address at once respectful and affectionate.

'*Let me freely speak.*' He would guard against giving any offence by his application of the psalm to another than David.

'*Patriarch.*' David is so called as the ancestor of the royal line from which the Messiah was to spring.³

'*His sepulchre.*' The tomb of

¹ Kuinoel.

² So Bucer and Michaelis.

³ Meyer.

¹ 1 Kings 2. you ² of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and
^{10.} ch. 13. buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.
^{36.}

² 2 Sam. 7. 30. Therefore being a prophet, ³ and knowing that
^{12, 15.} God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit
^{Ps. 132. 11.} of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up
^{Luke 1. 32,} Christ to sit on his throne;
^{69. Rom.}
^{1. 8. 2 Tim.}
^{2. 8.}

31. He seeing this before spake of the resurrection
⁷ Ps. 16. 10. of Christ, ⁷ that his soul was not left in hell, neither
^{ch. 13. 35.} his flesh did see corruption.

⁸ ver. 24. 32. ⁸ This Jesus hath God raised up, ⁸ whereof we
^{ch. 1. 8.} all are witnesses.

⁹ ch. 5. 31. 33. Therefore ⁹ being by the right hand of God
^{Phil. 2. 9.}
^{Heb. 10. 12.}

David is said to have been plundered by John Hyrcanus and Herod,¹ but it is mentioned by Jerome as a place where he was in the habit of praying. A cave at Jerusalem is still pointed out as the burial place of David and Solomon, and is described by Maundrell. Only kings and persons of the highest rank were buried within the walls of a city in Palestine, or in any ancient nation.

30. '*Had sworn with an oath.*' The passage referred to is in 2 Sam. vii. 11—16. Reference is frequently made to this solemn covenant in the Old Testament. See Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4; cxxxii. 11. These well-known passages would occur at once to the minds of Peter's audience, and would remind them of the typical and prophetic import of the book of Psalms.

'*According to the flesh, he would raise up Christ.*' St. Peter alludes to the psalm, but gives a deeper insight into the meaning of David than is supplied by the mere text. He is reasoning, not merely quoting.

'*To sit on his throne.*' The kingly dignity of Christ is first pressed on the Jews. The first object of preach-

ing is to bring the disobedient into subjection to Him.

31. '*Seeing this before.*' Looking with a prophet's eye into the future.

'*Spake.*' Must of necessity have spoken of that, which alone could justify the expressions used by him.

32. '*This Jesus.*' This Christ is the Jesus whom God has raised up, so fulfilling that and all other prophecies of similar import.

'*Whereof.*' Of which fact, viz. the resurrection of Jesus.

'*We all.*' All the disciples, upon whom the miraculous gifts, at which ye are now amazed, have been bestowed.

33. '*Therefore.*' As a result of the resurrection.

'*Exalted.*' Raised in glory, and received into heaven.

'*The promise of the Spirit.*' See Acts i. 4. The Spirit promised by the Father to the Son, who in His office as Mediator receives and conveys all spiritual and saving gifts from God to man. As God He is the source, as Christ He is the channel of the outpourings of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord had declared that the Holy Ghost would not come unless He should depart and return to heaven, and that He would

¹ Joseph. Ant. vii. 15, 3; xvii. 8, 5; B. J. i. 2, 5, Kuinoel.

exalted, and 'having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he 'hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

^c John 14. 26. & 15. 26. & 16. 7, 13. ch. 1. 4. ^d ch. 10. 45. Ephes. 4. 8.

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,

^e Ps. 110. 1. Matt. 22. 44. 1 Cor. 15. 25. Ephes. 1. 20. Heb. 1. 13.

35. Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God 'hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

^f ch. 8. 31. ^g Zech. 12. 10. Luke 3. 10. ch. 9. 6. & 16. 30.

37. ¶ Now when they heard *this*, 'they were pricked

receive this gift from the Father, and send the Comforter. See John xiv. 16, 17. The Jews, however, would understand the promise of such prophecies as that quoted above, v. 17, &c.

'He hath shed forth this,' &c. This spiritual influence, which ye observe in its audible and visible effects.

34. 'For.' St. Peter proceeds to shew that the same consciousness of a higher dignity reserved for the Messiah pervades the other writings of David.

'The LORD said unto my Lord.' The LORD, when printed in large characters in our version, always answers to Jehovah. Our Saviour appeals to this text as a manifest proof that the Messiah was the Lord of David. Matt. xxii. 44. From that passage it is also evident that the Jews interpreted the 110th Psalm of Christ.

35. 'Until.' This refers to the duration of the mediatorial sovereignty of Christ. He will reign in heaven over His Church, until 'He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.' 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.' 1 Cor. xv. 24, 26.¹

The session of Christ at the right hand of God intimates—Perfect Blessedness (Ps. xvi. 11), Glorious Majesty

(Heb. i. 3 and viii. 1), and Fulness of Power (Ps. xx. 6 and Matt. xxviii. 18).²

36. 'Therefore.' St. Peter thus sums up the whole purport of his discourse.

Let all the house of Israel.' The nation is spoken of as the house or family of Israel, not without a reference to the promises made to the patriarchs.

'Lord.' A very important and significant word. Jesus, as Christ, is Prophet, Priest, and King of the true Theocracy, but as Lord He must be all this in a peculiar and divine sense.³ For the word Lord, as applied to Him, answers both to 'Adonai,' the supreme Lord, and undoubtedly also to 'Jehovah.'

In the original the last words of St. Peter are, 'whom ye have crucified.' Our language would hardly bear the transposition, but that collocation of words better expresses the direct practical object of the apostle, which was to awaken the conscience of his hearers. It was their Lord, upon whom they were wholly dependent, and their Christ, in whom all their hopes were centred, that they had crucified.

37. 'When they heard this.' This cogent address, with its array of proofs

¹ Athanasius ap. Cramer.

² Whitby.

³ Pearson on the Creed.

in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

^a Luke 24.
47. ch. 3. 19.

38. Then Peter said unto them, ^b 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.

¹ Joel 2. 28.
ch. 3. 25.
² ch. 10. 45.
& 11. 15, 18.
& 14. 27. &
15. 3, 8, 14.
Ephes. 2. 13,
17.

39. For the promise is unto you, and ¹to your children, and ²to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

from miracles and prophecy, and its clear, definite, and unanswerable application.

'They were pricked in their heart.' Pierced with a sudden acute feeling of anguish and compunction. The same word is used by the LXX., Psalm cix. 16; Genesis xxxiv. 7.

'Men and brethren.' This affectionate and reverent form of address proved that they did not 'kick against the pricks,' but were grateful for the loving rebuke. The heart was crushed but won.

'What shall we do?' The crime cannot be undone, how can it be forgiven?

38. *'Repent.'* Repentance includes the compunction and anxiety just described; but in its full significance it means an entire change of principles and affections in the inner man, attested by outward acts. The evil heart is not merely to be pierced, it must be changed.

'And be baptized—in the name.' The confession or recognition of Jesus, as the Messiah (including implicitly a reception of all truths taught by His Spirit, and a full obedience to His authority) was therefore the second condition of baptism. Repentance, faith, and obedience were then, as ever, the conditions of salvation.

'For the remission of sins.' *'For'*

indicates the object of baptism, which is the admission of the penitent believer into a state in which the remission of sins, which is procured and granted by Christ, is applied by the Holy Ghost. Baptism is thus represented both as a condition and instrumental means of salvation.

'And ye shall receive.' *'And'* here means, as a result of which.

'The gift of the Holy Ghost.' That is, the full and perfect communication of His saving and enlightening influence, that indwelling of the Spirit which is the peculiar privilege of Christians. This was represented and attested at first by miraculous signs, which ceased when no longer needed for the edification of the Church.

39. *'The promise.'* Of the communication of the Holy Ghost, &c. v. 17.

'Unto you and to your children.' This is said to comfort them, and to remove their fear, lest the great sin of the rejection and murder of their Lord should shut out them and their posterity from the blessing. The propriety of infant baptism is fairly inferred from this text.

'And to all that are afar off.' This may be understood primarily of the Jews of the dispersion, who were not present at the festival. It must, however, include the Gentiles (see Ephes.

¹ Meyer.

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

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

42. ¹ And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

¹ ver. 46.
ch. 1. 14.
Rom. 12. 12.
Ephes. 6. 18.
Col. 4. 2.
Heb. 10. 25.

ii. 13, 17), for, as the apostles and the Jews well knew, the promise made to Abraham was, that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed. See also Isaiah. The hesitation of St. Peter, recorded chap. x., was not owing to a doubt whether the Gentiles would be called, but whether they could be received into the Church without passing through Judaism.

'*Shall call.*' By the preaching of the gospel.

40. '*With many other words.*' St. Luke gives the general purport of this second address. The object of the former discourse was to awaken their conscience. The aim of this was to urge them to separate themselves from the unbelieving party, and become members of the kingdom of Christ.

'*Untoward,*'—crooked and perverse. Their mental blindness was owing to their moral depravity.

41. '*Then they that gladly received.*' Or, they accepted the promise and consolation with great joy and gratitude.

'*Were baptized.*' The form of administration was of course that which but ten days before had been distinctly appointed by our Lord in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It was quite unnecessary for St. Luke to record a fact so well known to all his Christian readers.

'*And the same day there were added,*' &c. The word is used by classical writers¹ of persons who become adherents to any party. It seems evident that these 3,000 persons who were converted and baptized in the course of this day were baptized by sprinkling, and not by immersion. Water was at all times scarce at Jerusalem, and even on ordinary occasions the brook Cedron, and the few pools in the city, would hardly have sufficed for the immersion of so large a number; and at that time it is not probable that the authorities would have allowed the followers of Him, whom they had so lately crucified, to take possession of them. To make the efficacy of baptism depend upon the quantity of water used in the administration appears contrary to the first principles of Christianity.

'*Souls.*' A Hebraism, equivalent to persons, but apparently chosen with special reference to conversion.

42. St. Luke has described the immediate effects of the first Christian sermon: he now relates the permanent results.

'*They continued—doctrine.*' The first converts had much to learn, and they attended closely to the teaching of the apostles.

'*And fellowship,*' brotherly communion. They lived as members of

¹ Elsner, Ob. p. 374.

^m Mark 16.
17. ch. 4.
33. & 5. 12.

43. And fear came upon every soul: and ^mmany wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

ⁿ ch. 4. 32,
34.

44. And all that believed were together, and ⁿhad all things common;

one family, the household of faith. The word may sometimes mean communication of temporal things, oblations, and almsgiving,¹ but this is a subordinate notion, and is included in the higher and more general idea of communion.

'Breaking of bread.' As a religious act this must be understood of the daily meal, after which the primitive Christians partook of the consecrated elements of bread and wine, according to our Lord's command. The early versions and most of the Fathers take the words to mean 'the Eucharist,' which was, undoubtedly, the essentially religious part of the Agape, or love-feast. The common meal, which was a custom, not an ordinance, was separated at an early period from the Eucharist, and, in consequence of many abuses, was afterwards discontinued.

'And in prayers.' These included liturgical forms, partly adapted from the Hebrew ritual, supplications, and thanksgivings uttered by inspired persons, which soon assumed a regular form,² and psalms and hymns, which formed a part of the early Christian service, as we may learn even from the heathen Pliny. In his epistle to Trajan he says, 'The Christians declared that they were wont to meet on a certain day (the Lord's day), and to repeat in alternate parts a hymn to Christ as their God.'³

We thus observe that the early Church had these four notes or signs—apostolic doctrine; brotherly com-

munion; regular administration of sacraments, and common prayer.

43. *'Fear.'* The effect upon all who heard of this event was fear, which either prepared the souls of those who were still 'without' for the apostle's preaching, or degenerated into hatred.

'Wonders and signs.' Miracles which were signs or evidences of the divine approbation.

44. *'Were together.'* That is, they constituted one society, though they may have formed many separate congregations. Although many of the 3,000 converts must have returned to their own countries after the festival, it is not probable that one room would have been large enough for the regular meetings⁴ of those who remained, including the converts who were daily added to the Church.

'Had all things common.' It is probable that the oblations of the several congregations formed a common stock, from which the expenses of the daily meals, and of the maintenance of the poor, were defrayed.⁵ It appears, however, that in the first outburst of Christian zeal the disciples generally endeavoured to follow the example of the apostles, who in the time of our Saviour evidently had all their property in common stock. We must bear in mind that this was not commanded by the apostles,—that it was not adopted in any other community, or separate Church established by them,—that it was perfectly volun-

¹ As Kuinoel and Olshausen interpret it here, after Mosheim.

² Justin Martyr. See Hooker, E. P. v. 25.

³ Plin. Ep. 97.

⁴ As Meyer supposes.

⁵ Neander, p. 35; Burton, and Hinds.

45. And sold their possessions and goods, and [°]parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. [°] *Isai.* 58. 7.
^p *ch.* 1. 14.

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, [°] *Luke* 24.
^{53.} *ch.* 5.
^{42.} *ch.* 20. 7.
^{||} Or, at home.

47. Praising God, and [°]having favour with all [°] *Luke* 2.
^{52.} *ch.* 4. 33.
^{Rom.} 14. 18.

tary in each individual,—and that, although it proves most convincingly the fervour and sincerity of their conversion, it was an outward act, the value of which is dependent upon circumstances, and must be judged by its practical effects upon the general welfare of a community. It was then probably both necessary and beneficial; now it would be impracticable; and, if practicable, might be injurious to society and to the moral character of man.

45. '*Sold.*' This word in the original does not refer to a single act, as though it were done at once and by all, but to frequent offerings. This observation applies also to the word '*parted.*' '*Possessions*' means houses and lands.

'*Goods,*' personal property. It does not appear that all sold their property, or that any sold all.

46. '*Continuing — temple.*' This attendance at the temple, at the usual hours of daily prayer, was independent of the common prayers in the Christian assemblies. Christianity interfered not with national or other institutions further than as they were incompatible with the gospel faith and practice.¹ The converts attended the temple as Jewish citizens, and its services would be more interesting and instructive to them than previously, as they would now discern the

true meaning of its typical ceremonies.

'*Breaking bread from house to house.*' Or, as the margin reads, '*at home,*' in their common Christian home, the house² in which they ate the Agape, or love-feast, and celebrated the Eucharist.

The 42nd verse gives the characteristics of the Church; this verse describes the habits of the apostles and first disciples. They attended the temple not merely for the purposes of prayer and devotion, but because they had there the best opportunities of addressing and converting their countrymen.

'*Did eat their meat,*' &c. The consciousness of duties well fulfilled, of devotion to God and love to the brethren, gave them a feeling of serene and unmingled satisfaction.

'*Singleness of heart.*' Simplicity, open and unaffected honesty of character. They had no ambitious or interested views.

47. '*Having favour with all the people.*' It is observable that the preachers of the gospel, and the Christians in general, were popular at first, not only in Jerusalem, but wherever a Church was established. The people were attracted by their sweetness of character, won by their benevolence, and disposed to reverence them for their piety and

¹ Hinds, R. & P. p. 134.

² So Wolff, Bengel, Olshausen, Meyer, Alford, Wordsworth, and

most of the modern commentators. See also Hinds, R. & P. p. 133.

¹ ch. 5. 14. the people. And ² the Lord added to the church daily
& 11. 24. such as should be saved.

devotion. It was not until they felt the contrast between the principles of Christians and their own views and habits, that they became the instruments of the persecutors of the Church.

'The Lord.' The Lord Jesus Christ, as the head and king of the Church. The apostles were but his instruments; their preaching was made effectual by His grace.

'The church.' This is the first place in which the word is used to designate the whole body of Christians, as organised and established.

The only passage in which it previously occurs in reference to the Christian body is prophetic, Matt. xvi. 18; here we have the fulfilment of the prophecy.

'Such as should be saved.' Or, such as were saved, i.e. who, by joining the Church, were rescued from the evil world, and admitted into a state of salvation. Unbelievers are called the lost, as being in a state which leads to perdition; Christians the saved, as being in a state which leads to everlasting salvation. The word in the original does not express a purpose, but a fact.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—4. When Christians meet with one accord in places consecrated to the Lord's service, He will surely fulfil His promise to be in the midst of them, and will vouchsafe proofs of His presence, which, though they may be imperceptible to the senses, will be recognised by the eye of faith, and produce results equally unmistakable with the miraculous gifts which attested the descent of His Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

5—11. The confusion of tongues is a symbol of the mutual alienation of fallen man. It is the more striking, inasmuch as all this many-tongued multitude were of one race and one family, and had unlearned their own sacred language in exile. Their tongues bore witness to the sin and punishment of their nation. As the spiritual utterances then reached their hearts and understanding, so should the one spiritual tongue which believers all speak renew that communion of mind and feeling which sin interrupted, and be heard in heaven as a mighty harmony from unnumbered hearts, saying, 'Great and marvellous are Thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints.'

13. Levity, carelessness, prejudice and passion do hinder us from being rightly informed with respect to common things; and they may in like manner, and perhaps in some farther providential manner, with respect to moral and religious subjects, hinder evidence from being laid before us, and from being seen when it is.—BISHOP BUTLER.

¹ Rev. xv. 3.

14, 15. From the introduction to St. Peter's discourse Christians may learn how to behave when injurious charges are made against them and their actions are misrepresented. The charges must be answered, for the sake of the Church, but briefly, and without attaching too much importance to them, if they are evidently made in a light and mocking spirit.

16—21. The explanation of this prophecy by St. Peter throws great light upon the connection between the Old and New Testament. It teaches us that the coming of Messiah, the events that preceded and accompanied His advent, and the effects which it would produce, are the great subjects of all inspiration. The outpouring of the Spirit in gifts and graces, and the manifestation of divine wrath in physical or national calamities, have always two great objects, to prepare men for His coming, and to teach them to flee from the wrath to come, calling on that name which alone is given whereby we may be saved. We must take care not to restrict such warnings to that epoch, although they had their especial application. The great and notable day of the Lord is nigh at hand to us individually, whether it be nigh or far, humanly speaking, with reference to the world. 'But no evil shall fatally touch our persons, or come near our dwellings, whilst we take hold of God by faith, and approach unto Him by prayer. Lord, how happy is it when strong afflictions from Thee raise strong affections in us towards Thee.'—*Burkitt*.

22—24. The guilt of the Jews was in proportion to their knowledge. So will it be with us. If we reject Christ it will be in spite of signs and unquestionable testimonies to His mission. If we be not one with Him in His crucifixion and death,—buried with Him in baptism,—we shall be guilty of His blood. But the pains of death are loosed for ever, and it is impossible that they can hold those who have risen with Him in newness of life, for they become partakers of His divine nature.

25—28. The believer has one great work before him, and that is to realise his union with Christ. Though David well knew that the sin-defiled body which he bore would be committed to the grave, he knew also that what was sown in corruption would be raised in incorruption, and that the soul, bowed down by penitent anguish, would be filled with joy, for he identified himself with Christ. In Christ he rejoiced, and was glad, and rested in sure and certain hope. What David so expressed in a season of inspiration should be the abiding feeling of each member of the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

36, 37. The main thing in a sermon is its personal application. It is not sufficient to know that Christ is exalted; we must know and feel that He suffered for our sins; that our sins are the cause of His death; and that if we are not separated from sin by hearty repentance and conversion, we crucify the Lord Jesus afresh, and are guilty of His death. This we must feel individually, or we shall never be pricked to the heart, and enquire of His messengers what we shall do to be saved.

38. Grief for sin is a precursor and condition of repentance, but is not repentance itself. The scriptural word implies a change of mind—the putting off the old man with his lusts, evil passions, and affections, with his darkness and corruption; and the putting on the new man, which is created after God in righteousness and true holiness. Hence it is that repentance is always represented as a gift of God, procured by Christ and conveyed by the Holy Spirit.

41. Spiritual joy is closely linked to godly sorrow for sin. Because they were pricked to the heart they gladly received the word. The pain of the wound taught them to welcome the good physician.

42. This enumeration of the signs of the first Church should teach us, in the first place, to be deeply grateful that all the privileges afforded to them are equally supplied to us: we have pure apostolic doctrine; ample opportunities for nourishing and displaying brotherly love; frequent access to the Lord's table, where the bread that came down from heaven, and was broken for us, is distributed to believers; and pure, scriptural, evangelical forms of common prayer. But in the next place it should make us very anxious to enquire whether we avail ourselves of those privileges, and derive from all external ordinances the spiritual blessings which they are intended to convey.

43. Reverence and awe for Christ's ministers are feelings far from being incompatible with true Christian liberty. They are, in fact, the conditions of that freedom. Selfishness, called independence, makes a man equally careless of those above and those below him.

45. The real need of our brethren is the true limit of Christian liberality. To give to those who need not, who can and ought to work for their own living, is a snare and a temptation to them—an injury and no benefit. While to refuse to the infirm and helpless is to despise the commands, nay, the person, of Christ.

46, 47. The sweet dispositions and beneficent actions of the Christians were means whereby the Spirit overcame the prejudices and won the hearts of many infidels. The truthfulness and strict morality of a believer may give offence; but he does not rightly adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour unless he strives to win favour with all the people.

CHAPTER III.

In this chapter we have a full account of one transaction, from which we learn what manner of 'wonders and signs' was wrought by the apostles.

A.D. 33.

1. Now Peter and John went up together ^ainto ^ach. 2. 46. the temple at the hour of prayer, ^bbeing the ninth ^bPs. 55. 17. hour.

2. And ^ca certain man lame from his mother's ^cch. 14. 8. womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, ^dto ask alms of ^dJohn 9. 8. them that entered into the temple;

3. Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

1. '*Peter and John.*' The names of these two apostles are frequently joined in the latter chapters of St. John's gospel, and in the beginning of this book, and in terms which prove a close and affectionate intimacy between them. See John xviii. 16; xx. 3; xxi. 2—21.

'*At the hour of prayer.*' There were three hours of prayer, which, as the Jews believed, were observed by Abraham and the patriarchs.¹ The first at the third hour (nine o'clock), when the morning sacrifice was offered; the second at mid-day; and the third at the ninth hour, i.e. three o'clock P.M., when the evening sacrifice was offered. Worshippers at Jerusalem generally offered prayer in the temple at the first and third of these stated times, which were also observed at an early period in Christian churches.

2. '*Called Beautiful.*' This may have been either the eastern gate or the gate of Nicanor,² or, as is more probable from its vicinity to the Porch of Solomon, where the Christians usually assembled, that called Shushan, or the gate of lilies (see 1 Kings vii. 19), which is described by Josephus.³ It was thirty cubits high, and was made of Corinthian brass, and wrought with exceeding delicacy and skill, so that it greatly exceeded in value the gates leading into the second court, which were covered with plates of silver and richly gilt.

'*To ask alms.*' The Jews regarded it as a privilege to give alms to persons who, like this poor man, were unable to work, and for whom no other provision was made. They believed that their prayers would be more effectual if they gave as they entered the

¹ Lightfoot, Schoetgen, and Wetstein. ² Meyer.

³ B. J. vi. 14. See Lightfoot.

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.

6. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none;
* ch. 4. 10. but such as I have give I thee: ^aIn the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

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

* Isai. 35. 6. 8. And he ^bleaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

* ch. 4. 16, 21. 9. ^cAnd all the people saw him walking and praising God:

^a Like John 9. 8. 10. And they knew that it was he which ^bsat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

temple, the gates of which were generally thronged with beggars.

4. '*Fastening his eyes.*' Looking intently; the same word is used chap. i. 10, and very frequently by St. Luke. We must remember that the apostles had the gift of discerning spirits, and they then doubtless searched the heart of the man, and ascertained that he was a fit subject for miraculous healing.

6. '*In the name.*' In the Old Testament miracles are always wrought in the name of Jehovah. Our Lord and His disciples always wrought them in His name. They knew whose power worked in and by them. Could they declare more plainly that Christ was God?

'*Of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.*' The name of Jesus was not uncommon, and

it was necessary to declare plainly that Jesus, in whose name the miracle was wrought, was the prophet of Nazareth, who was the true Messiah.

'*Rise up and walk.*' The command assured and conveyed the power,—all that was required of the man was faith and an obedient will.

7. '*His feet and ankle bones.*' The expressions in the original are very precise—indeed technical—as is usual with St. Luke, the 'beloved physician.'

8. '*Leaping up,*' &c. These gestures were not only significant of joy, but were proofs that he was perfectly and miraculously healed.

10. '*Were filled,*' &c. These words denote the utmost astonishment. The miracle was not merely the restoration of a suspended faculty, but the infusion of a new power.

¹ Meyer and Albert.

11. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch ¹that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

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?

13. ²The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, ³hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye ⁴delivered up, and ⁵denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.

14. But ye denied ⁶the Holy One ⁷and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

15. And killed the ⁸Prince of life, ⁹whom God hath raised from the dead; ¹⁰whereof we are witnesses.

¹John 10.
23. ch. 5. 12.
²ch. 5. 30.
³John 7. 39.
⁴12. 16. &
17. 1.
⁵Matt. 27.
2.
⁶Matt. 27.
30. Mark
15. 11.
Luke 23. 18,
20, 21.
John 18. 40.
& 19. 15.
ch. 18. 28.
⁷Ps. 16. 10.
Mark 1. 24.
Luke 1. 35.
ch. 2. 27. &
4. 27.
⁸ch. 7. 52.
& 22. 14.
⁹Or,
Author.
Heb. 2. 10.
& 5. 9.
¹⁰John 5.
11.
ch. 2. 24.
ch. 2. 32.

11. '*Held Peter,*' &c. He would not be separated from his benefactors.¹

¹ *The porch that is called Solomon's.*

This appears to have been the place where the apostles were in the habit of addressing the people. See chap. v.

12. It was the cloister on the east side of the temple. The porch there consisted of a double row of pillars, twenty-five cubits high, with a richly carved roof of cedar-wood. The breadth of the porch was thirty cubits. It was probably erected on the site of a porch of the old temple.²

13. '*He answered.*' The demeanour of the people shewed that they were anxious to enquire what the miracle meant.

¹ '*Why marvel ye.*' The astonishment of the people was not blame-worthy, but they are reproved for not referring the miracle to the divine power.

13. '*Hath glorified.*' That is, hath attested the exaltation of Jesus by this

miracle wrought in His name. The word here rendered 'son' means literally 'child,' and may signify either 'son' or 'servant,' and in this and other passages of the Acts more probably the latter. It is the word used in the Septuagint version of Isaiah xlii. 1, and elsewhere, for the servant of the Lord; and St. Peter may have thus recalled those well-known predictions to the minds of the people.

¹ '*Whom ye,*' i.e. the common people. See marginal references.

² '*When he was determined.*' When he had decided that it was just to release him. See John xix. 15, and Luke xxiii. 16—23.

14. '*The Holy One and the Just.*' Jesus, who alone, and in a peculiar sense, is absolutely free from sin, both towards God and towards man.

15. '*Prince of life.*' The word translated prince means author and giver, as well as sovereign. The term is here used in emphatic contrast with

¹ Chrysostom.

² Winer, ii. 530.

* Matt. 9.
22. ch. 4.
10. & 14. 9.

* Luke 23.
34. John
16. 2. ch.
13. 27.
1 Cor. 2. 8.
1 Tim. 1. 13.
* Luke 24.
44. ch. 26.
22.
* Ps. 22.
Isai. 50. 6.
& 53. 5, &c.
Dan. 9. 26.
1 Pet. 1. 10,
11.
* ch. 2. 28.

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.

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.

19. ¶ 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that

'a murderer,' whom the Jews preferred. Life may be taken in the widest signification; for Christ overcame death in body and in spirit by His resurrection and by sending the Holy Ghost.

16. '*Through*.' The apostles' faith in His name is here meant.

'*The faith which is by him*.' Which is given by Him, infused and elicited by His grace. The invocation of the name of Jesus produced the effect, but not unconditionally,—not without faith both in the apostle and the lame man.

17. '*Through ignorance*.' This did not remove their guilt, since such ignorance was wilful, in spite of evidence, and connected with their evil dispositions and habits; but it so far mitigated their guilt that it left a way open for repentance. It was not the sin against the Holy Ghost. Compare Luke xxiii.

34. Our Lord's own Spirit then spake in His apostle.

'*Also your rulers*.' Compare St. Paul's words, 1 Cor. ii. 8. Had the rulers known the wisdom of God, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. They did not know that He was the Christ, although they had sufficient evidence.

18. '*But those things*.' St. Peter

points out that their guilt had been the means whereby God's predetermined purposes were accomplished. A circumstance that would not remove their feelings of compunction (since they well knew that God, who overruled the result of their actions, had not controlled their will), but would save them from despair. See Joseph's address to his brethren, Genesis i. 20.

'*Of all his prophets*.' It was a saying of the Jews, that 'the prophets,' universally and exclusively, prophesied of the days of Messiah.¹ Then no rabbi doubted that the sufferings of Christ were predicted by David, Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah, although they hardened themselves against the application of the types and prophecies to Jesus.

19. '*Repent ye therefore*.' Since there is hope of mercy, procured even by the sufferings which ye have inflicted.

'*Be converted*.' Or turn,—turn to Him whom ye denied. That is conversion.

'*That your sins*.' Repentance is the condition and pledge of forgiveness.

'*Blotted out*.' The ancients wrote on tablets covered with wax, and when they wished to alter what they

¹ Sanhed. ap. Meyer.

your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

20. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you :

21. ^aWhom the heaven must receive until the ^{ch. 1. 11.} ^atimes of ^{Matt. 17.} ^brestitution of all things, ^{11.} ^bwhich God hath ^{Luke 1.} ^{70.} spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

22. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, ^aA ^{Deut. 18.} ^{15, 18, 19.} ^{ch. 7. 37.}

had written, they expunged the words with the flat end of the iron pen which they used. Hence 'blotted out' implies a total extinction of guilt. See Isaiah xliii. 25. 'I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.'

'*When the times,*' &c. These words may be rendered, in order that times,¹ &c. Although the time of our Lord's coming may not depend upon man's conversion, yet the effects of that event upon each of us will vary according to our state of preparation. They will not be times of refreshing to the impenitent.

'*Of refreshing.*' This expression evidently refers to the second coming of the Lord,² which will be a period of rest and refreshment to pardoned sinners after the tribulations of the world. There appears to be an allusion to that parallel between the sabbath and the Messianic kingdom which is referred to by the apostle, Heb. iv. 1, 9—11.

20. '*And he shall send.*' This verse makes it certain that the preceding refers to the second coming of the Lord. The Jews had rejected Him when preached, or appointed³ for them on His first coming, but by

repentance they may be prepared to rejoice in His second coming.

21. '*The heaven must receive.*' It was the purpose of God, and therefore necessary, that Christ should reign in heaven, and not, as the Jews supposed, on earth, until the end of the world. This text is conclusive against the doctrine of the *Bodily* Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist; hence in the notice in our Prayer-book at the end of the Communion service, 'the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one.'

'*Restitution.*' This implies a restoration of that harmony between God and His creatures, and of that paradisiacal felicity of the latter, which were interrupted by the fall of man. The Jews expected that Messiah would restore the physical and moral perfection of man, but corrupted that true and simple doctrine by many superstitious notions.⁴

'*Which God hath spoken,*' &c. That restoration is the leading subject of all prophecy from Genesis to Malachi. It is implied in the first promise made after the fall.

22. '*Moses truly said.*' In Deut.

¹ Lightfoot, and most of the later commentators.

² Chrysostom, Olshausen, Meyer.

³ Tischendorf.

⁴ Kimchi and Tanchum. ap. Meyer.

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.*

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

^a ch. 2. 39.
Rom. 9. 4, 6.
& 15. 8.
Gal. 3. 28.
^c Gen. 12. 3.
& 18. 18. &
22. 18. & 26.
4. & 28. 14.
Gal. 3. 8.
^d Matt. 10. 5.
& 15. 24.
Luke 24.
47. ch. 18.
32, 33, 46.

25. ^aYe are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, ^cAnd in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26. ^dUnto you first God, having raised up his Son

xviii. 15—19. *'Like unto me.'* Christ alone was like unto Moses in that He was the mediator of a new covenant, and promulgator of a divine law. The prophecy of Moses no doubt included a reference to the prophets whom God raised up from time to time to declare His will, but only so far as they were types of Christ. It is doubtful whether the teachers of the Jews at that time applied the prophecy to the Messiah, but none was likely to deny the cogency of St. Peter's argument. The application needed but to be pointed out.¹

23. *'Shall be destroyed.'* St. Peter gives the sense of the original, or rather explains it by substituting another form, which usually expresses the penalty inflicted for resisting the declared will of God.

24. *'From Samuel.'* Samuel is here reckoned the first of the prophets, either because the schools of the prophets were first instituted by him (1 Sam. xix. 20—hence the Jewish proverb, 'Samuel was the master of the prophets'),² or rather

because the first distinct prophecies concerning Messiah recorded after the time of Moses are found in the book of Samuel (1 Sam. ii. 10, and 2 Sam. vii. 16). The historical books of the Old Testament were always called 'the Books of the Prophets,' as being written by inspired persons, who were officially prophets.³

25. *'Ye are the children.'* This does not mean the descendants, or disciples and followers of the prophets, but persons who are the subjects both of the prophecies and of the covenant.⁴ In the Hebrew idiom 'children' marks dependence and connection.

26. *'Unto you first.'* In consequence of that relationship the gospel was first preached to the Jews. St. Peter still hoped that the great mercy of God, in permitting that the Jews, who had crucified His Son, should first hear of His resurrection, and receive the first offer of forgiveness and acceptance, would be effectual for their salvation. This hope is quite consistent with the opinion, which in

¹ Schoetgen, Hor. Heb.

² Talmud ap. Lightfoot.

³ Simon. Hist. Crit. O. T. c. ix.

⁴ Meyer.

Jesus, ^ssent him to bless you, ^hin turning away every ^{s ver. 22.}
one of you from his iniquities. ^{h Matt. 1.}
21.

common with the other apostles, he then entertained, that the Gentiles would be admitted into the Church after circumcision. See notes on chap. x.

'Having raised up.' This refers to v. 22. God raised up Jesus as the prophet whom He had promised.

'Sent him.' First in the flesh, at

the Incarnation, and now in the spirit, by the coming of the Holy Ghost.

'To bless you.' St. Peter concludes by reminding the Jews that the blessing which was promised and offered to them consisted in deliverance from sin, and not from mere temporal bondage.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. In all ages, since God hath had a Church in the world, there have been stated times and places for solemn public worship. Regular habits of private devotion are indispensable for the sustenance of the spiritual life in individuals—frequent and solemn assemblies for public and common devotion are equally necessary for the development of the spiritual principle by which the whole Church is quickened.

2. Let not our charity fall short of the Jews, who were ready to help those who could not help themselves. The rich gave money, the poor bore them to and from home gratuitously. We can all imitate them by helping or giving; and a truly charitable work is the best preparation for the service of the sanctuary.

3—8. Every miracle in the Bible is also a parable. There are no dead, meaningless facts in the book of life. The weak and impotent in spirit, who feel that they have no strength to walk in the way which their own sins make so rugged, spiritual cripples, as we all are from our mother's womb, may learn from this miracle how they are to recover strength. They must apply to those who are commissioned by Christ to dispense spiritual alms, fix heart and mind upon their words, and listen in faith that they will receive something—even that one thing which is needful for their souls. Nor will they forget that the best proof of restored health is strenuous action. Disease is heavy, indolent, sad; but health is light, active, cheerful. This is true of the body, and more perfectly true of the spirit.

9—11. It is a good sign when amazement is followed by enquiry. If, when we are perplexed, we go at once to the temple, we shall be sure to have our difficulties cleared up, for we shall find there the apostles, and their Master. Prayer is the 'beautiful gate' which will bring us into that temple which 'the glory of God doth lighten, and the Lamb is the light thereof.'

12. It is a natural, but very dangerous, superstition to believe that when great spiritual works are done, it must be by virtue of some power inherent in the agent, or conferred upon him as a reward of personal holiness. Thus the catechism of the Council of Trent plainly declares that God confers on us many

benefits by the merits of the saints; and Lorinus (a famous Roman Catholic writer) asserts that the merits of the saints are prevalent for the working of miracles.¹ We acknowledge, with the apostles St. Peter and St. John, that the highest saints are but earthen vessels conveying the treasures of Christ.

13—15. The infidel is not so unjust as the bigot. Pilate acquitted, and wished to release, Him who was accused as the rival of Cæsar, and who was the true conqueror of the world, while the Jews betrayed and denied their own Messiah, the King of Glory. Still the apathy of the infidel is even a more fatal symptom than the fury of zealots. Or rather, we may say, this is a deadly disease, that is death.

16. Such are the effects of faith in the spiritual man also. Perfect soundness comes from Christ, but faith is the channel, the 'golden pipe,' through which it flows. The apostle spake in faith, and the healing virtue went forth; the lame man heard in faith, and its influence was at once felt throughout his frame, not merely restoring, but infusing life and strength.

17, 18. How tender the apostle is in his treatment of a sore conscience. Those who are prompt in finding excuses for others are generally the severest censors of their own sins. We never read that St. Peter palliated his denial of our Lord, but, simply, that he went out and wept bitterly.

19—26. In this address every motive to immediate repentance is presented with that art which divine love alone possesses in perfection. The certainty of the second coming in glory of Him whom they had rejected in His humiliation suggests an awful terror, while the liveliest feelings of hope and gratitude are excited by the renewed promises of grace and blessing to the children of the Covenant.

¹ Whitby.

CHAPTER IV.

The rapid increase of the Church soon attracted the notice, and excited the jealousy, of the Jewish authorities. They had in fact but two alternatives: either to confess their guilt in procuring the death of Jesus, or to suppress the evidence of His resurrection. The cautious and hesitating character of their proceedings proves that their conscience was partially awakened, but they were strong enough to silence its remonstrances, and to incur the new guilt of resisting the testimony of the Holy Ghost, and of persecuting His witnesses.

A.D. 33—34.

1. AND as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, ^{|| Or. ruler. Luke 22. 4. ch. 5. 24.} came upon them.

2. *Being grieved that they taught the people, and * ^{Matt. 22. 23. Acts 23. 8.} preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

1. '*And as they spake.*' The vast concourse of people afforded a pretext for interference, and the apostles were interrupted while they were still addressing them.

'*The priests.*' Those priests who were there officially as keepers of the temple.

'*The captain of the temple.*' This officer commanded the three bands of these priests, and the Levites, whose duty was to guard the temple and see that the laws of Moses were not violated. He was an officer of high rank, and one of the chief priests.¹

'*And the Sadducees.*' They had no official right to interfere, but took the lead in the persecution, being especially offended by the doctrine of the resurrection. At that time they were the most powerful party in the Sanhedrim, although they had less influence with the people in general than the Phari-

sees. Josephus says that they were generally remarkable for their cruelty in judicial cases.

2. '*Being grieved.*' This applies to the Sadducees. See Matt. xxii. 23. A famous rabbi says, 'The Sadducees deny the resurrection, and say, the cloud is exhausted and departs, so he who descends into the tomb never returns.'² They were also especially indignant that persons of no rank or station should presume to teach at all.

'*Through Jesus.*' In the case of Jesus. It does not mean that the apostles preached that the dead would be raised by the power of Jesus, which is perfectly true, but that they had declared a resurrection to be possible by asserting that He was raised. They had evidently heard St. Peter's address as far as v. 15 of the preceding chapter, and then had gone to call in the guard.

¹ Joseph. B. J. ii. 12, 6; Ant. xx. 6, 2; Winer, ii. 500; Lightfoot on Luke xxii. 4.

² Tanchum. ap. Meyer.

3. And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

4. Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

5. ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

^b Luke 2. 2.
John 11. 48.
A. 18. 12.

6. And ^bAnnas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and

3. '*And put them in hold.*' In the prison, which was near the temple, probably under ground.

'*Eventide.*' The Hebrews reckoned two evenings, from three and from six o'clock. It must have been the second evening, and nearly dark, as they went to the temple at three.

4. '*Howbeit many,*' &c. Notwithstanding the persecution of the apostles, which might have shaken their confidence. This occurred very probably soon after Pentecost, since the ruling party must have watched the proceedings of the apostles with anxiety, and were not likely to remain quiet long.

'*Number of the men was about five thousand.*' This does not seem to include the previous converts (St. Luke would otherwise have said of the brethren, or disciples), nor women and children; so that there were now 8,000 male adults baptized members of the Church. See ii. 41. It does not state that all these persons were present on that occasion in the porch of Solomon, but that they heard the Word; doubtless from the other apostles also. The fame of such a miracle, the truth of which could be at once ascertained, would spread rapidly through the city.

5. '*Their rulers.*' Their conduct is contrasted with that of the people. The members of the Sanhedrim are designated by this term. The elders, that is, the heads of the families, and

scribes, or chief doctors of the law, were only summoned on extraordinary occasions. This proves the great importance that was attached to these transactions.

6. '*Annas.*' This man had been high priest during seven years, but was deposed by Valerius Gratus, procurator of Judea, in the second year of the reign of Tiberius, A.D. 15.¹ Caiaphas was high priest from A.D. 16 to A.D. 36. But Annas still retained the title of high priest, together with much of the influence that was attached to the office. He was at that time probably the president of the Sanhedrim, and on that account appears to be named before Caiaphas, who was his son-in-law. Hence our Lord was first taken before Annas. John xviii. 13. Both Annas and Caiaphas were men of ability, crafty politicians and zealous Sadducees.

'*John and Alexander.*' These must have been persons of distinction. The former is supposed to have been Jochanan Ben Zaccai, one of the seven rabbans, of whom many sayings are preserved in the Talmud. Alexander bears the same name as a brother of the celebrated Philo, and may possibly be the same person, though it is scarcely probable that he would be resident in Judæa, as he held a high office at Alexandria. They appear to have been relations of Caiaphas and Annas.

¹ Lewin, *Fasti Sacri*, § 1073.

John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

7. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, 'By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?' 'Exod. 2. 14. Matt. 21. 23. ch. 7. 27. ' Luke 12. 11, 12.

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

'At Jerusalem.' Several members of the Sanhedrim were apparently summoned from the country after the arrest of the apostles.

7. *'When they had set them.'* Both the apostles and the lame man. See v. 14.

'In the midst.' The expression is, as usual, very accurate; the Sanhedrim sat in a semicircle. See also note on xvii. 22.

'By what power.' The fact was admitted. The question was whether the apostles would assert that it was done by the divine power,—if not, it must have been by sorcery. In the first case the apostles would be bound to prove their commission,—in the second they would be at once subject to the highest penalty of the law.

'By what name.' The Jewish exorcists used various names in their incantations, such as that of Solomon, of the patriarchs, or of God.¹ The Sanhedrists well knew that the apostles wrought the miracle in the name of Jesus, but might hope that they would fear to acknowledge it, in which case they would at once lose their influence with the people; or if they confessed it, they might be punished for

invoking the name of one who had so lately been crucified on the charge of blasphemy and sedition.

8. *'Peter filled with the Holy Ghost.'* This expression always denotes a special and miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, which was then bestowed according to our Lord's promise (Luke xxi. 14, 15), in reference to such persecutions.

'Ye rulers,' &c. St. Peter fully recognises the authority of the Sanhedrim to enquire into such cases, and addresses them, of course, with due respect.

9. *'The good deed.'* This expression implies a pointed, but perfectly respectful reproof. Miracles of healing were never referred to the agency of evil spirits.

'By what means,'—or by whom. The object of the enquiry was to ascertain to what person the apostles referred the miracle.

10. *'Be it known,'* &c. This bold and unequivocal answer of St. Peter is quite in accordance with his character. He was timid and vacillating when his faith was shaken, but when that was established he was a willing

¹ Lightfoot, &c.

* ch. 3. 6, of Israel, *that by the name of Jesus Christ of Naza-
 16. reth, whom ye crucified, 'whom God raised from the
 ' ch. 2. 24. dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before
 you whole.

8 Ps. 118.
 22. Isai. 28.
 16. Matt.
 21. 42.
 ' Matt. 1.
 21. ch. 10.
 43. 1 Tim.
 2. 5, 6.

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

and energetic instrument of that Spirit, who rectifies and develops, but does not supersede or annihilate, the natural faculties of man.

'By the name.' By the invocation of the name. This answer means, and was understood by the Sanhedrim to mean, that the name of Jesus was equivalent in power to that of God.¹

'Of Jesus Christ,' &c. Jesus is declared to be the Messiah, a statement most repugnant to all their prejudices; the rulers are reminded of the part which they took in His murder, of which they were in fact the instigators, and for which they were officially and personally responsible; and the assertion is repeated, which was the immediate cause of the hostility of the ruling party, and of the apostles' arrest, viz. that God had raised Jesus from the dead.

11. 'This is the stone.' These words were applicable to David as the type of Christ, in whom alone they are truly and completely fulfilled. See Psalm cxviii. 22.

'Of you builders.' The priests and scribes were officially the builders of the Jewish Church; it was their duty to form and develop the religious character of the people of God, a duty which was afterwards performed for the true Israel by the apostles and the Christian ministry.

'The head of the corner.' The corner or key-stone which supports and holds

a building together. This expression was understood by the rabbis to describe the Messiah.² St. Peter refers to our Saviour's own declaration. Matt. xxi. 42. There are several other instances in which St. Peter seems to have specially in view the conduct and language of our Lord. See ii. 34, xi. 16, xv. 10; 1 Peter ii. 7; 2 Peter i. 14; as, if in his life, no less than in his death, he was mindful of the words 'Follow thou me.'³

12. 'Salvation.' This word must be understood in the widest sense; including deliverance from physical evils, which will be completed at the restitution of all things (See note iii. 21), and from spiritual evils, from the power, guilt, and penalties of sin.⁴

'For there is none other name,' &c. This passage does not imply the condemnation of those who lived before Christ, or who have never heard of His name, but it does assert that no man is saved by any other power, or on any consideration, save that of the merits of Christ. His name is the pledge of man's salvation, and the acknowledgment of it by faith is the instrumental cause of salvation to those who hear it.

'We must be saved.' The word 'must' refers to the necessity originating in the everlasting decree of God. *We* is used emphatically, as the original text shows,⁵ of those who receive Christ.

¹ Olshausen.

² Schoetgen on Matt. xxi. 42.

³ Humphry.

⁴ Olshausen and Meyer.

⁵ Meyer.

there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

13. ¶ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, 'and perceived that they were unlearned' ^{1 Matt. 11. 25. 1 Cor. 1. 27.} 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} ^{2 ch. 2. 11.} it.

15. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16. Saying, 'What shall we do to these men? for' ^{1 John 11. 47.} that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them ^{is} ³ manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and ⁴ ⁵ we cannot deny ⁶ ⁷ it. ^{8 ch. 2. 9. 10.}

17. But that it spread no further among the people,

13. '*Now when they saw,*' &c. The Jewish people were kept in complete subjection by their teachers. The opinion and slightest word of the latter were a law, and persons who had not a professional claim to attention scarcely ventured to form, much less to express, an independent judgment.

'*Perceived.*' The original word does not imply that they perceived this from the apostle's speech, but that they were previously aware of the fact.

'*Unlearned and ignorant.*' Not trained in the schools of the scribes, and in rabbinical learning. The latter word means, 'unprofessional,' or 'laymen,' in the ecclesiastical and legal sense. A similar objection was frequently urged against the preachers of Christianity, in the three first centuries, but the apologists were contented to answer, with Justin Martyr, that 'it was not of human origin, and that being with Jesus was sufficient to make the ignorant and unlearned wise.'

'*They took knowledge of them.*' They then recognised them as former disciples of Jesus.' The boldness and cogency of the apostles' discourse reminded them of Him before whom their subtlest disputants and expounders of the law had so often quailed.

14. '*They could say nothing against it.*' It was an admitted principle, that a miracle like this was satisfactory evidence of a divine commission.

16. '*A notable miracle.*' The word here translated miracle means a miraculous sign, wrought in attestation of divine authority. This seems a very remarkable admission, but we must remember that the peculiar guilt of the Jewish rulers consisted in their sinning against light. See especially Matt. xxviii. 13, and John xv. 22.

'*We cannot deny.*' This implies that they would have suppressed the evidence had it been possible.

17. '*It spread.*' The report of this

¹ Meyer.

let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

^a Again,
ch. 5. 40.

18. ^a And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, ^a Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

^p ch. 1. 8. &
2. 32.
^q ch. 22. 15.
¹ John 1. 1,
2.

20. ^p For we cannot but speak the things which ^q we have seen and heard.

21. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, ^r because of the people: for all *men* glorified God for ^s that which was done.

^r Matt. 21.
26. Luke
20. 6, 19. &
22. 2. ch. 5.
26.
^s ch. 3. 7, 8.

22. For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

^t ch. 12. 12.

23. ¶ And being let go, ^t they went to their own

miracle, or, more probably, the doctrine which was supported by the miracle. The word 'spread' conveys the notion of a disease.

'*That they speak.*' The object of this prohibition was to suppress all further preaching of the gospel, all working of miracles, and the very mention of the name of Jesus.

19. '*Peter and John answered.*' Their answer indicates the extent and limits of the authority of the Sanhedrim. It was their duty to enquire into the pretensions of persons claiming to be messengers of God, and acting in His name, but they had no right to suppress their preaching, when supported by 'notable miracles.' Their authority was suspended when God spake, and the apostle's duty was to hearken to Him. Even Balaam bore witness to the truth, which the rulers of Israel overlooked. See Numbers xxiii. 18. This is the last occasion on which St. John is mentioned in the

Acts. He must however have either remained in Jerusalem, or if, as Dr. Wordsworth supposes, he went away for a season, have returned, since we learn from Gal. ii. 9 that he was there when St. Paul visited the city.

21. '*Because of the people.*' They could prove no legal offence, and dared not punish the apostles contrary to law, when the people were convinced of their innocence.

'*Glorified God.*' Referred this miracle, with grateful reverence, to God.

22. '*For the man was,*' &c. The age of the man made the miracle more remarkable, and his case better known.¹ It is evident that he was recognised by the members of the Sanhedrim, most of whom must have seen him daily at the temple during many years.

23. '*To their own company.*' To their fellow apostles, and probably to the disciples who assembled regularly in the same house.²

¹ Chrysostom.

² Olshausen. See also Hind's History of the R. & P. of Christianity.

company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, "thou ^{* 2 Kings 19. 15.} 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 * ^{Ps. 2. 1.} 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 ^{7 Matt. 26. 3. Luke 22. 2. & 23. 1, 8.} of a truth against *thy holy child Jesus, ^{* Luke 1. 35.} whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius ^{* Luke 4. 18. John 10. 36.} Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

'And reported all,' &c. St. Peter and St. John had already determined what they ought to do; and they now lay the subject before the other apostles and leading members of the Church that they may decide also. Their decision is expressed in the following prayer.

24. *'They lifted up their voice,'* &c. The greater part of this prayer is derived from the book of Psalms, which has always formed part of the regular devotions of the Church, so that the disciples would readily join in lifting up their voices, supposing that one of the apostles recited a portion. It is the opinion, however, of Wheatly,¹ and of some of the latest commentators, that the whole prayer formed part of the regular liturgical service of the apostolic Church, and that it was then used simultaneously by the whole body, as best adapted to the circumstances, and as exactly expressing their sentiments and wishes.

25. *'By the mouth.'* The expres-

sion is very forcible, proving the full inspiration of the Psalms. The Jewish rabbis unanimously interpreted the second Psalm of the Messiah.²

'Why did the heathen rage, and the people.' The former term is used both in the Old and New Testament exclusively of unbelieving Gentiles; the latter is a more general term, and includes the Israelites. The apostles evidently make this distinction.

26. *'His Christ.'* This is one of the earliest passages in the Old Testament in which the word Christ or anointed is distinctly applied to Him of whom all anointed kings, priests, and prophets, were types and delegates.

27. *'For of a truth.'* The apostles represent the late events as a remarkable exemplification of the enmity which the unregenerate always bear to Christ. Prophecy has many fulfilments in the history of God's people, and is not exhausted because it was then specially applicable.

¹ On the Prayer-book, p. 10-12. See also Meyer.

² Hengstenberg, Christologie, i. 95, 96.

^b ch. 2. 23. & 3. 18. 28. ^bFor to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

^c ver. 13, 31. ch. 9. 27. & 13. 46. & 14. 3. & 19. 8. & 26. 26. & 28. 31. Ephes. 6. 19. 29. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, ^cthat with all boldness they may speak thy word,

^d ch. 2. 43. & 5. 12. ^e ch. 3. 6, 16. 30. By stretching forth thine hand to heal; ^dand that signs and wonders may be done ^eby the name of ^fthy holy child Jesus.

^g ch. 2. 2, 4. & 16. 26. 31. ¶ And when they had prayed, ^gthe place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, ^hand they spake the word of God with boldness.

ⁱ ch. 5. 12. Rom. 15. 5, 6. 2 Cor. 13. 11. Phil. 1. 27. & 2. 2. 1 Pet. 3. 8. 32. And the multitude of them that believed ⁱwere of one heart and of one soul: ^jneither said any ^kof them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

^l ch. 1. 8. ^m ch. 1. 22. 33. And with ^lgreat power gave the apostles ^mwit-

28. '*For to do.*' Their intention was to slay the Lord, which was, in fact, unconsciously to execute the purposes of God.

'*Thy hand.*' Thy overruling power.

29. '*And grant.*' The apostles, instead of expressing their determination to incur the penalty of disobeying the Sanhedrim, pray to God to give them boldness, and to confirm their preaching.

30. '*By stretching forth,*' &c. That is, they pray for a continuance and increase of the power of healing, especially as a sign and evidence.

'*By the name.*' By that name in which they were forbidden to teach. They ask for power to do the work, not for security from the consequences.

31. '*The place was shaken.*' When a trembling of the earth was not attended by any damage, the ancients regarded it as an intimation of the divine presence in favour.¹ In this

case it was an intimation that their prayer was vouchsafed.

'*They were all filled.*' This signifies not merely a temporary outpouring of the Holy Ghost, but also a permanent increase of the special gift for which they prayed, viz. that of speaking the Word with boldness.

32. '*And the multitude.*' This verse refers to the new converts² who believed in consequence of the late miracle and preaching of Peter. They are represented as under the same influences with the former disciples.

'*Neither said,*' &c. The expressions here are equally clear as to the two points, that each had possession of his own, and that he used them for the benefit of all. See note ii. 44.

33. '*Great power.*' This refers to the efficacy of their preaching.

'*And great grace.*' Divine grace and favour. It is true that the people of Jerusalem were for the time favour-

¹ Kuinoel, &c.

² Meyer.

ness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus : and ^agreat ^bch. 2. 47. grace was upon them all.

34. Neither was there any among them that lacked : ^cfor as many as were possessors of lands or houses ^dch. 2. 45. sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35. ^eAnd laid *them* down at the apostles' feet : ^fand ^gver. 37. distribution was made unto every man according as he ^hch. 5. 2. ⁱch. 2. 45. ^j& 6. 1. had need.

36. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed

ably disposed to the Christians, but the object of St. Luke is to enumerate the marks of divine favour which followed this first persecution of the Church.¹

'Upon them all.' All the members of the Church.

34. '*Neither was there.*' The effect of this grace was increase of love.

'*That lacked.*' There was no indigence, though there was poverty.

'*As many as were possessors.*' It is not stated that these converts, who, under the influence of divine grace, sold lands or houses, parted with all their property, nor that the custom was universal.²

35. '*At the apostles' feet.*' The expression is derived from the Oriental custom of laying offerings before the footstool of kings. It implies that the Christians regarded the apostles as their governors, being representatives and viceregents of Christ. All stand in the same relation to Him, for all are His servants ; but with reference to the household, the apostles and their successors are rulers. See Matt. xxiv. 45.

36. '*And Joses.*' In these verses, and in the following chapter, which is closely connected with this, we have two examples of persons who made

such offerings. Instead of Joses the best MSS. have *Joseph*, a name associated with so many holy reminiscences that it seems singular that it should have been changed by transcribers.

'*Barnabas.*' The name given by the apostles describes the character of this good and holy man, but it refers very probably to the special circumstances under which he made the offering. Barnabas, or 'son of consolation,' means one who prophesies, exhorts, and consoles, being moved by the Comforter.³ We know nothing of the early history of Barnabas, but there is a tradition that he was a fellow student with Saul in the school of Gamaliel. His family appear to have been persons of similar dispositions to himself ; Mary, who was his sister or aunt, had a house at Jerusalem, where the Church assembled at an early period (see Acts xii.), and her son Mark became a distinguished minister.

'*A Levite.*' The Levites could buy and sell land in Palestine, as we learn from Jeremiah xxxii. 7.

'*Of Cyprus.*' His family dwelt in Cyprus, a rich and beautiful island, and, next to Sicily, the largest in the Mediterranean Sea. It lies very near

¹ Meyer.

² Hind's Hist. R. & P. of Christianity.

³ Lightfoot, Winer, and Meyer.

Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus,

¹ ver. 24, 25.
ch. 5. 1, 2.

37. ¹Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

the south coast of Asia Minor, opposite Cilicia, the native country of St. Paul. The Jews had settled there in great numbers.¹

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—7. The Word is a touchstone of the heart, which, on coming into contact with it, is either subdued or hardened. The most spiritual doctrines produce this effect in the highest degree. The Sadducees could not accept that of the resurrection, without surrendering their whole system; the people gladly received it as the pledge of a blissful eternity.

God comforts His persecuted pastors by the increase of their flock, and He confirms the flock by the constancy of their pastors.—*QUESTNEL.*

8—12. What a different being is man when abandoned to his own impulses, and when acting under the influences of the Spirit. He who had denied Christ before a few poor servants, now proclaims Him in the presence of the very instigators and ringleaders of His murderers.

13. The Christian may be deemed ignorant or unlearned by those who are without; but he has the best learning, being a partaker of Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He must search those treasures diligently, and use them boldly, lest he be condemned as a faithless and unprofitable servant.

14—21. We should here meditate on the power of the Lord in restraining the enemies of the Church, and on His goodness, in shielding the tree which He had planted, until, being rooted and grounded in faith, it had acquired strength to resist the storms of persecution.

On the 16th and 22nd verses we should remark, that God always gives clear evidence of the truth which He reveals. It is a great sin not to examine that evidence honestly and carefully, but any attempt to suppress or falsify it is the very sin of Satan; it is of the nature of the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost.

24—30. This prayer of the apostles is a model for the devotions of the Church in times of distress and persecution. We should remark the total absence of selfish considerations. They do not pray that they may not be persecuted, but that they may have boldness to pursue a course which will subject them to further and greater trials. And even this request comes at the conclusion of their prayer. The first subject which presents itself to their minds is the glory of God, the Creator, the King of kings, the Father of Christ Jesus, even as we find our Saviour directing the thoughts of His people, first to the thought of God, in His own prayer. The sufferings of Christ shut out all

¹ Josephus, Ant. xiii. 5; Phil. and Dio Cass. lxxii. 9.

thought of their own afflictions, and they rest with confidence in the thought of God's predisposing and overruling will. When the afflictions which believers undergo, or the opposition which they may encounter, give vividness to their perception of these truths, and lead to such supplications, they may pray in the fulness of hope, for they must be assured that the Spirit of God moveth them.

31—35. The characteristics of the apostolic Church were boldness in the preachers of the Word, and perfect unity in the hearers. The grace that attested the sincerity of their conversion was charity, which cast out all selfish feelings, destroyed all private interests, moulded their hearts and souls into one Spirit, and thus made them truly one in Christ. On their contempt for worldly possessions, Quesnel observes, 'All things are as nothing to him to whom God is all in all.'

36, 37. The goods of this world are of little worth in themselves, but he converts them into something great who consecrates them to God by charity. St. Barnabas purchased for himself a glorious name on earth, but his act was a sacrifice well pleasing to God, only because it was offered by a loving heart. We must consider when we give alms whether we advance the true interests of the receiver, and we should be thankful that our Church affords us abundant opportunities of making such offerings, without any danger of encouraging idleness or improvidence.

CHAPTER V.

In the beginning of this chapter we read an account of the first transaction in which the apostles exercised the judicial power intrusted to them by our Lord. In the latter part we have a history of the second persecution to which they were subjected.

A.D. 34—35.

1. BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,
2. And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also

1. '*But.*' This word connects the verse with the end of the preceding chapter, and directs our attention to the contrast between Barnabas and Ananias.

'*Ananias.*' Not an uncommon name among the Hebrews, meaning the Grace of the Lord.

'*With Sapphira his wife.*' This shows that the act had been the result of previous deliberation.

'*Sold a possession.*' A piece of land. Persons who gave up their private property were, of course, regarded as benefactors of the Church, and may probably have been entitled to a certain precedence, if not official rank.¹ Ananias and his wife doubtless expected the speedy establishment of Messiah's kingdom on earth, and hoped to be raised to high rank in it, if they succeeded in deceiving the apostles into the belief that they had given up all for the sake of Christ. Such gross notions were not uncommon among the Jews.

2. '*And kept back.*' The word used here and in the following verse is applied properly to the sin of peculation, that is, of purloining the pro-

perty of a corporate body. In considering this transaction, we must remember that it was the joint and deliberate act of two persons, and that it was an attempt to deceive the Holy Ghost, who dwelt in the Church, and especially in the apostles, who were His delegates. If the apostles had been deceived, their authority would have received a fatal blow, and either the presence or the power of the Holy Spirit would have been denied. It appears also to have been a sacrilege, since things devoted (Levit. xxvii. 28), vowed, and set apart for God's service, could not be touched without incurring that guilt. It has, moreover, been truly remarked, that severe punishments have always been inflicted upon those who first offended God in matters that concerned the authority of His law and ministers, as in the case of the first violator of the sabbath, of Nadab and Abihu, and of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram. Numb. xvi. 'It was therefore fit the first great offence of this kind should receive exemplary punishment from God, that others might dread those sins, which thus affronted that Holy

¹ Hind's Rise and Progress of Christianity, p. 140.

being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. ^a ch. 4. 37.

3. ^b 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? ^b Numb. 30.
² Deut. 23.
²¹ Eccles.
⁵ 4.
^a Luke 22. 3.
^{||} Or, to deceive. ver. 9.

4. Whilst 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.

5. And Ananias hearing these words ^a fell down, ^a ver. 10, 11. and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

Spirit by whose power the Gospel was propagated.¹

3. '*Why hath Satan.*' All sin is traced to the instigation of Satan, but especially presumptuous attacks upon God's authority.

'*Filled thine heart.*' This implies a thorough hardening of the conscience; an indwelling of the spirit of evil, the antagonist of that Spirit who fills the hearts of believers.

'*To lie to the Holy Ghost.*' The object of Satan is thus pointed out. It was, by means of Ananias, to deceive and mock the Holy Spirit.²

4. '*Was it not thine own,*' &c. These words show very plainly that such offerings were quite voluntary, and that the money did not belong to the Church until it was formally offered to the apostles. Ananias might have kept all, or have given a part only, but he hypocritically offered it as the entire produce of the possession which he had sold.

'*Why hast thou conceived,*' &c. This sin, which was attributed to Satan, is now charged upon Ananias. The consent of the will constitutes the sinner's guilt.

'*Thou hast not lied,*' &c. This idiomatic form of expression, which is very common in the Old and New Testament, does not mean that Ananias had not attempted to deceive man, but that the peculiar enormity of his guilt consisted in its being directed against God. See Psalm xli. 4.

'*But unto God.*' Comparing this expression with that used in the preceding verse, we learn that to lie unto the Holy Ghost is to lie unto God. It is clear that the Holy Ghost is thus distinguished from the Father and the Son, and that He is yet identified with God. Such statements only find an explanation in the doctrine of the Trinity. '*To lie unto*' means to lie with the view of deceiving.

'*Fell down.*' St. Peter had not sentenced him; the sentence was pronounced by his own conscience, and the instantaneous death, which was a judicial infliction for his sin, was the immediate act of God.³

'*Gave up the ghost,*'—or, as the word may be more simply and accurately translated, he expired.

'*All them that heard.*' This seems to refer to those who were present.

¹ Whitby.

² Kypke, Obs. ii. 54.

³ Thus Jerome, Augustine, and Origen. See Wordsworth.

^a John 19. 40. 6. And the young men arose, ^awound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

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.

^c ver. 3. Matt. 4. 7. 9. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together ^c'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.

^e ver. 5. 10. ^e'Then 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.

^b ver. 5. ch. 2. 43. & 10. 17. 11. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

^d ver. 3. & 10. 11. Rom. 15. 19. 2 Cor. 12. 12. Heb. 2. 4. ^b ch. 3. 11. & 4. 32. 12. ¶ And ^d'by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (^d'and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

6. '*The young men.*' These were apparently subordinate ministers of the Church,¹ who at a later period were called subdeacons.

'*Wound him up,*'— or 'covered him' with a linen robe. Bodies were wound up in folds of linen before burial, but the word here used seems to imply merely a hasty covering, as might be expected on such an occasion.

'*And buried him.*' Burials took place outside of the city gates, and immediately after death, excepting when the bodies were embalmed.

8. '*For so much.*' Naming the sum offered by Ananias as the produce of the sale.

9. '*Are at the door.*' The young men who had buried Ananias outside

of the city had not yet returned to the public assembly. St. Peter saw them in the Spirit, and pronounced the sentence, or, to speak more accurately, uttered the prediction which the same Spirit put into his mouth.

11. '*Great fear came.*'— '*And upon as many.*' It might have been expected that the Sanhedrim would avail themselves of this occurrence, as a pretext for persecuting the Church; but they were also stricken with fear, and seem to have been aware that any enquiry would but serve to confirm and increase the reputation of the apostles.

12. '*In Solomon's porch.*' The usual resort of the Christians.

13. '*Of the rest.*' The meaning of this appears to be, that none of

¹ Meyer; Mosheim de reb. a Const. p. 114.

13. And ¹of the rest durst no man join himself to them: ²but the people magnified them.

¹ John 9. 22. & 12. 42. & 19. 38.
² ch. 2. 47. & 4. 21.

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, ¹that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

¹ Or, in every street.
² Matt. 9. 21. & 14. 36. ch. 19. 12.

16. There came also a multitude *out* of the cities

the other Christians durst join himself as an equal to the apostles,¹ whose peculiar rank as rulers of the Church and representatives of the Holy Ghost, had been vindicated by so great miracles, and especially by the judicial miracle in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. This deference was needful for the government of the Church.

'*The people magnified them.*' The general body of the Christians recognised their superiority to all other ministers. They felt that they stood apart.

14. '*And believers were the more added to the Lord.*' The miracles and signs which caused so much awe to the members of the Church, and so much terror to its enemies, attracted great attention, and drew many of those who were yet without unto Christ. 'The more' refers to the first part of v. 13, and points out that the number of believers increased, notwithstanding that 'great fear.'

'*And women.*' Female converts are here mentioned expressly for the first time. It may be that none had been baptized previously. It is supposed that deaconesses² were appointed on this occasion.

¹ See the references in Alford. Wordsworth, with Meyer and others, gives a different interpretation, which appears less suitable.

15. '*Inasmuch.*' This word does not refer to the preceding verse, but to the 12th.

'*They brought forth.*' The friends and relations who believed.

'*Into the streets.*' Along the streets,³—in every street, as in the margin.

'*Beds and couches.*' The latter word signifies coarse, hard couches, used by the poor.⁴

'*The shadow of Peter.*' We find a similar account of St. Paul's miracles (xix. 12). Although we may not attribute a miraculous efficacy to the shadow of St. Peter, or indeed to any outward means, considered in themselves, yet there can be no doubt that the simple, childlike faith⁵ of these persons in Him whom St. Peter represented was approved, and that many of them were healed in attestation to the spiritual power with which the apostles were invested by their Lord.

16. '*Out of the cities round about.*' This is the first notice of converts out of Jerusalem after the resurrection. It seems plain that these occurrences took place shortly after Pentecost.

'*Unclean spirits.*' Evil spirits are called unclean, not only because of their own depravity, but because they

² Olshausen.

³ Winer, Gram. p. 340.

⁴ So Kuinoel, Capel. Obs. Sac. 53.

⁵ Olshausen.

^o Mark 16.
17, 18. John
14. 12. round about unto Jerusalem, bringing ^osick folks,
and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and
they were healed every one.

^p ch. 4. 1, 2,
6. 17. ¶ ^pThen the high priest rose up, and all they
that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sad-
ducees,) and were filled with ¶ indignation,

¶ Or, *every*.
^q Luke 21.
12. 18. ^qAnd laid their hands on the apostles, and
put them in the common prison.

^r ch. 12. 7.
& 16. 26. 19. But ^rthe 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 ^aall the words of this life.

^s John 6. 68.
& 17. 3.
1 John 5. 11. 21. And when they heard *that*, they entered into
^t ch. 4. 5, 6. the temple early in the morning, and taught. ^tBut

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,

prompted to sin and impurity. They
were at once the effect and cause of
sin.¹

17. '*The high priest.*' Caiaphas.²
'*Rose up.*' There appears to have
been a formal meeting of the heads of
the Sanhedrim to consider the conduct
of the apostles, who preached and
wrought miracles in the name of
Jesus, in spite of their prohibition
(chap. iv. 18). The expression '*rose
up*' indicates haste and excitement on
the part of the rulers.

'*Which is the sect of the Sadducees.*'
The family and connections of Cai-
phas, including Annas, appear to have
been connected with the Sadducees,
who were remarkable for cruelty in
punishing offences against the law,
and as we have seen (chap. iv.) were

foremost in persecuting the Christians.

19. '*The angel of the Lord.*' Or
an angel of the Lord. A heavenly
spirit; one of those who minister for
the heirs of salvation.

20. '*All the words of this life.*' They
were to declare all the doctrines, for
which they were specially persecuted.
'The words,' that is, the statements
pertaining to that spiritual and hea-
venly life which the Sadducees denied,
who believed neither in the resurrec-
tion, nor in the life to come, nor in the
existence of heavenly spirits.

21. '*Early in the morning.*' At the
dawn of day. The Greek word marks
the exact time.

'*The council*' consisted of the San-
hedrim only.

'*The senate.*' The assembly of the

¹ Trench on the Miracles.

² Olshausen. It is not, however,

certain that the high priest is in-
cluded. See Meyer.

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 ^{* Luke 22. 4. ch. 4. 1.} 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: ^{* Matt. 21. 26.} 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 straitly command you ^{7 ch. 4. 18.}

elders, i.e. the heads of families who were summoned by the Sanhedrim on occasions of unusual importance.

23. '*Found we shut.*' The prison door had not been broken open; therefore, they could not have been delivered by human force.

'*The keepers standing.*' This proved that they had not escaped by the connivance or neglect of the guards.

24. '*The captain of the temple.*' See above. He was a member of the Sanhedrim, and is mentioned here as representing the executive power of the hierarchical government.

'*The chief priests.*' The titular high priests, who had either held the office, as Annas, or were the heads of the twenty-four courses.

'*They doubted of them.*' This miraculous interposition appears for the first time to have awed and disheartened the ruling party. They were quite at a loss to account for the facts, or to foresee the results.

25. '*Lest they should have been stoned.*' These words well charac-

terise the feelings of the people, whose enthusiasm was excited alternately for and against the Christians. It was not from the believers that the captain of the guard had to apprehend violence, but from that fickle mob whom he and his colleagues afterwards used as instruments of persecution.

27. '*When they had brought them.*' The apostles of course did not avail themselves of the popular feeling, but submitted to all lawful authority.

28. '*Did not we,*' &c. This question implies that the apostles were in duty bound to obey the order of the Sanhedrim, as they would have been had not that order been superseded by Him from whom all authority is derived.

'*Ye have filled,*' &c. The high priest charges them with a total disobedience, not one act, but a series of acts.

'*And intend.*' This suggestion of an intention is altogether gratuitous. It was perfectly true that the guilt of

^a ch. 2. 23, 36. & 3. 15. & 7. 52. ^b Matt. 23. 35. & 27. 25. ^c ch. 4. 19. ^d ch. 3. 13, 15. & 22. 14. ^e ch. 10. 39. & 13. 29. ^f Gal. 3. 13. ^g 1 Pet. 2. 24. ^h ch. 2. 38, 36. ⁱ Phil. 2. 9. ^j Heb. 2. 10. & 12. 2. ^k ch. 3. 15. ^l Matt. 1. 21. ^m Luke 24. 47. ⁿ ch. 3. 26. & 13. 38. Ephes. 1. 7. Col. 1. 14. ^o John 15. 26, 27.

that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, ^aand intend to bring this man's ^ablood upon us.

29. ¶ Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, ^bWe ought to obey God rather than men.

30. ^cThe God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and ^dhanged on a tree.

31. ^eHim hath God exalted with his right hand to be ^fa Prince and ^ga Saviour, ^hfor to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

32. And ⁱwe are his witnesses of these things;

the blood of Jesus, which lay on the Jewish rulers, would be brought home to them by the preaching of the resurrection, but that was not the intention of the apostles. Their intention was to procure pardon for His murderers by urging them to repentance. The rulers had not feared to shed the innocent blood, but they now dread its temporal consequences. Their words indicate a self-accusing, but unconvinced and stubborn conscience. It is remarkable that they do not mention the name of Jesus.

29. '*Then Peter and the apostles.*' Peter spoke in their name, and with their assent.

'*We ought to obey.*' See chap. iv. 19. He refers to the principle which he had already laid down, and which they could not deny.

30. '*The God of our fathers.*' St. Peter proves that the application of the principle is justified, since God had spoken plainly by raising up Jesus.

'*And hanged on a tree.*' The legal term among the Jews for crucifixion.¹ It refers to the curse,—'Cursed is everyone who hangeth on a tree,'—and so implies, that He whom ye deemed accursed, and on whom ye inflicted the

curse of the law, has been glorified by God. The Jewish term is here used to show that the Sanhedrim, rather than the Romans, were chargeable with the crime.

31. '*A Prince.*' The same word is used in the Septuagint and in our version. Isaiah xxx. 4. It is equivalent to Lord, and denotes His supreme authority over the Church.

'*And a Saviour.*' This shows the end and object of that authority, viz. the salvation of man.

'*For to.*' This indicates very clearly the direct and immediate result of Christ's ascension. It was to receive, and to bestow the gifts of the Spirit, especially the following gift.

'*Give repentance.*' An important text to prove that repentance does not precede grace, but is produced by it. Repentance is the inseparable condition and sure pledge of forgiveness of sins.

'*To Israel.*' That gift was first offered to Israel in the literal sense, and then to the true, spiritual Israel, the elect of God, which is the Church.

32. '*We are his witnesses.*' Therefore we must speak, notwithstanding your prohibition.

'*Also the Holy Ghost.*' The Spirit

¹ Gen. xl. 19; Deut. xxi. 22.

and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, ^hwhom God hath ^hch. 2. 4. & given to them that obey him. ^{10. 44.}

33. ¶ *When they heard that, they were cut to the heart,* and took counsel to slay them. ¹ch. 2. 37. & ^{7. 54.}

34. Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named ^mGamaliel, a doctor of the law, had ^mch. 22. 3. in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

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,

bears witness to the truth of the testimony, and testifies Himself by miraculous signs, which are His attestations. St. Peter adduces this to show that the apostles could not be silent without resisting the Holy Ghost.

33. '*They were cut to the heart.*' The word implies a harsh, vehement feeling of wrath and malice. The metaphor is taken from a saw. It was not such a pain as is felt by a penitent heart when probed, but the irritation of one struggling against conviction and remorse.

'*They took counsel.*' That is, they proposed, and actually proceeded to vote, the execution of the apostles.

34. '*Gamaliel.*' There is no doubt that this distinguished person is the same who is often named in the Talmud. He bore the title of Rabban, which was given only to the seven most famous interpreters of the law. He was the son of Simeon, and grandson of Hillel, the most famous doctor of the Pharisees, of which sect he was a strict adherent. He is stated to have been the most influential member of the Sanhedrim during the reigns of Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius, and

to have died eighteen years after the fall of Jerusalem, shortly before which event his son, named Jesus, was high priest.¹ He was a man of enlarged and liberal mind, and cultivated the study of Greek literature to an extent which was often blamed by his countrymen. There is a tradition² that he was converted by St. Peter and St. John, and Nicodemus is said to have been his near relation. One would willingly believe that a man of so much wisdom and moderation, so intimately connected with the apostle Paul, did not remain an unbeliever; but it seems but too probable that whatever may have been his inward convictions, he lived and died in the position of antagonism to Christianity.³

35. '*Ye men of Israel.*' Gamaliel addresses them as the representatives of the nation. See chap. ii. 23.

36. '*Theudas.*' A person of the same name headed an insurrection, and was slain by Cuspius Fadus, governor of Judea, about ten years after this time. The Theudas of whom Gamaliel speaks, whose followers only amounted to 400, was a person of so

¹ Josephus, Ant. xx. 9, 47; Wieseler, p. 138.

² Phot. Cod. clxxi. 199.

³ Burton's Lectures; Winer, i. 455; Tholuck, Vermischte Schriften, ii. 285—287; and Neander.

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.

¹ Or, believed.

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.

^a Prov. 21.

³⁰.

¹ Mal. 8. 10.

¹ Matt. 15.

¹³.

^o Luke 21.

¹⁵.

¹ Cor. 1. 25.

¹ ch. 7. 51.

¹ & 9. 5. &

²³. 9.

38. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: ^a for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

39. ^oBut if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even ^pto fight against God.

little note that a general historian, like Josephus, was not likely to notice him.¹ The New Testament proves how frequently the same name was borne by different individuals, and Theudas was a very common name.²

'To be somebody.' A distinguished person,³ either Elias, or 'that prophet;' he probably claimed to be the Messiah.

'As obeyed him.' Were persuaded by him, gave credit to his pretensions.

'Brought to nought.' The party was annihilated, and left no trace of its existence.

37. '*Judas of Galilee.*' Josephus (Ant. xviii. 1) says that he was a native of Gamala, in Lower Galilee. In two other passages he calls him a Galilean.⁴ This is a point of some importance. Had the former notice been the only one in the historian, St. Luke's accuracy would have been questioned.

'In the days of the taxing.' Judas represented the decree of Augustus Cæsar (see Luke ii. 2 and notes) to be an introduction to slavery.

'Drew away.' Caused them to revolt.

'Were dispersed.' This exactly accords with the accounts given by Josephus. The party of Judas survived, though broken and scattered.

38. '*It will come to nought.*' It was evident to Gamaliel, as it must be to every unprejudiced enquirer, that the apostles, who had no great earthly principle to appeal to, were supported by no prominent party in the state, and had neither riches, learning, nor, humanly speaking, remarkable talents, would soon lose whatever temporary interest they might have acquired, if there were no higher and supernatural agency at work. If the scheme were an invention or a delusion of man, it had no single element of stability, and must fall.

39. '*But if it be of God.*' It is clear that Gamaliel was really in doubt. He might admit the miracle as a fact, but felt that the question whether it was of divine origin or not could only be decided by the result. This decision is full of human wisdom,

¹ See Rawlinson, Bampton Lectures, p. 261. Wieseler, however, endeavours to prove that he is the Matthias mentioned by Josephus, Ant. xvii. 6.

2—1. See Synopsis, p. 103.

² Kuinoel.

³ Valckn, Herod. iii. 140.

⁴ Kuinoel, &c.

40. And to him they agreed: and when they had ^{9 ch. 4. 18.} called the apostles, ^{10 Matt. 10.} and beaten *them*, they com- ^{17. & 23. 34.} manded that they should not speak in the name of ^{Mark 13. 9.} Jesus, and let them go. ^{12 Matt. 5.}

41. ¶ And they departed from the presence of ^{12.} the council, ^{Rom. 5. 3.} rejoicing that they were counted worthy ^{2 Cor. 12.} to suffer shame for his name. ^{10.}

42. And daily ^{Phil. 1. 29.} in the temple, and in every house, ^{Heb. 10.} they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. ^{34.}

and seems laudable. It was prudent to watch the course of events; but it would have been more just and wise to enquire into the facts.

'*Lest haply ye be found.*' That is, lest the event should prove that ye have been rebelling against God. Gamaliel's words were prophetic; and the condemnation of the Jews was then pronounced by the greatest professor of that sect, which they regarded as the depository of all true knowledge and true religion.

40. '*To him they agreed.*' They were persuaded not to put the apostles to death. It does not follow that their conscience was touched; but they may have gladly adopted a decision which saved them from the present danger of a riot.

'*And beaten them.*' This was a most iniquitous proceeding. If the apostles were blasphemers, they de-

served death; if they were innocent, they should have been commended; if the case were doubtful, they should have been dismissed. Stripes were inflicted in a very arbitrary manner, as the bastinado at present in the East.

41. '*Rejoicing that they were counted worthy.*' They remembered our Lord's words (Matt. v. 11, 12; Luke vi. 22). The expression is remarkably graceful and forcible: they were honoured by being dishonoured. Earthly infamy incurred, and patiently endured, for the name of Christ, is heavenly fame.

'*For his name,*'—or '*the name.*'

42. '*And daily in the temple, and in every house.*' They continued to preach openly to the people, whether believers or merely listeners, whom they found in the temple; and to the congregations who met in the houses set apart for the purposes of devotion.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1, 2. God claims all that is vowed to Him. He will not be satisfied with a portion of our hearts, which have been dedicated to Him in baptism, and have been bought with the blood of the Lamb. We must be on our guard against those temptations which are connected with our natural affections. In this case the union between the husband and wife, which should have kept both close to God, served but to strengthen them in sin.

3—6. *All* lies come from the father of lies, and are essentially devilish.

They separate man from his fellow man, and from God. No lies are trifling. Lies, which are looked upon as most excusable, destroy confidence, create a habit which speedily gains entire mastery over the soul, and prepare the way for temptations which involve its destruction. Satan never tempts us to tell what we know to be great lies at first. Ananias and Sapphira had doubtless united in many little devices to deceive men and improve their social position before they joined in a scheme to become eminent saints by deceiving God. What a sign of the prevalence of lying, that men find it hard to realise the greatness of the guilt of those who first perished in the very act of lying unto the Holy Ghost.

7—11. The conscience of that woman must have been strangely hardened. The delay of her husband might have surprised her, and she seems to have enquired after him on entering the presence of the apostles, for we read that Peter 'answered unto her.' But she was so absorbed in her own crafty thoughts that neither the awe on the countenances of the disciples, nor the warning voice of the apostle, could arouse her to a sense of her own condition. It is this deadness of conscience that characterises the sin against the Holy Ghost. We should here observe, also, that the wife's subjection to her husband does not in any degree excuse her for sharing his sin, nor exempt her from punishment. All our duties to man are subordinate to our duty to God.

12—16. Judgment is God's strange work, but his delight is mercy. Remark the abundant outpourings of healing virtue, the symbol and pledge of spiritual graces, that followed this awful punishment.

17—20. With increasing strength come heavier trials to the Christian, but also fresh manifestations of divine love. Angels no more appear visibly, since believers are to walk by faith and not by sight; but their invisible ministrations cease not, for they are ever 'sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.'

21—23. There is confusion and dismay among the enemies of the Church, partly because of the putting forth of a mysterious power, still more because of the manifest effects upon the people. They might attempt to resist God, but for their fear of man. The terror of the unseen world, which does not subdue, irritates the will, and often finds an expression in calumnious upbraidings.

29—33. Each persecution brings out the power of faith and the malice of Satan more distinctly. The apostles speak more decidedly, and the rulers at once take counsel to slay them. In the answer of the apostles, remark the clear enumeration of Christian blessings: first, repentance, then the peace of forgiveness, with all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit given to those who confess and obey their Prince and Saviour. Thus Bengel: 'Christ gives repentance when He is received as a Prince, and forgiveness of sins when He is received as a Saviour.'

34. Gamaliel is perhaps the most striking example in this book of the danger of worldliness. A spirit so candid and unprejudiced ought to have received the truth; but there is but too much reason to fear that the pride of knowledge, of station, and of character, kept this learned Pharisee a self-righteous alien from Christ unto the end. Love of this world can only be overcome by such faith as taught the apostles to rejoice in suffering, and to glory in shame, and sent them from the prison and the scourge to 'teach and preach Jesus Christ.'

CHAPTER VI.

The great increase in the number of believers led to a change in the organisation of the Church, which St. Luke describes in this chapter. The results of that change were of the highest importance, since it brought the Church into a position of antagonism with both the leading parties of the Jewish nation, and thus gave occasion to the first general persecution, and eventually to the extension of the gospel to the countries bordering on Palestine. St. Luke appears to have dwelt with peculiar interest on the circumstances of this epoch, on account of their connection with the conversion of his friend, instructor, and master, the great apostle of the Gentiles. This chapter may, in fact, be regarded as an introduction to that great series of missionary exertions which it was the principal object of the sacred historian to record.

A.D. 35—37.

1. AND in those days, ^awhen the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of ^bthe Grecians against the Hebrews, because their ^cwidows were neglected ^din the daily ministration.

^a ch. 2. 41.
^b & 4. 4. & 5.
 14. & ver. 7.
^c ch. 9. 29.
 & 11. 20.
^d ch. 4. 35.

1. '*In those days.*' In the period between the liberation of the apostles and the great persecution which followed the judicial murder of St. Stephen. This period lasted, probably, from A.D. 30 to 37 (see INTRODUCTION, Chronology); and the events described in this chapter occurred not earlier than A.D. 36 or 37.¹

'*Was multiplied.*' Or was becoming very numerous. There must have been many thousands by this time in Jerusalem and the adjacent villages.

'*A murmuring.*' This, it should be remarked, is the first indication of a spirit which in every succeeding age has produced painful and lasting disturbances in the Church. The evil, under apostolic guidance, resulted in good.

'*Grecians.*' The word is not the

same as 'Greeks,' which is used of heathens of Greek or of Gentile origin; by 'Grecians' are meant, properly, Hebrews of the dispersion, who lived in countries where Greek was spoken, and who had, to a certain extent, adopted the Greek customs and language. The Alexandrian Jews first bore this appellation. All these Hebrews used the Septuagint version of the Bible in their synagogues. Their numbers, riches, and superior cultivation gave them much influence even at Jerusalem, notwithstanding the strong national and religious feelings which assigned a great superiority to the Palestinian Hebrews.² It is possible that heathen converts to Judaism were included under this name. Nicolas, the proselyte of Antioch, was evidently

¹ Wieseler, p. 208.

² Lightfoot on John.

2. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, ⁴It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.
⁴ Exod. 18. 17.
⁵ Deut. 1. 13.
⁶ ch. 1. 21. & tables.
⁷ 16. 2.
⁸ 1 Tim. 3. 7.

3. Wherefore, brethren, ⁹look ye out among you

selected as a Grecian; and though the name, as was said, according to the Jewish idiom, belonged properly to Hebrews who spoke Greek, yet St. Luke may have used it more generally, as the classical writers¹ do, of Syrians and other Asiatics.

'The Hebrews.' That is, those Christian members of the Church of Jerusalem who followed all the national customs, and spoke the language of Palestine, i.e. the Syro-Chaldaic, as their mother-tongue.²

'Their widows were neglected.' The term 'widows' includes all who were without natural helpers and protectors.

'The daily ministration.' This included, most probably, a distribution of food and other necessities, and a meal,³ of which all partook, the expenses being defrayed from the common stock, as we might say, from the offertory money.

2. *'The twelve.'* The apostolic office involved two main functions—the government of the Church, and the preaching of the Word. In their capacity of governors they received the alms, and gave, of course, general directions for their distribution. But the details of the distribution seem to be quite incompatible with their higher duties; nor is it likely that any murmuring would have arisen had they personally attended to such affairs. It is therefore probable that they had been hitherto assisted by

subordinate ministers, who, being selected from the earliest converts, perhaps from the hundred and twenty, were of course Palestinian Jews.⁴ But it does not, even in that case, necessarily follow that those assistants had been formally appointed or ordained. All the ancients regarded this as the formal institution of the diaconate; and the whole narration implies this so clearly that it seems very strange that the misinterpretations natural enough in the case of members of communities without a proper diaconate should have been adopted by any English Churchman. Our Church has recorded its judgment in the service for ordering deacons where we read, God did inspire the apostles to choose into the order of deacons the first martyr, St. Stephen, with others. In the Church of Rome the number of seven was even considered essential, and has never been exceeded; a custom which, though unreasonable, bears witness to the tradition.

'That we should leave.' This expression implies, both in English and in the original, that they had not hitherto served tables, which would have interfered with their preaching. See preceding note.

3. *'Look ye out.'* The right of selecting deacons was therefore not inherent in the people, but was given to them on that occasion for a special reason by the apostles. All other deacons of whom we read, as Mark,

¹ Lobeck on Phryn. p. 380.

² Meyer. ³ Meyer, &c.

⁴ Mosheim de Reb. a. Con. p. 118, 139.

seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4. But we 'will give ourselves continually to 'ch. 2. 42. prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5. ¶ And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, ^a a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and ^b Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and ^c Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch :

6. Whom they set before the apostles : and ^d when they had prayed, 'they laid *their* hands on them.

and the other attendants on St. Paul and the apostles, were selected by the apostles themselves or their representatives. See the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

'Of honest report,' &c. The two first qualifications of the deacons were the same as of elders, or priests, but the third, 'wisdom,' must be understood specially of that practical sagacity, good sense, and judgment, which are required for the administration of the temporal affairs of a community. The deacons were, however, strictly speaking, clerical ministers, since we find them preaching the Word, and administering the sacrament of baptism. Acts viii. 12, 38, &c.

'This business.' The due distribution, with special reference to the widows.¹

4. 'We will give ourselves.' Or, we will persevere, continue to apply ourselves specially.

5. 'Stephen, a man full of faith,' &c. Faith does not mean fidelity, but the Christian grace, which is the root and basis of all graces. The multitude justly regarded the earnestness and sincerity of his faith, attested by the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, as the best guarantee for the faithful discharge of all duties.

¹ Meyer.

² A name not derived from a person.

'And Philip.' The famous deacon. See chap. viii.

'And Prochorus,' &c. It is observable that all the names are Greek, and it is evident that the seven were selected because they were Grecians.

'Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch.' This deacon is said by some of the earliest and best-informed Fathers (Irenæus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, &c.) to have been the founder of the sect of Nicolaitans³ (Rev. ii. 6); but the charge is denied by others, and may perhaps rest upon a misunderstanding of the passage. It is interesting to find a representative of Antioch, which became the second metropolis of early Christendom.

6. 'They laid their hands on them.' The imposition of hands was a common and very solemn rite among the Jews;⁴ it signified the conveyance of some blessing, privilege, commission, or authority to an individual. It was at once an indication of the choice, and an instrumental means or channel by which the grace or power was bestowed. 'In consecrations and ordinations of men unto rooms of divine calling, the like was usually done from the time of Moses to Christ.'⁴

³ Gen. xlviii. 14; Numb. xxvii. 18; and Vitringa de Syn. p. 836.

⁴ Hooker, E. P. lvi. 1.

^m ch. 12. 24.
& 19. 20.
Col. 1. 8.

ⁿ John 12.
42.

7. And ^mthe word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company ⁿof the priests were obedient to the faith.

8. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9. ¶Then there arose certain of the synagogue,

7. '*And the word,*' &c. The appointment of the deacons had a considerable effect on the extension of the Church. The apostles were relieved of a burdensome care, and the humility and disinterestedness which they had shown were well calculated to win souls to Christ. The people of Jerusalem must have felt the contrast with the violent party spirit and cupidity of their own hierarchy.

'*A great company of the priests,*'—or multitude.¹ A most important fact. It would seem that many persons belonging to the priesthood had watched the proceedings of the Christians with interest, but had hitherto remained in a state of suspense. The time for a decision was now come, and they either became the avowed adherents or bitter enemies of Christ. The conversion of these priests must have greatly increased the irritation of the Sadducees; and from the following narrative it is clear that the distinctive tenets of the Christians began now to be canvassed more openly, and their incompatibility with the doctrine of the Pharisees became more clearly understood.

8. '*Stephen, full of faith and power.*' The miraculous power was developed in proportion to the faith of those on whom it was bestowed, faith meaning confidence in the divine power.

'*Miracles,*' or '*signs;*' so called be-

cause he wrought them in attestation of the truth which he preached. An interval from a year and a half to two years probably intervened between the appointment of the seven deacons and the martyrdom of St. Stephen, which took place A.D. 37. Many circumstances concurred to favour that outrage. The Emperor Tiberius died in the spring of the year, and Vitellius, the Roman governor, on hearing of his death, left Jerusalem. Pilate had been deposed in the year preceding. The city was thus under the control of the Sanhedrim, and more especially of the high priest, Theophilus, the brother-in-law of Caiaphas, a man who would gladly avail himself of the occasion to give full play to his hatred of the Christians.²

9. '*Then there arose,*' &c. Stephen being himself a Grecian, speaking the language, and conversant with the opinions of the Asiatic and African Jews and proselytes, brought the gospel to bear upon a class of men equally distinguished for learning and bigotry. The foreign Jews attended their own synagogues when they visited Jerusalem, where the Holy Scriptures were read and expounded in their own language. The synagogue of the Libertines was probably built and maintained by the Libertini, i.e. freedmen,³ most of whom were Jews who had been taken prisoners in great numbers by the Romans in war, and

¹ Meyer. ² Lewin, Fasti Sacri. ³ Chrysostom, and most of the commentators.

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 ^othey were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

11. ^pThen 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,

^o Luke 21. 15.
ch. 5. 39.
See Exod. 4. 12.
Isai. 54. 17.
^p 1 Kings 21. 10, 13.
Matt. 28. 59, 60.

afterwards manumitted.¹ It has been conjectured² that the father of St. Paul may thus have acquired the rights of citizenship, and that Paul was thus brought into contact with Stephen. Some commentators suppose the Libertines to have been natives of Libertum in Africa, but no such place is known in ancient geography.³

'Cyrenians,' &c. These were perhaps all members of the synagogue of Libertines.⁴ The freedmen spoken of came from Africa and Asia, taken in the wars between Pompey and Cæsar. A fourth part of the population of Cyrene consisted of Jews. The Alexandrians, however, had a separate synagogue at Jerusalem.⁵

10. '*The wisdom.*' The Christian wisdom, the spiritual discernment as opposed to the spurious learning and subtlety of the rabbinical school.

'*The spirit.*' The indwelling Spirit, or the spiritual power, not the natural energy of the man. Spirit is always used in such passages of the divine power. He spake not of himself, but as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.

11. '*Suborned.*' They privily instructed these men to bear false

witness, as the elders of Jezreel had done in the case of Naboth,

'*We have heard him speak blasphemous words,*' &c. The falseness of the accusation consisted probably in their substituting their own inferences for the words which St. Stephen spoke. They may have inferred from St. Stephen's preaching, and that not unfairly, that the development of Christianity would supersede the ceremonial law; but his words correctly reported would have conveyed no idea of disrespect to the legislator, much less of blasphemy against God.

12. '*They stirred up the people.*' This is the first indication of a popular movement in Jerusalem against the Christians. The adherence of a large proportion of the people to Christ would of course exasperate the unconverted Jews, and the time was well chosen to appeal to their prejudices.

'*And the elders and the scribes.*' The members of the Sanhedrim were thus won over before the commencement of the judicial process.

'*And came upon him.*' These words express a violent and tumultuous proceeding.

¹ Tacitus, Ann. ii. 85.

² By Wieseler, p. 63.

³ Winer, ii. 26.

⁴ Wieseler, l. 100.

⁵ Lightfoot.

13. And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law :

¹ ch. 25. 8. 14 ²For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of
³ Dan. 9. 26. Nazareth shall ⁴destroy this place, and shall change
⁵ Or, rites. the ⁶customs 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.

13. '*False witnesses.*' St. Stephen, therefore, had not used the expressions which we find in the next verse. As the enemies of our Lord had maliciously altered His words (Matt. xxvi. 61 ; John ii. 19), in order to represent Him as a rebel against the theocracy, so these false witnesses appear to have misrepresented both the intention and expressions of St. Stephen.

'*This holy place.*' The effect of the accusation would be much enhanced by the sight of the temple, to which the witnesses seem to have pointed.

14. '*This Jesus of Nazareth.*' A contemptuous form of expression.

'*Shall destroy this place.*' St. Stephen may have cited our Lord's prediction that the temple would be overthrown, but it is highly improbable that he described our Lord as the author of the destruction, which was,

according to the teaching of Christ Himself, to be accomplished by the Gentiles. That He would change the customs was partially true, but it was apparently not true that St. Stephen declared what the apostles themselves did not at that time understand.

15. '*Saw his face,*' &c. These words may imply that they observed a heavenly and angelic expression on the countenance of St. Stephen.¹ But there was probably a light or glory,² which, though it may not have appeared miraculous to unbelievers, invested his person with a mysterious majesty. It may have been intended as a warning to those who were now first joining the party of the persecution, as well as a consolatory evidence of God's favour to those Christians who were present among the bystanders.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1-4. Even the best natural affections are apt to degenerate into evil passions. Thus, care for the poor, and commendable anxiety for our destitute brethren may lead to suspicions and misrepresentations, and even become the occasion of a schism in the Church. In this instance the evil was checked by the wisdom and meekness of the apostles, who, instead of resenting the murmuring as an insult to themselves, were only anxious to remove every stumbling-block from the way of the weaker brethren.

¹ Meyer.

² Compare Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30.

5—7. Such are the rewards which the Head of the Church vouchsafes to meekness and disinterestedness in His representatives; the love of the people was increased, the organisation of the Church was completed; the apostles were not only relieved of temporal cares, but aided in their higher functions by the appointment of able coadjutors; and the objects which lay nearest to their hearts were advanced by the increased power of the Word, shown in the conversion of numerous disciples and the adherence of many who had been foremost among their persecutors.

8—10. Our Saviour had promised His disciples 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist.' We see how that promise was fulfilled, and should not forget that such faith as opened Stephen's heart to all the influences of the Spirit, and made him an instrument of God, is equally needed, and will be equally effectual now, when enemies not less furious, and it may be even more subtle, are assailing the Church of Christ.

11—14. All persecutions have a general resemblance, but each has some peculiar feature. Party spirit in all ages pursues very nearly the same course as in the case of Stephen. Baffled by argument, it tries misrepresentations, and scarcely refrains from perjury.

15. The glory of saints, which will be revealed hereafter, sometimes shows itself in glimpses here, and especially in moments of tribulation. The inward transformation into the likeness of Christ was so far complete in St. Stephen that it irradiated even the earthly form, which was hereafter to be made like unto the glorious image of his Saviour.

CHAPTER VII.

The defence of St. Stephen, which occupies nearly the whole of this chapter, is one of the most interesting portions of the Acts, and throws great light upon the general principles of God's dealings with His people, as well as upon the bearings of the ancient dispensation upon Christianity. There has been, however, great diversity of opinion among commentators as to the objects of the martyr, and the purport of his reasoning. This diversity appears to have been caused by the peculiar mode of argument which St. Stephen employed in addressing persons who, like himself, had been trained under a very different system of intellectual development from that which modern Europe has derived from classical antiquity. Instead of laying down certain premises, and deducing from them certain logical inferences, sustained and illustrated by facts, the Orientals, and especially the Hebrews, are accustomed to make historical statements bearing upon the points at issue, and they often leave the inference to be deduced and applied by the ingenuity of the hearers, or suggest such inference merely by a passing allusion. This is observable in those discourses of St. Paul which are addressed to his countrymen, whereas in reasoning with Gentiles he adopts a method more in accordance with modern views. If we bear this in mind, we shall find that the discourse of St. Stephen is clear and forcible. His first object must have been to answer the high priest, and refute the very serious charges brought against him. He could not do this by a simple denial, since the charges were sustained by false witnesses; he does it therefore by making what may be called an historical profession of faith in that God, and of reverence for those institutions which he had been accused of blaspheming or speaking against. He touches with a rapid but masterly hand upon all the principal epochs of the Jewish dispensation, from the covenant with Abraham to the erection of a temple by Solomon; and he recognises throughout the interposing and overruling providence of the God of Glory. The inference from this statement would of course be, that it was morally impossible that, holding such sentiments, he could have spoken against God, or Moses, or the law, or the tabernacle, or the temple, and it must be admitted to be a complete vindication. But he had another object, scarcely second to this in importance. He saw his countrymen in danger of perishing, and of losing all the blessings promised to Abraham by their obstinate rejection of Christ. He wished therefore to warn them, and this he does by showing that, at every stage in the history, the will of God had been resisted, his messengers and chosen servants had been persecuted, and his institutions either neglected or grossly misunderstood, by their forefathers; and he concludes his address by a severe and pointed application of the warning to themselves. It is evident from this sketch of his discourse that his object was not to defend his life, but to vindicate his character, and to make a solemn profession of those truths which were most important for his countrymen to know.

It will be observed that St. Stephen alludes to some traditions, which were

then generally received by the Jews. We have many instances of such traditions both in the Old and New Testaments, but it must be borne in mind that we receive them not because they were preserved by the Jewish Church, but because they are authenticated by the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Very needless discussions have been raised as to the source from which St. Luke derived this account of St. Stephen's defence. St. Paul, who was present, was not likely to forget a word of what was uttered on such an occasion, nor to omit giving full information to St. Luke; and notes were doubtless taken at the time by some persons among the bystanders. But we may be assured, that whatever means may have been used by St. Luke, he had 'a perfect understanding of all things' which he records under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

A.D. 37.

1. THEN said the high priest, Are these things so?
2. And he said, 'Men, brethren, and fathers,' ^{ch. 22. 1.}

1. '*The high priest.*' Caiaphas was the chief agent in procuring the condemnation of our Lord. Theophilus, his successor, who married his sister, now presides over the murder of the first martyr.

'*Are these things so?*' This appears to be the legal form of putting the accused on his defence, equivalent to calling upon him to plead guilty or not guilty.

2. '*Men, brethren, and fathers.*' St. Stephen addresses the bystanders as brethren, and the members of the Sanhedrim as fathers, according to the custom of the Hebrews¹ and most ancient nations.

'*The God of glory.*' This appellation refers to the Shechinah, i.e. the spiritual and unapproachable light in which the Almighty dwells (1 Tim. vi. 16), and by which he appeared unto Abraham, and manifested himself on other solemn occasions, as at the giving of the law and the consecration of the temple. St. Stephen uses it evidently with reference to the first

accusation. How could he have spoken blasphemously against the God of Glory?

'*Appeared unto our father.*' In the book of Genesis it is not expressly stated that God appeared to Abraham in Ur, before he went to Charran; but it is distinctly implied, for we read (Gen. xv. 7) that God said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees. See also Nehemiah ix. 7. From these passages all the Hebrew writers² concluded, most justly, that the first manifestation to Abraham occurred at Ur. Ur was situated in a desert between Nisibis and the Tigris,³ and the direct road between it and Canaan passes through Charran.

'*Charran,*'—or Haran. This city also was in Mesopotamia. It lay in a plain surrounded by hills, and was a place of importance under the Arabians, as the high road for caravans from Central Asia passed through it. The Greeks and Romans called it Carræ, a name famous for the defeat

¹ Lightfoot on Mark.

² Philo. Abr. ii. 11, 16; Joseph. Ant. i. 7, 1.

³ Ammian. Marc. xxv. 3. See also Winer, i. 253.

hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our futher Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

^a Gen. 12. 1. 3. And said unto him, ^bGet thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

^a Gen. 11. 31. & 12. 4, 5. 4. Then ^ccame 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.

^a Gen. 12. 7. & 13. 15. & 15. 3, 18. & 17. 8. & 26. 3. 5. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not *so much as* to set his foot on: ^dyet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.

^a Gen. 15. 13, 16. 6. And God spake on this wise, ^eThat his seed

of Crassus by the Parthians. It is now inhabited by a few wandering Arabs, who select it for the delicious water which it contains.

3. '*Out of thy country, and from thy kindred.*' The kinsmen of Abraham were idolaters. Joshua xxiv. 2. 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (the Euphrates) in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods.' The Coran has many curious legends relating to the idolatry of Abraham's family, and the persecutions which he underwent in preaching the true God.

4. '*When his father was dead.*' The death of Terah is supposed by some divines¹ to mean a spiritual death, or relapse into idolatry, since it would appear, calculating his age from Genesis xi. 26, 32, that his natural death must have occurred much later. But it is not certain from that passage that Abraham was the eldest son of Terah, and it is more

probable that he was the youngest, and born many years after Haran.

'It appears, indeed, that Abraham was sixty years younger than his brother Haran, was born when his father was 130, and departed not from Haran till his father's death.'²

'*He removed him.*' This second call of Abraham is recorded Gen. xii. 1, when the same command to leave his father's house is repeated.

5. '*Inheritance.*' Settled property, inherited or otherwise acquired. Abraham was forced even to purchase a burial place, the cave of Macpelah with the adjoining field, that he might 'bury his dead out of his sight.' Gen. xxiii. 3, 4, 16. As this was purchased, and not intended for his residence, it may not be regarded as an inheritance, which implies the latter condition at least. It was moreover bought at a late period of his sojourn in Canaan, whereas St. Stephen refers to his settlement there.³

6. '*Four hundred years.*' There is some difficulty in this calculation.

¹ Michaelis, Kuinoel, Olshausen.

² Biscoe, p. 545, 546.

³ Meyer.

should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil '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 he gave him the covenant of circumcision: 'and so *Abraham* begat *Isaac*, and circumcised him the eighth day; 'and *Isaac* begat *Jacob*; and 'Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

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,

' Exod. 12.
40.
Gal. 3. 17.
' Exod. 3.
12.
' Gen. 17.
9, 10, 11.
' Gen. 21. 2,
3, 4.
' Gen. 25.
26.
' Gen. 29.
31, &c. &
30. 5, &c. &
35. 18, 23.
' Gen. 37.
4, 11, 28.
Pa. 105. 17.
' Gen. 39.
2, 21, 23.

It seems most probable that the period should be reckoned either from the birth or weaning of *Isaac* until the deliverance of the children of *Israel* from *Egypt*. If dated from the birth, we find from that time to the birth of *Jacob* 60 years. Gen. xxv. 26. From the birth of *Jacob* to his journey into *Egypt*, 130 years. Gen. xlvii. 9. The time in *Egypt*, 215 years. Altogether, a period of exactly 405 years. If, however, we date from the weaning, or feast of weaning, which probably took place, according to *Jerome*,¹ when *Isaac* was five years old, we have a period of exactly 400 years. It was on that occasion that *Ishmael* mocked *Isaac*, a circumstance which, as we learn from *St. Paul* (Gal. iv. 29), was typical of the persecution of the children of the Spirit by the children born after the flesh, and from that time the seed of *Abraham* were sojourners in strange lands.²

7. 'And serve me.' Gen. xv. 16. 'And shall return hither.' *St. Stephen* gives the purport of the words, referring also to *Exodus* iii. 12.

8. 'The covenant of circumcision.' Circumcision is called the token of the covenant, and briefly, as here, the covenant. Gen. xvii. 11. The covenant consisted in the gracious promises made in the same chapter (v. 2—8), and in the condition of sincere obedience, 'walk before me, and be thou perfect.'

'Patriarchs.' So called specially as ancestors and princes of the tribes of *Israel*.

9. 'Moved with envy.' *St. Stephen* evidently notes this fact as a warning; it was an indication, from the earliest history of *Israel*, of an evil and malignant tendency in the majority of that race, who were children of the promise. *Joseph* was always regarded as a type of *Christ*.³

10. 'Favour and wisdom.' Favour acquired by wisdom; or favour may refer to the grace of God, and wisdom to the cause of the estimation in which he was held by *Pharaoh*.

'Over all his house.' An Oriental designation of a prime minister or *Vizier*.⁴ The house means the palace of the sovereign, whence all the

¹ Quæst. in Gen.

² *Whitby*.

³ *Pearson* on the Creed, art. vi.

⁴ *Gesenius* on *Isaiah*.

^a Gen. 41. 27. & 42. 6. ^oand gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

^p Gen. 41. 54. 11. ^pNow there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.

^a Gen. 42. 1. 12. ^aBut when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

^r Gen. 42. 4. 16. 13. ^rAnd at the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

^a Gen. 42. 9. 27. ^r Gen. 46. 27. ^r Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and ^aall his kindred, threescore and fifteen ^r souls.

^a Gen. 46. 2. ^a Gen. 46. 28. 15. ^a So Jacob went down into Egypt, ^aand died, he, and our fathers,

^a Gen. 46. 28. 16. ^a And ^rwere carried over into Sychem, and laid in ^athe sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor *the father* of Sychem.

^a Gen. 48. 12. ^a Gen. 48. 13. ^a Gen. 48. 14. 17. But when ^athe time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the ^bpeople grew and multiplied in Egypt,

^a Gen. 48. 14. 18. Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

legislative, judicial, and executive acts of government proceed in the East.

12. '*Our fathers.*' That is, all with the exception of Benjamin.

14. '*Threescore and fifteen souls.*' St. Stephen follows the Septuagint version, which gives the total number of Jacob's children and grandchildren, including five sons of Manassah and Ephraim, who were born in Egypt. These are not reckoned in the passage. Gen. xlv. 27. One of the oldest MSS. has 75, in Exodus xlvii.

16. '*Were carried.*' This applies only to the last words, '*our father.*' Jacob was buried in the cave of Macpelah, but the sepulchre of the twelve patriarchs was shown in the time of

Jerome at Sychem, and it is evident that St. Stephen adopts this tradition. Dr. Wordsworth, in a very ingenious note on this passage, supports the hypothesis that Abraham may have purchased the field at Sychem, which was afterwards recovered by Jacob. There is, however, much difficulty in reconciling the passage with the known facts of the history, and it is possible that some words may have been omitted by St. Stephen in his rapid allusion to events with which his hearers were, of course, equally familiar.

18. '*Another king arose.*' This expression implies that a change of dynasties had occurred in the interval. Such changes are very common in

19. The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, [°]so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. ^{* Exod. 1. 22.}

20. [¶]In which time Moses was born, and was [°]exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: ^{¶ Exod. 2. 2. Heb. 11. 23.}

21. And [¶]when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. ^{¶ Exod. 2. 3—10.}

22. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was [¶]mighty in words and in deeds. ^{¶ Luke 24. 19.}

23. [¶]And when he was full forty years old, it came ^{¶ Exod. 2. 11, 12.}

Egyptian history, especially in Lower Egypt, which was for a long time in the power of nomad tribes. It is quite uncertain which king reigned at the time of the Exodus.

19. '*So that they cast out.*' Or, that he might force them to cast out.¹

20. '*Exceeding fair.*' Literally, was fair to or before God. This expression is a Hebraism, which is frequently used in the place of our superlative; but it has a peculiar force and true meaning. It describes an ideal beauty, such as God recognises.² The beauty of Moses is often celebrated by the Hebrew writers, and is asserted in the Pentateuch. Exodus ii. 2.

21. '*For her own son.*' That he might be her heir. Adopted children succeeded to all the rights of true children.

22. '*And Moses was learned,*' &c. The secular instruction which Moses received in the palace of Pharaoh's daughter must have been highly favourable to the development of his mental faculties, and must be regarded as the providentially appointed means of preparing him for his future duties. In Egypt considerable progress had been already made in art and science, especially in natural philosophy, medicine, geometry, and mechanics. It

is evident that he was well acquainted with their religious ceremonies and theology, but these must not be understood as included in the term wisdom. The religion of Egypt was essentially polytheistic and idolatrous; that which Moses was inspired to maintain and teach was essentially the reverse. St Basil quotes this passage to show that young Christians may profitably be instructed in heathen learning.

'*Mighty in words.*' This expression does not imply fluency of speech, in which, as we know from Exod. iv. 10, Moses was deficient, but the ability to persuade and influence the minds of men, for which he was remarkable.

'*In dreds.*' This may refer to some traditional accounts of his exploits in early life. He is said to have led the army of Pharaoh, and to have conquered his enemies.

23. '*When he was full forty years old.*' Moses remained forty years in the house of Pharaoh's daughter, forty in Midian, and forty in the Wilderness. Compare Exod. vii. and Deut.

'*It came into his heart.*' A thought suggested by natural feeling, and strengthened by special grace. We can hardly realise the distance between the adopted son of Pharaoh and his

¹ Meyer.

² Meyer.

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 :

¹ Or, *Now*. 25. ¶ For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them : but they understood not.

¹ Exod. 2. 13. 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 ?

¹ See Luke 12. 14. ch. 4. 7. 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 diddest the Egyptian yesterday ?

¹ Exod. 2. 15, 22. & 4. 20. & 18. 3. 29. 'Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.

degraded brethren. See Hebrews xi. 24—26.

24. '*And smote the Egyptian.*' It is the unanimous opinion of the Hebrew commentators that Moses acted in this instance by special inspiration. This is not stated in the Pentateuch, nor is it certain, although it seems probable. It may perhaps be inferred from St. Stephen's words in the next verse, and from Hebrews xi.

26. '*Would have set them at one again.*' Literally, compelled them to peace. He urged them to agree.

27. '*Did his neighbour wrong.*' It is not without an evident bearing upon the Jews of his own time that St. Stephen points out the fact that the unwillingness to admit the mediation of Moses originated in the consciousness of wrong.

28. '*As thou diddest.*' The Israelite

who had been rescued had, of course, gratefully related the circumstance, which the oppressor of his brother now uses against Moses. The same malice which prompted him to envy might lead him to denounce Moses.

29. '*Madian or Midian.*' A district in Arabia Petrea. As is the case with most districts belonging to nomad tribes, its limits are uncertain, and varied at different times. The principal city, called Madian, lay to the east of the Red Sea.¹ The Midianites were descendants of Abraham by Ketura. Genesis xxv. 2, 4.

'*Two sons.*' Gershom and Eliezer, by Zipporah, the daughter of Reuel or Jethro, priest of Midian. The posterity of Abraham in all districts long retained faith in the true God and a pure form of worship. See Job i.

'*Mount Sinai,*' called Horeb in Exod.

¹ Winer, ii. 93.

30. ²And when forty years were expired, there ^{= Exod. 3. 2.} appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai 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*, ^{32.} *I am* the God of thy fathers, the ^{Heb. 11.} God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God ^{16.} of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

33. ³Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes ^{= Exod. 3. 5.} from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is ^{Josh. 5. 15.} holy ground.

34. ^{P Exod. 3. 7.} *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.

iii. Horeb was probably the name of the mountain chain, Sinai of the mountain height on which the law was given to Moses. It is probably the lofty granite rock, now called Safsafeh,¹ at the north-west extremity of the range, at the foot of which there is an extensive plain, where the people may have been encamped, where also this manifestation appears to have been vouchsafed.

'An angel of the Lord.' An examination of all the passages,² in which this expression occurs, satisfactorily proves that we ought to understand the angel of the covenant the angel of Jehovah, or rather the angel Jehovah, who is, beyond doubt, the same as the Word, the second person in the Holy Trinity. Hence we find in this verse the angel of the Lord appeared, and in the next the voice of the Lord came unto him.

'In a flame of fire.' A symbol of the divine glory and indication of the divine presence, as at Pentecost. This appearance of God to Moses introduces the legal dispensation, as that to Abraham the patriarchal.

33. *'Put off thy shoes.'* This reverential act has always been regarded in the East³ as indispensable in places hallowed by the presence of God, or consecrated to His service. See Joshua v. 15. The priests performed the temple service barefoot.

34. *'I have seen, I have seen.'* Literally, seeing I have seen, an emphatic Hebrew idiom.

'And am come down.' The manifestation of the Omnipresent God in any particular place is of necessity described in terms which, applied to a finite being, would imply locomotion.

'I will send thee.' This is a brief summary of Exodus iii. 7—10.

¹ Robinson and Tischendorf ap. Winer. ii. 471.

² The most complete is to be found in Hengstenberg's Christologie.

³ Wetstein, Iamb. Vit. Pythag.

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 ^qby the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.
36. ^rHe brought them out, after that he had ^sshewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, ^tand in the red sea, ^uand in the wilderness forty years.
37. ¶This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, ^vA prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, ^wlike unto me; ^xhim shall ye hear.
38. ^yThis is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with ^zthe angel which spake to him in the

35. '*Whom they refused.*' The person who rejected Moses represented the disobedient portion of the nation, the same in spirit with Stephen's persecutors.

'*And a deliverer.*' The word, so translated, specially means ransom, or redeemer; but it is used generally for deliverer. St. Stephen chose it probably to indicate the resemblance between Moses and the Lord Christ.

'*By the hand.*' By the power and under the direction.

36. '*He brought,*' &c. The object of St. Stephen in this and the preceding verses was, first, to show his reverence for Moses, whom he was accused of blaspheming, and, secondly, to give a serious warning to those who refused Christ, as their forefathers had refused Moses.

37. '*This is that Moses which said.*' See Acts iii. 22. St. Stephen quotes it with peculiar force on the occasion. True reverence for Moses would have taught the Jews to receive gratefully the prophet whom he had promised. The Hebrews at that time doubted not that Moses meant an individual

prophet, and that the prophet was no other than the Messiah.

38. '*In the church.*' The people of Israel are called the Church, in the strict sense of the word. They formed a body, called elect, and separate from the heathen world; and on that occasion they were specially summoned as an assembly to receive the law.

'*The angel.*' See note, v. 30. This passage is very important as identifying the angel with Jehovah. Compare Exodus xx. The law is said, indeed, to have been given by the ministry of angels (Hebrews ii. 2, and Acts vii. 53), but that expression seems to refer to the external demonstrations which accompanied the giving.

'*The lively oracles.*' St. Stephen uses the strongest expressions to show his reverence for the law, which he was accused of blaspheming. The commandments are called lively, or living, with reference to their nature, 'for we know that the law is spiritual' (Romans vii. 14); but not with reference to their power, for the law could not give life, or deliver from sin and death, 'in that it was weak through the flesh.' Romans viii. 1-4.

mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: ^bwho received the ^clively ^doracles to give unto us: ^b Exod. 21.
^c 1.
^d Deut. 5. 27,
31. & 38. 4.
John 1. 17.
^e Rom. 8. 2.

39. To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

40. ^dSaying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before ^eus: for *as* for this Moses, which brought us out of ^fthe land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. ^e Exod. 32.
^f 1.

41. ^eAnd they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. ^e Deut. 9.
16.
Pa. 106. 19.
^f Ps. 81. 12.
Ezek. 20.
25, 39.
Rom. 1. 24.
^g Thes. 2.
11.

42. Then ^fGod turned, and gave them up to wor-

39. '*Our fathers would not obey.*' St. Stephen again joins his vindication of himself with a warning to his countrymen. The reference is to Exodus xvi. 3 and xvii. 3, or more generally to the disposition which the people showed to relapse into idolatrous customs.

40. '*Make us gods to go before us.*' Idols to be borne in front of the host, as was customary with the heathens.

'*For as for this Moses.*' 'For' indicates the motive; since Moses, who opposed idolatry, has disappeared, we may return to our old habits.

41. '*A calf.*' There can be little doubt that the form of the idol was suggested by the Egyptian worship of Osiris, who was represented by an ox, called Apis.¹ The Israelites, however, did not probably intend that idol to represent Osiris, but the deity who had delivered them from Egypt. Their gross and sensual apprehensions identified the symbol with the Being whom it represented, in a manner, and to an extent, that is scarcely comprehensible to us, and they offered the sacrifices directly to the idol itself.

'*And rejoiced.*' They held a great

feast with licentious rites borrowed from Egypt.

42. '*God turned.*' He turned Himself away from them, He withdrew His grace from them.

'*And gave them up.*' Men are only kept from sin by His grace; when that is withdrawn they fall by reason of their own depravity. See Romans i. 28.

'*To worship the host of heaven.*' The worship of the sun, moon, and stars, which were regarded not only as symbols and representations, but living personifications of the Divine Being, was probably the first form of false religion, and is the only one mentioned in the book of Job, xxxi. 26—28. It is called Sabaism, a word generally supposed to be derived from the Hebrew word meaning host.

'*In the book of the prophets.*' The twelve minor prophets were usually comprehended in one volume, which was called the Book of the Prophets, Sir. xlix. 10. The passage quoted by St. Stephens is from Amos v. 25.

'*Have ye offered to me,*' &c. This is equivalent to an assertion that the house of Israel did not offer sacrifices

¹ Selden de Diis Syr. i. 4; Winer, i. 759. Later commentators refer to

the bull Mnevis at Heliopolis in Lower Egypt.

¹ Deut. 4.
19. & 17. 3.
² Kings 17.
16. & 21. 3.
Jer. 19. 13.
³ Amos 5.
26, 26.

ship ¹the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, ²O 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 tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

44. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, ¹speaking unto

during those forty years. We are not, however, to understand that they slew no victims on the altar of the Lord (see Exod. xxiv. 4; Numb. vii. 11), but that they offered them without that sincerity and exclusive devotion which alone made sacrifice acceptable. Considered as a nation Israel at no time during those years was perfectly clear of idolatrous customs.

43. '*I's took up the tabernacle.*' This was a very small tent, made of branches, leaves, or grass, in which the image of the idol was carried about, of course in secret, and unknown to Moses.

'*Of Moloch.*' This name (which is derived from the Semitic word, he reigned) was given by the Ammorites (2 Kings xvi. 3) and the Moabites (2 Kings iii. 2) to their national idol, which they also called Baal, or Lord. It is supposed that they worshipped the sun by these names: but at a later period Baal was worshipped as the sun, Moloch as the planet Saturn. The rites performed in honour of this idol were remarkably atrocious. According to the Jewish writers, children were burned alive between the outstretched arms of the brazen statue. The Tyrians and their colonists, especially the Carthaginians, offered their children to Moloch, until a compara-

tively late period in ancient history. The Israelites frequently fell into this most horrible of all idolatries. See Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2; 1 Kings ii. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jeremiah vii. 31.

'*Remphan.*' Or Rephan. A Coptic, that is, Egyptian word, which is used by the LXX as equivalent to Chiun. Both words are of uncertain origin and meaning, but probably designate the planet Saturn, or rather the malevolent and destructive principle which the idolaters believed that planet to represent.

'*Figures.*' This word stands in opposition to tabernacle and star, and signifies idols.

'*Babylon.*' Damascus in the Hebrew. The Israelites passed Damascus on their way to captivity beyond Babylon.

44. '*Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness.*' This statement pointedly refers to their wilful idolatry. God gave them the tabernacle of witness, but they preferred the tabernacle of Moloch. The tabernacle was made according to the pattern shown to Moses on the mount (Exod. xxv. and Hebrews viii. 5), and was both symbolical and typical. It represented heavenly and spiritual truths, and was a shadow of better things to come. The word witness means testimony, and implies that the tabernacle was a

Moses, ¹that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

45. ¹Which also our fathers ||that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, ¹whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

* 46. ^mWho found favour before God, and ⁿdesired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47. ^oBut Solomon built him an house.

48. Howbeit ^pthe most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

49. ^qHeaven is my throne, and earth is my foot-
^p 1 Kings 8. 27. 2 Chron. 2. 6. & 6. 18. ch. 17. 24. ^q Isai. 66. 1, 2. Matt. 5. 34, 35. & 23. 22.

pledge and evidence of the covenant between God and His people.¹ St. Stephen had been accused of blaspheming the temple; the following verses contain an indirect but complete refutation of that charge.

45. '*Jesus*.' The Greek form for the Hebrew name Joshua, Saviour. St. Stephen uses it not without a reference to Him of whom Joshua was a type.

'*Into the possession of the Gentiles*.' This means at the time² when they subdued the Canaanites, and took possession of their land.

'*Unto the days*.' St. Stephen gives the history of the tabernacle. It remained with the Israelites at divers places from the beginning unto this time.

46. '*Who found favour*,' &c. The first project of building the temple is thus referred to the man who was after God's own heart.

'*And desired*.' Or prayed. The request of David and the answer of God, communicated through Nathan, is given 2 Sam. i. 1, and 1 Chron. xviii. 1.

'*A tabernacle*' here means a permanent dwelling-place.

47. '*But Solomon*.' David was not permitted to build the temple, because he had been a man of war.

'*An house*.' The temple was so called, as being symbolically the dwelling-place of God. (The Jews called the temple the 'mountain of the house.') St. Stephen thus expresses his full belief in the divine appointment of the temple. It was in a true, though peculiar and limited, sense the house of God.

48. '*Howbeit*.' Nevertheless, although the temple had that designation, it was not, and could not be, strictly speaking, the dwelling-place of God. This was expressly stated by Solomon himself at the dedication of the temple. 1 Kings viii. 27.

49. '*Heaven is my throne, and earth*,' &c. This passage from Isaiah, which is not quoted literally, declares the omnipresence of the Almighty. The Israelites' peculiar tendency was to restrict and sensualize religious truths, and to confound the symbols with the spiritual realities. The same chapter (Isaiah lxvi.) contains a pointed warning to the Jews of the

¹ This point, which has been much disputed, is fully proved by Bähr.

Symbolik, vol. i. p. 83.

² Meyer.

stool: 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 'stiffnecked 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.

54. ¶ When they heard these things, they were

inability of all Rome and rise without genuine conversion.

51. 'Ye stiff-necked.' &c. It is supposed that St. Stephen was here interrupted, if not by the prevalence of the Sadducees, yet by outcries or murmurs of the Hylasians. But his words though abrupt had a close and distinct connection with the preceding verses, in which as has been shown throughout, his confession of faith is combined with warnings to the Jews; and they are quite in unison with the declarations of Isaiah, in the chapter to which he has just alluded.

'Stiff-necked and uncircumcised.' The unconversion of the Jews has two characteristics,—stubbornness and impurity, which caused them at all times to resist the Holy Ghost. The former term is taken from oxen that would not submit to the yoke; the second conveys a sharp and painful reproof to the Jews who trusted in their circumcision.

'In heart and ears.' That is, whose affections and understanding are equally alienated from God.

52. 'Your fathers.' This verse proves the preceding sentence. The same evil spirit caused the Fathers to slay the heralds of 'the Just One,' and the sons to betray and murder Him.

'The Just One.' The only just one,—the absolutely just, who was the Lord our Righteousness.

53. 'By the disposition of angels.' With the ministration of angels.¹ See Psalm lxxviii. 17. The Hebrews at that time doubted not that God appeared at Sinai, surrounded by His holy angels;² and St. Stephen alludes to this opinion, both to prove his own respect for the law, and to prove the inconsistency of his accusers, who admitted its authority, but broke its precepts by their habitual wickedness, and most especially by the murder of the Just One.

54. 'They were cut to the heart.' See note, v. 33. They felt that although he had fully vindicated himself from both charges, that vindication involved an utter condemnation both of their superstitious practices and depraved character.³

¹ Grotius, Schmidt, Glass, but the connection is uncertain. See Alford.

² Joseph. Ant. xv. 5. 3.

³ Chrysostom.

cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.

55. But he, ^abeing full of the Holy Ghost, looked ^{* ch. 6. 5.} up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56. And said, Behold, ^aI see the heavens opened, ^{* Ezek. 1. 1.} and the ^bSon of man standing on the right hand of ^{Matt. 3. 16.} God. ^{ch. 10. 11.} ^{* Dan. 7. 13.}

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

55. '*Being full of the Holy Ghost.*' Under whose special inspiration he had spoken according to the promise of our Lord.

'*And saw the glory of God.*' He saw with the spiritual eye, opened by the Holy Ghost, the glorious light which declared the divine presence.

'*Jesus standing.*' Not, as on other occasions, sitting. Sitting is the position of a judge: standing of a helper and defender.¹

56. '*Son of man.*' This appellation, '*Son of Man*' is not used of our Lord by any of His disciples excepting in this passage. St. Stephen evidently uses it with reference to our Lord's own prediction in presence of the same unrighteous judges. Luke xxii. 69. See also Daniel vii. 13. He declared, moreover, by this expression, that he saw Him in His human form,—that well-known and beloved form which He had borne on earth.

57. '*Then they cried out.*' They had hitherto heard much that excited their rage, but nothing which they could deem blasphemous. Now they gladly seized the occasion, and, as the high priest had done when our Saviour predicted that glory, cried out on St. Stephen's declaration.

'*Ran upon him with one accord.*'

This was evidently a tumultuary proceeding,—no votes appear to have been collected, and no sentence was pronounced. The president and heads of the Sanhedrim were probably not unwilling to evade the responsibility of condemning Stephen to death. The Jewish authorities are said, by Origen, to have inflicted capital punishment not as a right, but with the imperial connivance.²

'*And stoned him.*' Stoning was the legal punishment for blasphemy and all offences against God. See Leviticus xxiv. 16; 1 Kings xxi. 10, &c. If, however, the description of a formal execution by stoning given by the Hebrew rabbis³ be correct, this was a riotous and irregular proceeding. According to them, a person so executed was thrown from a scaffold, about twelve feet high, by one witness, when, if he was not dead, the second witness killed him by throwing a large stone on his heart.

'*A young man's feet, whose name was Saul.*' For an account of the early life of Saul, who is here mentioned for the first time, see introduction to chap. ix. The expression '*young man*' does not define his age, since

¹ Greg. M. Hom. xix. in Fest. Asc.

² Wordsworth.

³ Mishna, San. vi. 3, 4; Winer, ii. 521. See also Lightfoot.

- ^c 1 Kings 21. 13. 58. And ^ccast *him* out of the city, ^dand stoned *him* : and ^ethe witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.
- ^f Luke 4. 29. Heb. 13. 12. 59. And they stoned Stephen, ^f'calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, ^greceive my spirit.
- ^h Lev. 24. 16. ⁱ Deut. 13. 9, 10. & 17. 7. 60. And he ^hkneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, ⁱ'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.
- ^j ch. 8. 1. & 22. 20. ^k ch. 9. 14. ^l Ps. 31. 5. Luke 23. 46. ^m ch. 9. 40. & 20. 36. & 21. 5. ⁿ Matt. 5. 44. Luke 6. 28. & 23. 34.

it is used frequently to denote persons between twenty-four and forty years old. He could not have been under thirty, since he was a member of the Sanhedrim (see chap. xxvi. 10), and immediately after this was employed on an important mission.

59. '*Calling upon God.*' The invocation was addressed directly to the Lord Jesus, and is a remarkably clear testimony to His divinity.¹ As the dying Saviour said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit' (Luke xxiii. 46), so the dying martyr says, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Prayer could not be addressed to any but God

without blasphemy, and St. Stephen spoke in the fulness of the Holy Ghost.

60. '*Lord, lay not,*' &c. This prayer must also be compared with our Saviour's words, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Such were the manifestations of the indwelling Spirit of Christ in the heart of His elect.

'*He fell asleep.*' The death of holy men is represented as a sleep, because it is calm, peaceful, and full of hope. They know that when they awake in the morning of the resurrection, they will be satisfied with His likeness.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

In the notes on this chapter we have observed the practical application of St. Stephen's discourse in reference to the Jews, but we must not neglect to apply it to ourselves. These things were written not only for instruction, but for our admonition and warning.

1—7. Like Abraham, the Christian is called out of that world and state in which he was born, and becomes one of the family of God, on condition of relinquishing the evil that is in the world. Like the early posterity of Abraham, he is a sojourner in a strange land, and must bear tribulation, although the bondage hath ceased, the prince of the world hath been judged, and the chosen seed have come forth to offer acceptable service unto God in that 'city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.'

¹ Bp. Horsley, Letters to Priestley, p. 232; and Bp. Bloomfield, Lect. on the Acts, p. 32.

9—14. Joseph is to be regarded as a type of Christ, and of Christ's elect in these points:—1. Favour with his father. 2. Envy of his brethren. 3. Betrayal by them. 4. Exile into Egypt. 5. Bondage, calumny, and imprisonment there. 6. Work in his humiliation. 7. Prophetic spirit. 8. Deliverance and exaltation. 9. Provident foresight. 10. Preparation for his brethren. 11. Trial of his brethren. 12. Reception of kinsmen. 13. Enduring prosperity.

15, 16. There is a natural desire in persons to be buried with their ancestors, but here it was a religious desire; they died in the faith of their ancestors, and laid down their heads together on the same pillow of dust, in hope of a blessed and glorious resurrection.—BURKITT.

18—23. Mental and bodily endowments, high station and princely favour, did not separate Moses from his brethren. He cast his lot with the despised people of God, 'esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.'

24—28. We must make no compromise with sin; neither allow it in ourselves, nor consent to it in others. But we must not forget that if the spirit of Christ be in us, it will direct our zeal, not against a fellow man, for whom Christ died, but against the evil principle, which He crushed by His death.

30—36. Like Moses, the Christian may have to wait long for a signal token of God's favour; but if like him we wait patiently, 'it will surely come, it will not tarry.'

Quesnel observes on v. 32, 'The God of faith in Abraham; the God of hope in Isaac, the type of the resurrection; the God of love in Jacob, the pattern of paternal affection.'

37—43. The lively oracles live only in hearts quickened by the Spirit; but the unconverted heart rejects them, and feels increased longing for forbidden pleasures. We should watch the effects which God's warnings have upon us.

41—43. Indulgence in sensual sins exposes the heart to all malignant influences. If we make a calf of any lust, we may be given up to worship the host of the false heaven, the prince of the power of air, the principalities and powers of darkness.

44, 45. The public worship of God, though worthless without inward devotion, is yet necessarily external, and ought to testify to the world the reverence which believers feel for the Divine Majesty. Decency and order are indispensable, solemnity and even magnificence are suitable adjuncts of the public service of the Almighty, if we may judge by the tabernacle and the temple. One of the most distressing results of superstitious abuses has been that they make good men look with suspicion on the offerings of piety.

46, 47. David is a type of Christ in His humiliation, when He prepared His merits as materials for the building of His Church; Solomon is His type in His exaltation when He builds up His Temple upon the foundation laid by His passion and death!—QUESNEL.

51—53. We are surprised by the conduct of the Jews, but the principle which moved them is universal in the unconverted. All who do not obey, resist the Holy Ghost. By St. Stephen's words we may learn that sharp words, when needed, may be spoken, but not unless we can be sure that the Spirit of God dictates or approves them. The safe rule for Christians is given by St. Paul, Galatians vi. 1.

54—58. May that mind be in us which dwelt in this holy martyr of the Lord Jesus. He cried with a loud voice when, in the agony of love, he prayed for his murderers; he prayed for himself standing, looking upwards in holy confidence for a crown of glory, but he prayed for them kneeling as a humble intercessor, pleading the merits of another and not his own. May we, like him, be consoled in our last hour by the revealed presence of the Saviour, and like him surrender our spirits in full assurance unto Him 'who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto Him.'

CHAPTER VIII.

The death of St. Stephen was followed immediately by a general persecution.

The Pharisees, who appear hitherto to have opposed the Sadducees in their attempts to suppress a religion founded on the doctrine of a resurrection, now urged them on, and indeed took the lead with their usual fanaticism. This change is to be attributed partly to misapprehension of the Christian views touching the spirituality of true religion, which appeared to them to contradict the revelations made to Moses, and partly to a growing perception of the formidable character of that faith by which their whole theory of justification was subverted. It is said by the Jewish writers, and with but too much appearance of probability, that Gamaliel now consented to the persecution; and though not willing to take an active part in the proceedings, that he encouraged and directed the impetuous zeal of his disciple Saul.

A.D. 37.

1. AND ^aSaul was consenting unto his death. And ^ach. 7. 58.
at that time there was a great persecution against ^a 22. 20.
the church which was at Jerusalem; and ^bthey were ^bch. 11. 19.
all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea
and Samaria, except the apostles.

2. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, ^aGen. 23. 2.
and ^amade great lamentation over him. ^a 50. 10.
^bSam. 3. 31.

1. '*Consenting.*' The word used in the original means that he fully approved the act and sympathised with the murderers. See St. Paul's own words in chap. xxii. 20.

'*At that time.*' Rather, on that very day. The popular movement, excited and guided by the Sanhedrim, was directed at once against the Christians. The stoning of Stephen was the signal for the persecution.'

'*They were all scattered.*' The blood of the first martyr was the seed of the Church.^a All the leading Christians were dispersed; and some carried the gospel as far as Phœnicæ, Antioch,

and Cyprus, although as yet they preached to the Jews only. See xi. 19, 20.

'*Except the apostles.*' The apostles remained at Jerusalem until a later period, when the relative positions of the Gentiles and Hebrews were more clearly defined. The persecutors may have feared to attack persons who had performed miracles of so awful a character.^a There is an ancient tradition, found in writers of the second century, that the apostles were commanded by our Lord to continue their preaching at Jerusalem for twelve years.⁴

2. '*Devout men.*' These are sup-

¹ Meyer.

² Tertullian. ad Nat.

³ Meyer.

⁴ Clem. Alex. Strom. vi. 5, 43. See Rowth, Rel. Sac. i, p. 484.

3. As for Saul,¹ 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 everywhere preaching the word.
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

proof to have been Jews, who believed St. Stephen to be innocent. Christians would have been called heathens or *hellenes*.² The kind demonstration was a Jewish custom, which Christians did not approve. We judge not that their conversion followed when that demonstration would be changed to rejoicing. There are was singularly bold, even it was not lawful among the Jews to make outward demonstrations of grief for persons condemned by the Sanhedrim.—LACUNNOR.

3. 'As for Saul.' The rage of Saul is thus contrasted with the conduct of those compassionate Jews.³ Saul was now acting under the authority of the Sanhedrim, who were probably glad to employ a distinguished Pharisee, since his zeal would prove the full concurrence of this powerful sect in the persecution. See Acts xxvi. 10, 11.

'Haling.' An old English word for hawling, i.e. seizing, arresting.

4. 'Preaching the word.' Different words are used in the original for preaching in this and the following verse. Here it means 'bearing the glad tidings of the Word;' and does not necessarily imply any official character in the bearers.

5. 'Then Philip.' Not the apostle, but one of the seven deacons (vi. 5). Henceforth he is called an evangelist

(xxi. 8). St. Luke, according to his usual method, gives us a detailed account of one transaction, in order that we may understand the general character and results of this first extension of the preaching of the gospel.

'The city of Samaria.' Samaria had been destroyed by Hyrcanus, but was afterwards rebuilt, and called Sebaste by Herod, in honour of Augustus, whose Greek name was Sebasios. It is, however, probable that it was still called Samaria by the people, who in that country are singularly tenacious of old names.⁴ At that time Sychem was the capital of Samaria; and some commentators suppose that Philip preached the gospel in that city.⁵ If so, a way had been prepared for him by our Lord.

'Preached Christ.' Officially, as an ordained minister. The word here translated 'preached' is never used of a layman. The function of preaching was not always committed to deacons; but it was never doubted that they might be deputed by the bishop to preach.⁶ Philip undoubtedly acted under the direction of the apostles.

6. 'Gave heed.' The Samaritans expected the Messiah, whom they called the Restorer; and believed that he would restore the creation to its original state of perfection.⁷ They

¹ Olshausen. See also Chrysostom.

² Meyer.

³ Reland, Pal. p. 979; and Winer.

⁴ Olshausen.

⁵ Potter on Church Government, p. 206—208.

⁶ Neander, Pfl. p. 76; Gesen. Carm. Samarit.



those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7. For ^aunclean spirits, crying with loud voice, ^bMark 16. 17. 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 ^bused sorcery, and ^cch. 13. 6. bewitched the people of Samaria, ^dgiving out that ^ech. 5. 36. himself was some great one :

were also of a more simple and pliable character than the Jews.

'*The miracles.*' The Samaritans regarded them as indispensable attestations to a revelation. The power of working miracles appears to have been bestowed generally on the evangelists or missionaries.

7. '*Crying with a loud voice.*' This cry seems to have been a wild inarticulate cry of rage and pain, as in the case of the demoniac of Capernium.¹ Mark i. 23—26.

8. '*There was great joy.*' Joy for the present benefit, but deeper and truer for the knowledge of Christ.

9. '*Simon.*' This man, called Simon Magus by the early Fathers, was born in Gitton, a city of Samaria. He studied philosophy at Alexandria, but became notorious at a later period for employing his talents and learning for infamous purposes. At that time persons professing sorcery, divination, and other unlawful arts, were very numerous in all parts of the Roman empire. They were feared, flattered, and despised. This Simon is represented by the early Fathers to have been the origin of the worst heresies

which infested the primitive Church, and which did not consist merely in misapprehension or even perversion of doctrines, but in the introduction of Oriental systems that were diametrically opposed to the truth.² From the expressions used in this and in the following verse, it is clear that Simon represented himself to be a divine person, or an emanation from the Deity. Theodoret says expressly that Simon pretended to appear to the Jews as the Son, to have descended to the Samaritans as the Father, and to other nations as the Holy Ghost. This account, which is confirmed by Irenæus, Tertullian, and Jerome (on Matt. xxiv.), shows that he was an impenitent apostate, and incidentally illustrates the clear idea which the early Christians had of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.³

'*Used sorcery.*' St. Luke neither asserts nor denies the reality of his sorceries, which probably consisted of incantations, exorcisms, astrology, and to some extent of what is called natural magic. It is well known that some secrets of importance have been preserved among the pretended magicians of the East.

¹ Trench on the Miracles, p. 232.

² On the connection between Simon and the Gnostics, see Burton, Lect. H. E. p. 75—80, and Bampton Lec-

tures, p. 374.

³ Whitby; Mosheim, p. 114, 139; Winer, &c.

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 ^{b ch. i. 8.} concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the <sup>† (1). signs and mi-
racles.</sup> miracles and signs which were done.

14. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem

¹ *And bewitched.* or, bewildered and fascinated. 'The effect was very real on their minds. See note, v. 13.

10. '*This man is the great power of God.*' About this time it was commonly believed in Palestine that the power of God, a personal emanation, or personified attribute of the Deity, was to be manifested in the Messiah.¹ This opinion had an important bearing upon the formation of many early heresies, and is not without interest in the present state of Jewish controversies; proving how much of their own authoritative tradition they have thrown away in their hatred to Christianity.

12. '*Philip preaching, &c.*' The object of his preaching was first to show them the full meaning of that Messianic era, and the true name, character, and offices of the Restorer whom they expected. Their baptism took place without delay, being administered by Philip as deacon.

13. '*Then Simon believed.*' A very remarkable attestation to the reality

of the miracles wrought by Philip. Simon believed that Jesus was the Messiah,² and that He had established the kingdom of God, because his understanding could not resist the evidence, and he was baptized because he wished to obtain the benefits of this manifestation. Such faith does not of course involve a change of heart, but he probably deceived himself and the evangelist as to his state and views.

² *And wondered.* This hardly gives the force of the original, which means, he was bewildered, beside himself. The same word is used in the ninth and eleventh verses, where it is rendered 'bewitched.' He who bewildered others is now bewildered himself.

14. '*That Samaria.*' Not only this city, but the country of Samaria. The conversion of the whole district was commenced and carried on by Philip, the deacon and evangelist.³

³ *They sent.* The two most distinguished among the apostles went to complete the work of Philip, but, as we observe, they were sent by the

¹ Dorner, Ent. von der Person Christ. i. 15—60. Burton, l. c.

² Meyer.
³ Meyer.

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, ¹that they might receive the Holy Ghost :

¹ ch. 2. 38.

16. (For ^mas yet he was fallen upon none of them : ⁿonly ⁿthey were baptized in ^othe name of the Lord Jesus.)

^m ch. 19. 2.
ⁿ Matt. 28.

17. Then ^plaid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

^{19.}
^o ch. 2. 38.
^o ch. 10. 48.
[&] 19. 5.
^p ch. 6. 6. &
19. 6.
Heb. 6. 2.

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.

20. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because ^qthou hast thought that ^rthe gift of God may be purchased with money.

^q Matt. 10.
^{8.}
See 2 Kings
^{5. 16.}
^r ch. 2. 38.
[&] 10. 45. &
11. 17.

apostolic body. St. Peter therefore could not, of course, be the supreme ruler of the Church.

15, 17. The two verses describe the apostolic rite of confirmation.¹

15. '*The Holy Ghost.*' Not merely the gifts, but the assurance of that peculiar indwelling presence of the spirit which brings with it the fulness of Christian privileges, and of which the miraculous gifts were the attestations. In the early Church confirmation followed immediately upon baptism in the case of adults, but not in the case of infants.

16. '*He was fallen.*' This expression indicates such an extraordinary manifestation as was described in the second and third chapters.

17. '*Then laid they their hands.*' This was an act of consecration, not merely of prayer. It signified the conveyance of that special blessing

described above, v. 15. See note, vi. 6.

18. '*He offered them money.*' Simon's object was not to purchase the gifts of the spirit for himself, which would have been bestowed upon him freely and without price, had he sought them, but the power of conferring them upon others, which was confined to the apostles. He was evidently prompted by ambition, the origin of most sects and heresies, and by covetousness, intending to sell what he bought. Hence Simony has become the general and legal name for the great crime of trafficking in spiritual charges.

20. '*Thy money perish with thee.*' The Fathers² generally regard this as a prophecy, rather than an imprecation. It seems to be simply an outburst of spiritual indignation and horror.

¹ Cyprian, Ep. 72, 73; and Hooper, E. P. V. lxvi. 4. ² Ap. Cramer, Cat. in ⁴ct.

THE ACTS.

21. 'Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter : for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.'

22. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray (God, 'if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23. For I perceive that thou art in 'the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

24. 'Then answered Simon, and said, " Prayye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

25. And they, when they had testified and preached

21. 'Neither part nor lot.' The same expression is used in the original as by the LXX in 2 Sam. xx. 1 and 1 Chron. x. 1 when an entire separation or enmity is described. The Samaritan suspected was not in a state to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and was less to communicate them to others.

22. 'Repent therefore.' It has been thought remarkable that repentance should be offered to so great a sinner, considering the punishment inflicted on Ananias and Sapphira. This is to be accounted for, perhaps, by the superior enlightenment of the Hebrews, which enhanced their guilt. The Samaritan, notwithstanding his baptism, yet remained in his low, sensual, and grovelling state of mind. He had not received the Holy Spirit, and knew the 'power of the world to come' experimentally only.¹ The subject is however mysterious.

'If perhaps.' St. Peter admonishes and directs, but scarcely expresses a hope. His doubt, however, refers to the repentance of Simon, not to the forgiveness, which would be bestowed, if he should pray with a contrite and broken spirit.

23. 'The gall of bitterness.' Poison and bitterness are convertible terms in Hebrew. See Deut. xxix. 18; Heb. xii. 15. And the gall of the viper was regarded as the source of its venom.² The expression, therefore, means that his affections were thoroughly corrupt and poisoned.

'The bond of iniquity.' The thralldom of habitual sin. The inward corruption and the evil habit complete the description of a reprobate.

24. 'Then answered Simon.' He does not request the apostle to pray that he may be delivered from the bondage, or healed of the disease, of sin, but merely that he may be saved from the consequences, which his guilty conscience forebodes. There is no indication of genuine repentance in this fear. Simon appears to have left Samaria shortly after these events, and to have travelled through various countries promulgating the most detestable heresies.³ He is said to have obtained great celebrity at Rome.⁴

25. 'When they had testified,' &c. Peter and John probably remained in Samaria long enough to organise a Christian Church, and then passed

¹ Olshausen. Meyer.

² Irenæus, i. 20, 23; Eus. H. E. ii. 14.
³ Justin Martyr, Ap. p. 69.

the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

26. 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.

27. And he arose and went: and, behold, ²a man ² 2 Zeph. 2. 10. of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and ³had come to Jerusalem for to ³ John 12. 20. worship,

28. Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

some time in preaching the gospel in other parts of the district. This was a very important step in the propagation of the gospel, and prepared the feelings of the apostles for the overthrow of the 'partition wall' between Hebrews and aliens.

26. The following narrative illustrates the mode by which the gospel was made known at a very early period in remote countries, and it presents a striking contrast to the Samaritan magician, in the single-hearted convert from Ethiopia.

'*The angel of the Lord.*' Or, 'an angel.' There can be no doubt that St. Luke means that a heavenly spirit appeared to Philip, whether in vision or in dream. Though angel means 'messenger,' yet angel of the Lord always designates a celestial being.

'*Gaza.*' A very ancient city (see Gen. x. 19), and one of the five principal cities of Philistia. It was destroyed by Alexander, but rebuilt by Herod. We learn, however, from Josephus¹ that it was laid waste by bri-

gands about this time. Hence, perhaps, the remark of St. Luke, 'which is desert,' unless, indeed, this refers to the way which passed through a desert country.

27. '*A man of Ethiopia.*' Though a native of Ethiopia, he was probably a Hebrew by descent, as he appears to have been reading the Hebrew Bible. See note, v. 32.

'*Candace.*' This name was borne by the queens of Meroe, an island in the Upper Nile.² Her dominions extended probably over part of Abyssinia.

'*For to worship.*' He had probably attended one of the great festivals at Jerusalem.

28. '*Read Esaias.*' He must have been a witness of the persecution of the Christians, and the defence of St. Stephen was likely to make a deep impression upon a devout spirit. It may be fairly presumed that he was searching the prophetic scriptures in order to ascertain the characteristics of the true Messiah.

¹ B. J. 11, 18, 1.

² Ludolph. H. Æth. p. 89; Winer, i. 649.

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.

32. The place of the scripture which he read was ^{8.} ^a *Isai. 53. 7*, this, ^a '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.

34. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I

29. '*Then the Spirit said.*' Doubtless by an internal communication. We must not, however, confound such a miraculous intimation with the ordinary promptings and suggestions of the Holy Spirit. This was a specific direction.

30. '*Understandest thou,*' &c. The application of the prophecy which he was reading.

31. '*How can I,*' &c. This answer does not imply that holy scripture generally is unintelligible without an interpreter, but that he could not understand this prophecy without a guide to tell him the facts to which it referred.

32. '*The place of the scripture.*' The expression used here refers to the Hebrew sections or divisions of the Bible.¹ St. Luke, as usual, quotes from the Septuagint version. The 53rd of Isaiah was understood by all

the Jews to be descriptive of the work and person of Christ.^a

33. '*In his humiliation.*' In our version, 'He was taken from prison and from judgment;' the exact meaning of the original appears to be, 'He was taken away by a cruel and oppressive judgment,' being humbled, afflicted, and crucified.^b

'*His generation.*' The meaning of this word is contested. According to some of our best commentators,^c it means 'manner of life.' The early Fathers understood it of our Lord's divine origin,^d but it generally signifies an age of men, the men of a particular epoch; and we may perhaps understand the expression to mean, who can declare or sufficiently describe the wickedness of that generation by whom the Messiah was judicially murdered?^e

34. '*Of whom speaketh,*' &c. Had

¹ Olshausen.

² Hengstenberg, *Christologie*; and Schoetgen, *Hor. Heb.* ii. 647—650.

³ Hengstenberg, i. 340.

^a Lowth and Kennicott.

^b Severus ap. Cramer. *Cat. in Acts*; and Suicer. *Thes.* i. 744.

^c Lightfoot, Meyer, and Alford.

pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35. Then Philip opened his mouth, ^aand began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. ^a Luke 24. 27. ch. 18. 28.

36. And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; ^bwhat doth hinder me to be baptized? ^b ch. 10. 47.

37. And Philip said, ^cIf thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, ^cI believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. ^c Matt. 28. 19. Mark 16. 16. d Matt. 16. 16.

38. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. ^d John 6. 69. & 9. 35, 38. & 11. 27. ch. 9. 20. 1 John 4. 15. & 5. 5, 13.

39. And when they were come up out of the water, ^ethe Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. ^e 1 Kings 18. 12. 2 Kings 2. 16. Ezek. 3. 12, 14.

40. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing

the eunuch been a Palestinian Jew, he would have known that the prophet spoke of the Messiah. See note, v. 32.

35. '*Opened his mouth.*' This expression is only used on solemn occasions, when some great moral or doctrinal truth is to be declared.¹

'*Preached unto him Jesus,*' i. e. proved that Jesus was the person of whom the prophet spake, and instructed him in the fundamental truths of Christianity, including, of course, the doctrine of baptism.

36. '*Unto a certain water.*' According to Eusebius and Jerome, the eunuch was baptized in a fountain near Bethsora, at the twentieth milestone from Jerusalem, on the road to Hebron. It is described by later travellers as the head of a considerable brook. Near it are the ruins of a Christian church.

37. '*If thou believest,*' &c. Such faith necessarily involves repentance. This verse is omitted in the best manuscripts, but is quoted by very early Fathers.

39. '*Caught away.*' Compare 1 Kings xviii. 12. The disappearance of Philip is evidently represented as miraculous.

'*He went on his way rejoicing.*' The Abyssinians believe that their Church was founded by this convert, whom they call Indich. It is known, indeed, that the country was Christianised by Frumentius and Ædesius in the 4th century; but there appear to be indications of an earlier introduction of the Gospel in the formularies of that Church, which still retains an orthodox confession of faith.²

40. '*Azotus,*'—or Ashdod (Josh. xiii. 3; 1 Samuel v. 1), lay about thirty-four miles to the north of Gaza,

¹ Tholuck on Matt. v. 2.

² Neander, p. 89 & note; Ludolph. H. Æthiopia.

through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.

A village of inconsiderable extent now occupies the site, bearing the old name Esdud.¹

'*In all the cities.*' This road led through Ekron, Rama, Joppa, and the plain of Sharon.

'*Cæsarea.*' The residence of the Roman procurator of Judea; it was built by Herod in honour of Augustus Cæsar, on the sea-coast, about sixty miles north-west of Jerusalem, upon the site of an old castle, called the Tower of Strato. It belonged to

Phœnice, not to Judea, and was regarded as a Gentile city both by the Jews and Romans. Philip appears to have settled permanently at Cæsarea, and to have been employed in preaching the Gospel in the surrounding district, under the authority of the apostles. Henceforth he is called the evangelist. The site of Cæsarea is marked by some considerable ruins and a few fishermen's huts, which still bear the name of Kysariah.²

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—4. Persecution draws out the characteristics of all parties: steady courage in the apostles, once timid, but now strong in the Lord; sympathy in single-hearted and devout, though as yet imperfectly informed, observers; the energy of hate in the persecuting fanatic, and the energy of love in the persecuted believers. God overrules all characters alike, and makes all things minister to the furtherance of His Gospel.

5—8. If we give heed to the preaching of the Word, and use the means of grace, these verses indicate the spiritual results, viz. the expulsion of unclean affections, new and vigorous life in the diseased heart, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

9, 10 & 18—24. The character of Simon strikes us as being very strange, and remote from our own experience. Yet his actions sprang from the common source of all evil,—selfishness, which developed itself in two affections, to which all are predisposed, vanity and covetousness; hence his fraud, hence his ostentatious and blasphemous lies. By his example we are warned that no profession of faith, or use of the external means of grace, avail for conversion, unless the root of evil be cut through by the sword of the Spirit, and the bitter source be sweetened by His gracious influence. While we apply these lessons to ourselves, yet, in the case of others, we must imitate the charity of Philip and the apostles, who accepted the professions of Simon, and, when he fell, pointed out the only means of deliverance.

14—17. The means of grace are various, but all are needed for the full edification of the Church. Bishop Beveridge observes, 'We must use not only some but all the means of grace that are appointed for the begetting or increasing of true grace and virtue in us; one being as necessary in its kind as another, and all assisting one another in order to the attainment of the end. And after all,

¹ Reland, p. 670; Winer.

² Winer.

though we use the means, and all the means, we must use them only as means; and therefore not rest in them, nor trust in them, but only upon Him who hath appointed them, and hath sent His Holy Spirit to move in them, to make them effectual to the purposes for which they are used.'

26—35. Remark the predispositions of this eunuch, who came so readily to Christ. He had neglected no means of grace afforded under the Old Covenant. Rank, power, riches, royal favour, important occupations, and vast distance, did not keep him from worshipping God in the place which He appointed. This was no mere form, for on his return he studied the Word of God. The twin graces, humility and teachableness, kept his heart open to saving impressions, and his search was rewarded by a complete revelation.

40. Burkitt observes upon the last verse, 'How good it is to obey God in the most difficult command. Philip had a hard and tiresome journey from Samaria to Gaza, footing it through a desert in untrodden paths, and running as fast as the eunuch's chariot, to join himself unto it at the command of God. But now from Gaza to Azotus he has a swifter and easier passage. He rides in an angelical flying chariot. When we attend the execution of God's commands the holy angels shall attend us, and take care of us, and administer necessary help unto us; like tender nurses, they keep us safe while we live, and bring us home in their arms to our Father's house when we die. Blessed be God for the ministry of His holy angels.'

CHAPTER IX.

With this chapter we enter upon a new and distinct series of events. Hitherto the object of the inspired historian has been to give a clear idea of the first institution of the Church, its doctrines and constitution, the characteristics of its adherents, the progress which it made in Palestine, and the obstacles by which that progress was obstructed or retarded. Henceforth the prospect widens, and a light, which with every chapter becomes more vivid and distinct, is cast upon the purposes of the Almighty Father, which included the conversion of the Gentiles and the complete establishment of a Catholic Church—a Church that would be limited to no race or nation, but would offer a redemption no less universal than the corruption which made it needful to mankind. This effect is, however, produced not by a general survey of events simultaneously occurring in various places—a mode of representation adapted only for the historical student—but by a personal narrative which is equally interesting and intelligible to the humblest Christian. With the exception of three chapters (and even they bear the same personal character), in which St. Peter and the other apostles are instructed in the true nature of the dispensation intrusted to them, the remainder of this book is exclusively occupied with the conversion and missionary labours of Saul, whom we have hitherto seen only in the character of a fierce and bigoted persecutor. This biography conducts us through an amazing variety of scenes, and enables us to realise the triumphs of Christianity; whether opposed by the energetic enmity of the Hebrew, or obstructed by the grovelling superstition of the Gentile; whether it encountered the philosophy of Greece, or came into contact with the imperial power of Rome. Everywhere we behold it exposing error, subverting idolatry, establishing the principles of divine truth, and erecting the standard of the Cross in the very centre of corrupt civilisation. In these chapters the Spirit of God describes the workings and results of those principles which the Son of God made known, and shows us in what manner the benefits which, by His precious blood-shedding, He purchased for us were brought within the reach and offered to the acceptance of our heathen forefathers. For we must understand this book to contain, so to speak, a specimen of the mode in which Christianity was disseminated through all nations, from Britain to China, by the other apostles and evangelists, although their labours may not have commenced during the period which it embraces, and have not been recorded by inspiration.

A brief account of what is certainly known or probably conjectured of the early life of Saul may be a fitting introduction to the study of these chapters.

Saul was born and received his early education at Tarsus, a rich and beautiful city, the capital of Cilicia. His parents enjoyed the immunities and privileges of Roman citizens, which may have been purchased by his father, or grandfather, or conferred upon them for services rendered to the state.¹ From

¹ Grotius on Acts xxii. 28; and Deyling, *Obs. Sacre*, iii. 41.

Saul's connection with one of the synagogues at Jerusalem, which appears to have belonged to Hebrew freedmen, it has been conjectured¹ that his father may have been made prisoner in the civil war, and afterwards manumitted at Rome. Little is known of the social condition of his parents, but from the care bestowed upon his education, from the expense which they must have incurred in sending him to Jerusalem, and from the influence which he possessed there at an early age, it may be presumed that they were persons of some property and consideration. Tarsus offered great resources for an intellectual education, since its university was so famous that Strabo² asserts that it equalled, or even surpassed, Athens and Alexandria, although frequented chiefly by the provincials of Asia Minor. The father of St. Paul, however, and probably his ancestors for some generations, were strict adherents to the sect of the Pharisees, and it is not likely that he would be exposed to the certain evil of intercourse with idolaters in early youth, for the uncertain advantage of Gentile cultivation of mind. He probably acquired in that city the familiar knowledge of the Greek language which is displayed in his epistles, and in the discourses at Athens, and before the Roman tribunals. But it is highly improbable that he then became acquainted with the literature of the Greeks. The few passages which he quotes prove indeed that he did not share the narrow prejudices of his countrymen, but he had ample opportunities in after-life of acquiring such information as might be useful, especially during the time which he passed at Tarsus early in his ministerial career. The education of a Hebrew boy was generally, and as we may be sure in his case, strictly scriptural. From a child they knew the Holy Scriptures, beginning that study formally, as we are told,³ at the age of five years. His parents, moreover, intended to educate him for the highly esteemed profession of a teacher of the law, and for that purpose sent him to Jerusalem, to be trained in the school of Gamaliel, the most celebrated professor. It has been much questioned at what age St. Paul left Tarsus for Jerusalem. The education of a youth intended to be a Rabbi began very early. According to the Talmud, the students began the Mishna, a traditional commentary on the Bible, at ten years, and were held to be responsible agents at the age of thirteen. Now, St. Paul states in the strongest possible terms,⁴ that he had been educated in early youth, 'from the beginning,' among his own nation at Jerusalem, 'after the most straitest sect' of their religion. And it is certain that he was trained some years under Gamaliel. These facts do not allow us to assume that he could have been above thirteen years when he left Tarsus.⁵ Since, however, he does not appear to have seen our Lord, or to have been acquainted with His doctrines, I cannot suppose that he was living at Jerusalem during His ministerial career; while, on the other hand, it seems clear from the whole tenor of his history that he could not have been under thirty years of age⁶ at the date of his conversion. It may, therefore, be concluded that he had returned to Tarsus after completing his education, and remained there until a short time before the martyrdom of St. Stephen.

¹ Wieseler, Chron. Apost. Zeit. p. 63, note. Schriften. ii. 274.
² xiv. 673. See also Plin. v. 22; ⁴ Acts xxvi. 4, 5.
 Appian, B. C. v. 7. ⁵ Wieseler, p. 155.
³ Pirke, Avoth. ap. Tholuck. V. ⁶ Note, ch. xxvi. 10.

The instruction which he received from Gamaliel included a thorough knowledge of the letter of the Word of God,¹ and an equally accurate acquaintance with the traditional interpretation and additions by which it was disfigured, and to a great extent practically superseded. But there can be no doubt that his mental faculties were brought into vigorous exercise,² and that he was thereby prepared to be an instrument in God's hands for exposing the errors and overthrowing the prejudices with which he became so early conversant. His knowledge of the Holy Scriptures without Christ was insufficient to enlighten his conscience, which it yet awakened,³ or to satisfy the aspirations which it certainly excited; but when, through faith in Christ, its obscurities were cleared up, and its end and aim manifested, it proved a treasury of wisdom whereby he was guided himself, and instructed others in the way of salvation. His mode of life during those years and previously was not less calculated to prepare him for the labours and trials of his after-career. The hours that were not given to study and devotional exercises were occupied by manual labour. This was so far from being regarded as incompatible with his destination that proficiency in some industrial art was held to be a necessary qualification for a teacher of the law. It was a proverbial saying among the Jews, that 'he who does not teach his son to work teaches him to be a thief;⁴ and as the scribes received no payment from their pupils, they had frequently to earn their own livelihood by labour. Industrial occupations, however, were not pursued merely or chiefly from necessity, they were justly regarded as the most effectual preservatives against sensual temptations, and as valuable means for promoting the spiritual life. Under this training Saul became a hardy, earnest, and powerful youth; self-denying and self-sacrificing, but full of prejudice and bigotry, under the influence of fierce and malignant feelings, and ready to employ the most unjustifiable means of repressing whatever seemed to be opposed to the system which he viewed as divine in its moral precepts, ceremonial observances, and dogmatic teaching. Humanly speaking, there was no man among the opponents of Christianity less likely to be affected and converted by the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus than the self-righteous persecutor Saul.

A.D. 37—39.

* ch. 8, 3.
Gal. 1, 13.
1 Tim. 1, 13.

I. AND *Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and

1. '*Yet breathing out.*' This expression graphically describes the fierce excitement of Saul. The persecution of the Christians continued some time, and, as we learn from Acts xxvi. 10, 11, Saul 'gave his voice,' i.e.

as a member of the Sanhedrim, joined in condemning other martyrs, and persecuted them even unto 'strange cities.' St. Luke proceeds at once to that expedition in which Saul was converted.

¹ Koppe reckons 88 quotations from the Old Testament in St. Paul's Epistles, of which at least 49 are evidently given from memory, and translated by St. Paul directly from the Hebrew. See Tholuck, l. c. ii. 278.

² The development of St. Paul's intellect, and his mode of reasoning, are not Greek, but thoroughly Hebrew. See Neander and Tholuck.

³ Romans vii. 7, &c.

⁴ Lightfoot on Mark vi. 3.

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 ^{† Gr. Of the way:} of this way, whether ^{So ch. 19. 9, 22.}

'Went unto the high priest.' At that time probably Theophilus, son of Ananias, whom Vitellius, the prefect of Syria, appointed,¹ A.D. 37. Saul applies to him as president of the Sanhedrim and head of the magistracy of Judea. The father of Theophilus, Ananias, or Annas, and his father-in-law, Caiaphas, were bitter enemies of Christianity.

2. *'And desired of him letters.'* The authority of the high priest and Sanhedrim was acknowledged by the Jews wherever they lived; and it was usual for the Jews dispersed in foreign nations to receive orders and letters from the great council, which orders they diligently followed.²

'To Damascus.' One of the most ancient cities in the east, probably the oldest city now existing in the world. It was the capital of Coele-syria, about 150 miles or a six days' journey to the north-east of Jerusalem. It is situate in a plain of exceeding beauty, watered by several branches of the Pharpar, or Chrysorrhoeas, now called the Barrady, and bounded by the snowy heights of Antilibanus. The loveliness of the scenery, and fertility of the soil, are celebrated by eastern poets, who call it the paradise of the earth. It was then a very large city, inhabited by a mixed Syrian and Greek population. The Jews had occupied a distinct quarter, probably as merchants, from very ancient times (1 Kings xx. 34), and were then so numerous that no less than 10,000 on one occasion, and

18,000 on another, were massacred in insurrections in the time of Nero.³ The city belonged to the province of Syria, and was entirely subject to the Romans from the time of Pompey, A.C. 64; but at the termination of the three years which St. Paul passed in Arabia and Damascus, we find it in the hands of Aretas, king of Arabia Nabatæa, whose capital was Petra. It is not certain at what time, or under what circumstances, this prince obtained possession of the city. It had formerly belonged to one of his ancestors,⁴ and it is not improbable that Caius Caligula restored it to him on his accession to the empire, A.D. 37. Aretas was the father-in-law of Herod Antipas, and made war against him when that licentious prince repudiated his daughter for Herodias. Although he was entangled in a war with Rome, in consequence of his successes against Antipas, it is probable that hostilities ceased when Antipas was disgraced, and that Agrippa, the favourite of the emperor, procured him the sovereignty of Damascus, of which it is certain that he was prince A.D. 43.⁵ Whether Damascus then belonged to this prince or to the Romans, the authority of the Sanhedrim in matters of religion would be recognised by the civil magistrate.⁶ Aretas would even be zealous to support the party favoured by Agrippa.

'Of this way.' Or, 'the way.' The Christian religion is called the way, as being a definite and progressive

¹ Joseph. Ant. xviii. 7.

² Biscoe on the Acts, p. 255; c. vi. p. 11.

³ Joseph. B. J. vii. 8, 7.

⁴ Joseph. Ant. xiii. 5, 2.

⁵ Wieseler, p. 168—175.

⁶ Biscoe, p. 234—243.

they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

^b ch. 22. 6.
^c 26. 12.
¹ Cor. 15. 8. 3. And ^bas 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, ^cwhy persecutest thou me ?

5. And he said, Who art thou, Lord ? And the

direction of the inner and outer life of man. The word is frequently used to denote a sect in religion or philosophy which has a definite creed and system.

3. '*As he journeyed.*' We have three distinct accounts of this event (compare Acts xxii. 1—16 and xxvi. 9—18). St. Luke gives here a concise narrative, while St. Paul, in his two discourses at Jerusalem, before Festus, adds many important particulars, which were vividly impressed upon his memory. The variations in these accounts, and their concurrence in every material fact, enable us better to realise the whole transaction. St. Paul moreover alludes to it in several passages of his epistles, and always in terms that confirm the narrative of St. Luke.

'*He came near.*' According to an old tradition, the event took place at a bridge near the city. The road lies through two mountains, one of which is called 'the Star,' in memory of the light which shone about St. Paul. The valley is described by Maundrell.

'*A light from heaven.*' This expression, which is never used in describing lightning,¹ indicates the divine light, or glory, called by the Hebrews the Shechinah, which always accompanied the manifestations of the Godhead, and is a symbol of

the unapproachable and spiritual light² in which He dwells. From the accounts given by St. Paul, we learn that this light was brighter than the sun, and that it was mid-day.

4. '*And he fell to the earth.*' Even good men, who are believers, and unconscious of having done anything peculiarly offensive to God are represented in the Bible as being overpowered and prostrated by manifestations of God's glory. Compare Daniel x. 8 ; Job xlii. 5, 6 ; Revelation i. 17.

'*Heard a voice.*' 'In the Hebrew tongue.' Acts xxvi. 14. It is a remarkable coincidence that St. Luke here uses the Hebrew form of the name Saul, not that which he generally gives, as in v. 1.³

'*Me.*' By persecuting the Church, which is the body of Christ. See Ephes. i. 23 ; 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27 ; and compare Deuteronomy xxxii. 10 and Zechariah ii. 8.

5. '*Who art thou, Lord ?*' We learn from other passages (ch. ix. 27 ; 1 Cor. ix. 1, and xv. 8), that the Lord Jesus appeared personally to Saul, as this passage implies. It may not perhaps be certainly concluded from these words of Saul that he had not previously known the person of our Lord, since he spake in a state of great confusion and amazement of

¹ Meyer.

² Alford.

Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: ⁴*it is* ⁴ch. 5. 39. hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, ⁵what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* ⁵Luke 3. 10. unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be ^{ch. 2. 22. & 16. 30.} told thee what thou must do.

7. And ⁶the men which journeyed with him stood ⁶Dan. 10. 7. speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. ^{See ch. 22. 9. & 26. 13.}

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.

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

mind; but the form of his question gives additional probability to the supposition that he then saw Him for the first time.

¹*It is hard,* &c. The pricks or goads, used to drive oxen or horses, were long staves, with sharp iron heads. To kick against them was a proverbial expression¹ for unavailing struggles against an irresistible power. The force of the expression here seems to be, 'Thy obstinate and prejudiced resistance is useless, thou must yield to the constraining power of grace.'²

6. ⁶*It shall be told thee.* From St. Paul's account (chap. xxvi. 18) it appears that our Lord spake other words, unless we may suppose that the apostle there gives a condensed account of the transaction, including its immediate results.

7. ⁷*Stood speechless.* Or, remained. We know from St. Paul that they fell to the ground with him. The variation is unimportant; but it is quite probable that, on recovering from the

first shock, they stood looking on with astonishment.

⁸*Hearing a voice.* St. Paul again tells us they did not hear the voice. The word 'hear' has two distinct meanings, to hear a sound, and to understand what it means, as in the Saviour's words, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' These men doubtless heard a sound, but distinguished no voice.³ This occurred on other occasions. See John xii. 29.

8 ⁸*He saw no man.* His eyes were dazzled 'by the glory of that light' (chap. xxii. 11). This, however, was not merely a natural effect, or his companions would have been blinded also.⁴ Its duration, and the manner in which it was removed, show that it was miraculous, and, as in the case of Zacharias, at once a sign and a warning.

9. ⁹*And he was three days,* &c. A time passed in prayer and meditation, with deep and bitter repentance,

¹ Grotius, &c.; Pindar, Pyth. ii. 174; Æschyl. Ag. 1633; Eurip. Bacch. 791.

² Olshausen, and the Arabic version.

³ Hammond, Wolf, Kuinoel, Grotius, and Hensen, p. 11. See also a good note by Dean Stanley on 1 Cor. xiv. 2.

⁴ Olshausen.

10. ¶ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus,
s ch. 22. 12. ^anamed 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 enquire in the
h ch. 21. 39.
 & 22. 3. house of Judas for *one* called Saul, ^bof 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.

13. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by
ver. 1. many of this man, ¹how much evil he hath done to thy
 saints at Jerusalem:

h ver. 21.
 ch. 7. 59. &
 22. 16. 14. And here he hath authority from the chief
1 Cor. 1. 2.
 2 Tim. 2. 22. priests to bind all ^kthat call on thy name.

15. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for

involved fasting as a necessary accompaniment. It is probable that total abstinence from food is meant. Long fasts are not uncommon in the east, and St. Paul's ascetic habits in early life had prepared him for severer discipline than we can easily realise. Such fasting was, moreover, deemed necessary when persons entered upon any great and solemn change connected with the inner life.

10. '*Ananias*.' A devout observer of the law, and highly esteemed even by the unconverted Jews at Damascus. See chap. xxii. 12. He was probably one of the Pentecostal converts. From v. 13 it is evident that he was not one of those who had fled from Jerusalem, and from 11 and 12 that he was not previously known to Saul.

11. '*The street which is called Straight*.' At Damascus there is now a street called Straight, in which the Christians point out a house which, according to tradition, stands on the site of that occupied by Judas. The street, which is about three miles long, crosses the city from east to west.

'*Of Tarsus*.' See Introduction to this chapter.

12. '*Hath seen in a vision*.' This occurred most probably in a trance or ecstasy, and not in a dream. Saul was thus prepared to recognise the messenger of the Lord.

13. '*Thy saints, or holy ones*.' Christians are the holy ones of God, being separated from the world, and consecrated to His service by the Holy Spirit. This is the first time this appellation occurs.

14. '*He hath authority*.' This was probably made known by the companions of Saul.

'*All that call on thy name*.' This definition of Christians is important. They not only recognised Jesus as the Messiah, but invoked His name, thereby acknowledging Him to be God. See Chrysostom on chap. xxii. 16; and compare Rom. x. 12; 1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 22. From Pliny's famous epistle to Trajan we learn that the primitive Christians sang hymns to Christ as God.

15. '*Go thy way*.' The Lord re-

¹he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before ^mthe Gentiles, and ⁿkings, and the children of Israel :

16. For ^oI will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17. ^pAnd Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and ^qputting 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 ^rbe filled with the Holy Ghost.

18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales : and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

peats His command, but graciously states the reason.

'For he is a chosen vessel.' A person that is elected and specially chosen to be a vessel, or instrument, and agent in the propagation of the Gospel. The word 'vessel' is often used by St. Paul in a similar meaning.

'To bear my name.' That is, to declare the nature and doctrine of Christ.

And kings. St. Paul preached that name in the presence of the governors of Cyprus, Achaia, and Judea, of Herod Agrippa, and of the Emperor Nero.

'And the children of Israel.' From the beginning to the end of his career we shall find that St. Paul always addressed himself, in the first place, to the Jews. 'To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.'

16. *He must suffer.* This must be regarded as a gracious promise. To suffer for the Lord is the highest privilege of a believer. See chap. v. 41.

17. '*Brother Saul.*' Ananias thus recognises him as one of the brotherhood in spirit.

'That appeared unto thee.' See note, v. 5.

'Be filled with the Holy Ghost.' The preventing and preparatory work of the Holy Spirit is thus, as always, distinguished from that indwelling presence which is the peculiar privilege of Christians, and was then communicated to St. Paul by the ministry of Ananias. The expression is peculiar to St. Luke, and is only used on great and extraordinary occasions.

18. '*As it had been scales.*' It has been often remarked that St. Luke, as a physician, describes miraculous healings minutely and accurately. The expression used here means that a scaly substance actually fell from the eyes, not merely that St. Paul felt such a sensation in the organ of sight. We may be assured that St. Luke had often heard from the apostle an account of what he felt on that occasion.

'And was baptized.' See xxii. 16. That he might 'wash away his sins.' The necessity of baptism for the remission of sins, and its efficacy when duly administered, could not be more strongly demonstrated than by the case of St. Paul, whose election was so peculiar, and repentance so undoubted. St. Paul was not confirmed by the apostles, but was replenished

¹ ch. 13. 2.
& 22. 21. &
26. 17.
Rom. 1. 1.
1 Cor. 15.
10.
Gal. 1. 15.
Ephes. 3. 7,
8.
1 Tim. 2. 7.
2 Tim. 1.
11.
^m Rom. 1. 5.
& 11. 13.
Gal. 2. 7, 8.
ⁿ ch. 25. 22,
23. & 26. 1,
&c.
^o ch. 20. 23.
& 21. 11.
2 Cor. 11.
23.
^p ch. 22. 12,
13.
^q ch. 8. 17.
^r ch. 2. 4. &
4. 31. & 8.
17. & 18. 52.

19. And when he had received meat, he was
ch. 26. 20. strengthened. ^aThen was Saul certain days with the
 disciples which were at Damascus.

20. And straightway he preached Christ in the
ch. 8. 27. synagogues, ^athat he is the Son of God.

21. But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said ;
ch. 8. 3. ^aIs not this he that destroyed them which called on
ver. 1. Gal. this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that in-
1. 13, 23. tent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief
 priests ?

ch. 18. 28. 22. But Saul increased the more in strength, ^aand

with the Holy Ghost by a special
 commission from the Lord in order to
 show that he was an apostle, 'not of
 man, nor by man' (Gal. i. 1), but by
 Christ alone.¹

19. '*Certain days*,' &c. We learn
 from Galatians i. 17, that St. Paul
 went into Arabia very soon after his
 conversion. There is some difference
 of opinion as to the order of events,
 but the following appears, upon the
 whole, to be most probable. Imme-
 diately after conversion, St. Paul
 preached in the synagogues of Da-
 mascus that Jesus was the Son of God.
 This was a fact of which the revela-
 tions vouchsafed to him made him at
 once a competent witness. In a very
 short time he left Damascus, and re-
 mained in the adjoining district, which
 was then counted as part of Arabia,
 probably during a considerable por-
 tion of the three years that elapsed
 before his return to Jerusalem. Gal.
 i. 18. That time seems to have been
 passed chiefly in retirement, in the
 study of the Bible, and in receiving
 instructions from our Lord, to whom
 alone he attributes his knowledge of
 Christian doctrine.² Since, however,
 there were many Jews in that country,
 which was governed by Aretas, who

favoured their religion, it is not im-
 probable that he may have laid the
 foundation of the Church in those re-
 gions ; where we find many Christians
 at an early period.³ He then returned
 to Damascus.

20. '*Christ*.' Many manuscripts
 have '*Jesus*,' which is most probably
 the true reading. Yet as it is certain
 that the Jews entertained false notions
 of the Messiah, it may have been St.
 Paul's first object to prove that He
 was to be, not a mere temporal sove-
 reign, but the Son of God, in the true
 and peculiar sense of the expression.

21. '*Called on this name*.' Invoked
 the name of Jesus, acknowledging
 Him to be the Son of God, '*Very God
 of very God*.'

22. '*In strength*.' The word implies
 a progressive development of spiritual
 strength, in the true understanding
 and spiritual application of the Scrip-
 tures, with the letter of which he had
 been familiar from a child. Alford
 supposes that this may refer to the
 sojourn of St. Paul in Arabia. See
 the note above on v. 19.

'*Proving that*,' &c. The question
 between the Jews and Christians was,
 not whether the great types and pro-
 phecies of the Bible referred to Mes-

¹ Whitby.

² Burton ; Tholuck, V. Sch. ii. 296 ;
 and Olshausen.

³ Manger, Sylloge Diss. ed. Schul-
 tens, ii. 1138.

confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

23. ¶ And after that many days were fulfilled, ^athe Jews took counsel to kill him: ^a ch. 23. 12. & 25. 3. 2 Cor. 11. 26.

24. ^aBut their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. ^a 2 Cor. 11. 32.

25. Then the disciples took him by night, and ^alet him down by the wall in a basket. ^a So Josh. 2. 15. 1 Sam. 19. 12.

26. And ^bwhen Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. ^b ch. 22. 17. Gal. 1. 17, 18.

27. ^cBut Barnabas took him, and brought him to ^c ch. 4. 36. & 13. 2.

siah, but whether Jesus was that Messiah. It was not until a much later period that any of the Jewish Rabbis attempted to explain away the passages which speak of Christ.¹

23. '*And after many days,*' &c. After the conversion of Saul, who, as it seems, had but lately returned from Arabia. The interval was about three years, according to Lewin (*Fasti Sacri*), who places this event A.D. 39. St. Paul went to Rome in the third year current after his conversion.

24. '*And they watched.*' With the concurrence and aid of the Arabian governor under Aretas the king.² See 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33. It was usual for the Jews to claim the assistance of the civil magistrate in the Roman provinces (see John xviii. 3 and 12), and it was still more likely that they would do so in the territory of a friendly prince. See note, v. 2.

25. Compare 2 Corinth. xi. 32, 33.

26. '*Was come to Jerusalem.*' He went direct from Damascus. We learn from Gal. i. 18, that his object was especially to see Peter. It is probable that the baptism of Cornelius had taken place before his arrival, in which case he would be anxious to re-

ceive information, as well as to inform Peter of the revelations which he had himself received.³

'*They were all afraid of him,*' &c. This is one proof among many that the communications between cities of any distance were imperfect and scarce. The war between Aretas and the Romans had ceased at the death of Tiberius, A.D. 41.

27. '*Barnabas.*' Barnabas was a native of Cyprus, which is very near Tarsus, and he may have known Saul previously, and have had sufficient opportunities of ascertaining his character. Persons from the same or neighbouring countries generally attended the same synagogues at Jerusalem. He is even said by a late writer to have studied with Paul under Gamaliel.⁴

'*To the apostles.*' Only St. Peter and St. James, the brother of the Lord, were seen by St. Paul on this occasion.

'*Declared unto them.*' Barnabas had probably received accounts of these facts from his friends and connections in Syria.

28. '*And he was with them.*' Fifteen days only. See Galatians i. 18.

'*Coming in and going out.*' This

¹ Lyall, *Propædia Prophetica*; Schoetgen, *Hor. Heb.*; and Lightfoot.

² Wieseler, p. 142, note.

³ Burton, p. 117, 118.

⁴ Alexander ap. Burton, i. 56.

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.

^d ver. 20.
22.

• Gal. 1. 18. 28. And ^ehe 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 ^fGrecians: ^gbut they went about to slay him.

^f ch. 6. 1. &
11. 30.
^g ver. 28.
2 Cor. 11.
26.

30. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

^h See ch. 8.
1.

31. ^hThen had the churches rest throughout all

expression always denotes living publicly, and with somewhat of an official character. He was recognised, not merely as a disciple, but as a minister of the Gospel.

29. '*The Grecians.*' The Hellenistic Jews. There can be no doubt that he attended the synagogues in which he had formerly disputed with St. Stephen, and there defended the truth which he had then resisted. From this statement it may perhaps be inferred that one of the three great festivals was celebrated at this time, which would account for the presence of numbers of these Grecians.

It was at this time that St. Paul saw our Lord in a vision in the temple (Acts xxii. 17), when he received the command to leave Jerusalem quickly, and learned that he was called especially to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.

30. '*To Cæsarea.*' St. Paul went by land through Syria to Tarsus (Gal. i. 21). It is therefore presumed that this was Cæsarea Philippi, which lay on his route. This city was situate at the foot of Mount Libanon, near the source of the Jordan. It was enlarged by Philip the Tetrarch, who changed

its name from Paneah, supposed to be the same as Laish or Dan. As usual in Syria, it now bears its old name Paneah or Baneah, and is a small village, with some ruins. If, as others hold, Cæsarea on the sea-coast is meant, St. Paul may have sailed thence to Seleucia and proceeded to Tarsus by Antioch.

'*To Tarsus.*' Where he remained a considerable time, during which, there can be no doubt, he was actively employed in preaching the Gospel, and establishing a Church among his fellow-citizens. The churches in Cilicia were numerous at an early period.

31. '*Then had the churches rest.*' That persecution ceased which followed the death of Stephen. See chronological tables in the Introduction. The attention of the Jewish authorities was occupied by the mad attempt of Caligula to set up his image in the Temple, and neither they nor the Roman prefect would be likely to tolerate any disturbances which might give a pretext to the emperor for severity.

'*Galilee.*' It is only from this incidental notice that we learn there were churches in the native land of our blessed Saviour.

'*Were edified.*' This expression

¹ Wieseler, p. 148, 167, 184.

Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

32. ¶ And it came to pass, as Peter passed ¹through- ¹ ch. 8. 14. out all *quarters*, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

33. And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

34. And Peter said unto him, Æneas, ^k Jesus Christ ^k ch. 8. 6, maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And ^{16. & 4. 10.} he arose immediately.

35. And all that dwelt at Lydda and ¹Saron saw ¹ Chron. 5. 16. him, and ^{16.} turned to the Lord. ^{11. 21.}

36. ¶ Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple

evidently implies that the constitution of the churches was settled about this time. It refers to their external organisation, as the following words do to their spiritual condition and progressive increase.¹

¹ *Walking in the fear,* &c. That is, their actions were guided by the commandments of God, and their spirits sustained and aided by the Holy Ghost.²

32. *'And it came to pass.'* For the chronology see Introduction. It is most probable that the following events took place during the three years of St. Paul's absence.

'As Peter passed.' This was evidently a formal apostolic visitation of the Christian churches in the west of Palestine. The churches in Samaria and Galilee were probably visited at the same time by other apostles.³

'Lydda,' a large village near the sea-coast,⁴ and not far from Joppa.

33. *'Æneas.'* Ænéas, not Ænéas. He was probably a Grecian, or Hellenistic Hebrew.

34. *'Jesus Christ maketh,'* &c. From the form of this address, it appears that Æneas was a Christian, and needed not to be informed about the person of Him in whose name the miracle was wrought.

'And make thy bed.' The peculiarity of miraculous cures was uniformly restoration of strength as well as health. This was now to be shown by an act requiring exertion.

35. *'Saron'* or *'Sharon.'* A very fertile and beautiful plain extending from Joppa to Casarea.⁵

'And turned to the Lord.' This cure drew their attention to Him, who gave the power to His apostle, and many were converted.⁶

36. *'Joppa.'* An ancient and very important sea-port to the south of the plain of Saron, and at the extremity of a hilly range that extends from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean. At that time it belonged to the province of Syria. It is now called Jaffa, or Japha, and contains about 7000 inhabitants, of whom half are Christians.

¹ Burton, i. 97.

² Meyer.

³ Meyer.

⁴ Burton, p. 109.

⁵ Jerome on Isaiah xxxiii. 19.

⁶ Meyer.

named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called

¹ Or, *Doe*,
or, *Roe*.
² 1 Tim. 2. 10.
Tit. 2. 8. || Dorcas: this woman was full ^aof 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 ^cch. 1. 13. laid *her* in ^ean upper chamber.

38. And forasmuch 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.

¹ Or, *be*
grieved.

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 shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

¹ Matt. 9. 25.

² ch. 7. 60.
³ Mark 5. 41, 42.

John 11. 43.

40. But Peter ^pput them all forth, and ^qkneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body ^rsaid, 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,

'Tabitha' or 'Dorcas.' Both words mean a fawn or gazelle, from the brightness of the large black eye: a common name of females in Palestine.¹

'Full of good works.' A Hebrew idiom, indicating her perseverance in well-doing, not without a reference to the reward.

37. 'In an upper chamber.' There is no reason to suppose that bodies were generally laid out in the large room which occupied the upper story of the house, but the friends of Tabitha probably chose it because they expected the apostle.²

38. 'Was nigh to Joppa.' About six miles distant.

'They sent unto him.' It is not said that they expected him to restore her to life. We may suppose that they sent hoping for some blessing, but

without forming any definite expectations.

39. 'All the widows.' The objects of her bounty were persons left without protection, or means of subsistence. Widows were specially cared for by the Church. See 1 Tim. v. 3—10.

'Coats.' Tunics, or inner garments.

'Garments.' Outer robes or cloaks. Both are mentioned to show that Dorcas clothed them completely.

40. 'Peter put them all forth.' As it would seem, because he was about to pray. St. Peter closely followed our Lord's proceedings in raising the daughter of Jairus. Compare also 2 Kings iv. 33.

'Tabitha, arise.' So simply and powerfully did the apostle speak, for he knew that his prayer was answered,

¹ Lightfoot on Matt.; Bochart, Hieroz.

² Meyer.

and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

42. And it was known throughout all Joppa; *and many believed in the Lord. * John 11. 45. & 12. 11.

43. And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one *Simon a tanner. * ch. 10. 6.

and that the might of Christ was in him. Compare Mark v. 41, 42.

42. '*Believed in the Lord.*' To whom they referred the miracle. The miracles wrought by the apostles in His name proclaimed His power, even more loudly than His own works on earth. He was thus shown to be not only the possessor, but the inexhaus-

tible source of life; its Lord and Giver.

43. Joppa being a large sea-port, would offer many opportunities for spreading the Gospel. It seems evident that St. Peter at this time had no fixed residence, or diocese in the proper sense of the word, but that he exercised a general superintendence over the churches of the circumcision.¹

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1, 2. Some persons think that true zeal and false zeal differ little, whereas the one comes from Satan, the other from God. The one degrades the nature of man, by exciting his fiercest passions; the other raises him to a participation of the divine nature, by conforming him to the very image of Christ. (See chap. vi. 15 & vii. 59, 60.) It is not the strength, but the truth of our convictions; not the earnestness, but the rightfulness of our enthusiasm that will make our exertions acceptable to God. Warmth and light come from the sun both in the natural and the spiritual world. Ignorant fury is from that place where the fire is not quenched, and yet all is blackness. Let us suspect ourselves whenever we feel wrathful or indignant, and ever pray for the clear, warm light of faithful and hopeful charity.

3—8. In God's dealings with man there is always a harmony between the form and the Spirit. The visible is a bodying forth of the spiritual. In this transaction all is matter of fact, and yet all is symbolical, at once a record of a past transaction, and a representation of the daily works of grace. The sinner moves in darkness, which he mistakes for light, until Christ sends the true light from heaven. Utter prostration of heart follows the revelation of the glory of God, as Saul fell to the ground, and as even pious Job exclaimed, 'Now my eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.' Then the voice of Jesus speaks to the humbled conscience; it reproaches, but the reproach is full of love; it teaches the oneness of Christ with His Church, and the constraining power of grace. Then comes submissive enquiry, answered by clear directions, and followed by obedience, deep penitence, and the works of a Christian life. Such is the inner history of every converted sinner.

9. 'It is an usual method with God to lay the foundation of a great

¹ Burton.

sanctity in affliction ; affliction which makes lasting impressions of dependence upon God, kindles a fervent devotion, which melts the believer into a compassionate charity, and sinks him into a profound humility.'—BISHOP KEN.

10—16. Observe how the workings of divine grace in different hearts are adjusted so as to produce one harmonious result. The Lord shows to Ananias, Paul in prayer; and to Paul, Ananias coming in with power to heal him. Remark, too, the childlike confidence of the believer, and the condescending love of Jesus to His own people. Ananias and his Lord converse as friend with friend.

16. 'Persecuted Christians are happy in acting, and evidencing by those sufferings for God their love to Him. Love delights in difficulties and grows in them. The more a Christian suffers for Christ, the more he loves Him, and accounts Him the dearer; and the more he loves Him, still the more can he suffer for Him.'—ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

17—22. Christ puts honour on His own ordinances. He sends His minister to comfort, heal, baptize, and confer the gifts of the Holy Spirit on one whom He hath miraculously called and specially elected. Spiritually minded persons will not neglect or lightly esteem those institutions which Christ hath ordained and sanctified.

20—25. Persecution must be expected by those who confess and preach truths which they previously denied. In all cases, but especially in such a case as this, it must be borne patiently and meekly, but it should not be courted. Saul avoided a danger which would be fruitless, and fled both from Damascus and Jerusalem; in the latter instance by the special direction of the Lord, that he might not bring upon his countrymen the guilt of his blood. But no danger could silence him, or make him neglect that first great duty of a convert, to declare what God hath done for his soul and to preach boldly in the name of Jesus.

26—30. It is natural to shrink from those who have been guilty of great offences, even when they profess repentance; but it is great and Christ-like to receive them, as Barnabas, that good and spiritual man, received Paul; to listen candidly to the facts of their conversion; and to comfort, love, and aid them under the trials to which their changed life must subject them.

32—43. These miracles are recorded to show that the faith of the first Christians did not rest solely on internal convictions, but on clear, unquestionable evidence. Such works were the signs of an apostle, and appear to have been wrought with more than usual power on the eve of what must have been regarded almost as a new revelation by the Hebrews. They fixed attention peculiarly on Peter, when he was about to admit the Gentile Cornelius into the Church of Christ. From the miracle of Tabitha we observe the value which God attaches to charitable works, and the gratitude due to benefactors. 'The character of the Christian religion is most exactly portrayed in those few words which describe the Founder. "He went about doing good"—active in beneficence, always in motion for some salutary purpose. He expects that they who profess to be His followers should be such, more especially in this respect. Of this disciple it is testified by the Holy Spirit that she was full of good works and almsdeeds that she did. The garments wrought by her own hands for the poor proved that she had not been idle; that she had been *employed*; that she had been *well* employed. She obtained the peculiar favour of a resurrection to this life, to show, I suppose, that all like her will obtain one to a better.'—BISHOP HORNE.

CHAPTER X.

The two following chapters contain a full account of that special revelation by which St. Peter, and through him the whole apostolic body, were prepared for the great series of events by which the catholicity of the Church was ultimately established. The need of such a revelation is evident. It was not merely that those Christians who had been educated in the prejudices of the Pharisees were opposed to the reception of heathens into the Church, but men of truly spiritual minds, nay the apostles themselves, were as yet unable to reconcile the abrogation of the ceremonial law with the letter of the Old Testament. St. Peter, indeed, and the other apostles were fully aware that the Gentiles were to be brought within the one fold, under the one Shepherd. So much they had learned, and were assured of from the prophetic scriptures, and from our Lord's repeated declarations. But they believed that the Gentiles were to pass through the Law to the Gospel, and circumcision, which involved submission to all the Mosaic ordinances, still appeared to them to be an indispensable condition of adoption into the family of Abraham, and, therefore, into that of Christ. It appeared to them the only mode by which the impure nature of man could be prepared for admission into the Messianic kingdom, nor, although the typical meaning of the rite is plainly declared in many passages of Holy writ (as in Deuteronomy x. 16, xxx. 6; Jeremiah iv. 4), could they feel themselves authorised, on their own responsibility, to alter a positive enactment of the divine legislator, even had they inferred from such intimations that the time might arrive, or had now arrived, when its obligation would cease. Hence the necessity of a declaration of the will of God, which the Holy Ghost vouchsafed to St. Peter, at this critical epoch in the history of the Church. Had not the point been fully discussed and decided by the apostles previous to the commencement of St. Paul's missionary labours, the obstacles which he surmounted with so much difficulty would have been, humanly speaking, insuperable, and a permanent schism in the Church, or a suspension of her most important work, might have ensued.

A.D. 40.

I. THERE was a certain man in Cesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,

1. '*Cesarea*.' At that time the political capital of Palestine. It was the residence of the Roman Procurators (see note, viii. 40), until the government of Judea was transferred

to Herod Agrippa, A.D. 41. See note, xi. 1.

'*Cornelius*.' This officer was of Roman, or at least Italian origin. The Roman legions stationed in the

^a ver. 22, ch. 8, 2, & 22.
12.
^b ver. 25.

2. ^aA devout *man*, and one that ^bfeared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

^c ver. 30, ch. 11, 13.

3. ^cHe 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.

4. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and

East consisted principally of natives of the province, but always contained one or more cohorts of Italians, in both respects resembling our Indian armies. An ancient inscription mentions a cohort in Syria, consisting of Italian volunteers, which was stationed, of course, at the residence of the governor of Judea.¹

2. '*A devout man*,' &c. The expressions used in this verse imply of course that he had abjured idolatry and polytheism, and worshipped the only true God. But they have a more special meaning, and always designate proselytes, of whom there were two classes. First, those who were circumcised, baptized, and after offering certain sacrifices, were admitted into all the privileges of Jews, and were said by the Rabbis to be regenerated into the family of Abraham. They were called proselytes of righteousness. Secondly, those who were bound only to observe the seven precepts of Noah, which were substantially the same as those prescribed by the apostolic decree (Acts xv. 20), viz. to worship the true God, not to worship the stars or idols; to abstain from blood, from fornication, robbery, and injustice, and to do as they would be done by. They were called proselytes of the gate. The Jews, however, regarded them as strangers (see v. 25), that is, aliens, and un-

clean, or at the best as half-converted heathens.² Cornelius was not the first proselyte admitted into the Church, but he was certainly the first uncircumcised proselyte.

'*To the people*.' To the Jews. His almsgiving was the more remarkable, as being contrary to the practice of the Roman officers, who generally plundered the provincials to the utmost.³

3. '*Evidently*.' That is, not in a confused, dreamlike manner, but distinctly and unmistakably, and, as we learn from v. 30, in a human form.

'*The ninth hour*.' That is, at three in the afternoon, the regular hour for evening prayer, which was observed by Cornelius as a proselyte.

4. '*When he looked on him*.' The word in the original means 'regarded him attentively,' as though he had at first taken him to be a man. He then recognised an heavenly being, and was awestruck.

'*What is it, Lord?*' He addresses the angel as the ambassador and representative of God; but his words do not imply that he took him to be God. The word 'Lord' in this passage means simply 'Master.'

'*Thy prayers and thine alms*.' Both are represented as sacrifice or incense (see Phil. iv. 18; Rev. v. 8, and viii. 3), the odour of which ascends to heaven, and is a symbol

¹ See Wieseler, p. 145, and Ackermann's Numismatic Illustrations of the Acts, p. 178.

² Winer, ii. 285; and Buxtorf, Lex. Rab. p. 407.

³ Humphry.

said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

5. And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter :

6. He lodgeth with one ^dSimon a tanner, whose ^e house is by the sea side: ^ehe shall tell thee what thou ^eoughtest to do.

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.

9. ¶ On the morrow, as they went on their journey,

and pledge of acceptance. The same word rendered memorial is used by the LXX for sacrifice. Lev. ii. 2, and 16. The expression here used by the angel implies that God approved the alms and would fulfil the prayers which were offered in sincerity and faith. Since Cornelius must have heard of the Gospel, which had been preached by Philip in his own city, it may be conjectured that his prayers were especially offered for enlightenment on so momentous a subject as the fulfilment of all that was hoped for at the coming of Messiah. The Fathers dwell much upon the state of preparedness evinced by the conduct of Cornelius.

5. '*To Joppa.*' A distance of about thirty-six miles.

'*One Simon, whose surname is Peter.*' The word 'one' is not in the original, and should be omitted. It is probable, though not certain, that Cornelius had previously heard of the name.

6. '*A tanner.*' The trade was looked upon as degrading, and even ceremonially unclean; and tanners were avoided by many scrupulous Jews;² they were not permitted to carry on their trade in cities, and generally erected their buildings near running streams, or the sea. This circumstance was a trial of humility to a Roman centurion.

7. '*A devout soldier.*' Cornelius had doubtless used his influence with his soldiers, or at least selected proselytes to be his constant attendants.

8. '*And when he had declared.*' One of the Fathers remarks that Cornelius did not simply command his soldiers to bring Simon Peter to him, but relates what he had seen in order to persuade him.³ He might have spoken as a master, but had learned already to be a suppliant.

9. '*Upon the housetop.*' The Hebrews usually retired to the house-tops, which were flat, in order to pray

¹ Chrysostom, Didymus ap. Cramer, Cat.

² Schoetgen and Wetstein; Mischna, ii. 9, ap. Meyer.

³ Ammonius ap. Cramer.

¹ ch. 11. 5, and drew nigh unto the city, 'Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour :
^{4c.}

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

⁵ ch. 7. 58. 11. And ⁶ 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 :

^{Rev. 19. 11.}

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

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

and meditate under the open heaven and in solitude.

'*About the sixth hour.*'—i.e. at mid-day. It was a Hebrew custom, retained by the early Christians, to offer stated prayers at this, as well as at the third and ninth hour.

10. '*He became very hungry.*' It was usual to prolong the morning fast until after the second hour of prayer.

'*He fell into a trance.*' Literally, an ecstasy fell upon him, an expression which denotes a sudden and overpowering influence of the Spirit. The state so produced may be conceived as one of unconsciousness of impressions upon the senses, and of total abstraction from the things of this world, during which the Holy Spirit presents distinct visions of heavenly realities to the soul. The same expression is used by the LXX to describe the deep sleep into which Abraham was plunged. Gen. xv. 12. It was in such a state that some of the most important revelations appear to have been made, as to St. Paul. Acts xxii. 17 and 2 Cor. xii. 2.

11. '*Heaven opened.*' The apparent opening of the firmament was an apt symbol of a revelation from the other world.

'*A certain vessel.*' The word 'vessel' had a wider signification formerly than at present.

'*Knit at the four corners.*' We may, perhaps, understand that it was let down by cords attached apparently to the four corners of heaven.¹ The word corners, however, is more generally understood of the great sheet. There can be little doubt that this was symbolical of the extension of the Gospel to the four quarters of the world.

12. '*All manner.*' This colossal vessel, which appeared to extend over the whole earth, presented a vision of all varieties of the animal kingdom.²

13. '*A voice.*' Revelations were often made by a voice, without any other personal manifestation. The Hebrews have a peculiar expression for this voice, which they call Bath Kol, the daughter or echo of the Divine Voice.

¹ Meyer.

² Meyer.

14. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; ^afor I have ^bnever eaten anything that is common or unclean. ^a Lev. 11.
4. & 20. 26.
Dent. 14. 2,
7.

15. And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, ^cWhat God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common. ^c Esak. 4. 14.
^d Matt. 15.
11. ver. 28.
Rom. 14.
14, 17, 20.
1 Cor. 10.
26.
^e 1 Tim. 4. 4.
Tit. 1. 15.

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

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 enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

18. And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

14. '*Not so, Lord.*' The distinction between animals ceremonially clean or unclean had not been formally abrogated by our Lord, who had undoubtedly observed it Himself, as part of the law to which He made himself subject; and although St. Peter might have inferred that it would be done away with, from such passages as Matthew xv. 11, and 17, 18, he would require a very clear and positive command both to overcome his natural repugnance, and to break a ceremonial precept. This answer must be understood as an expression of these feelings, not of course as indicating any intention to disobey. He pleads and reasons, as it must be remembered, in a state of trance.

'*Common.*' That is, profane, directly forbidden by the law.

'*Or unclean.*' The clean animals in the vessel would become ceremonially unclean by contact.

15. '*What God hath cleansed.*' God declared them to be clean by commanding Peter to kill and eat, and thus reversing the enactment

which was given but for the season, during which the Hebrews were to remain separated from the Gentile world.

16. '*Thrice.*' To denote the importance of the transaction, and to impress the circumstance on St. Peter's mind.

17. '*Doubted in himself.*' St. Peter appears to have been convinced that such a revelation was not made merely to settle a matter of ceremonial observance, but he could not, as yet, perceive its bearing upon any actual occurrence. This proves that the vision was not suggested, as some commentators¹ suppose, by previous meditation upon the conversion of the Gentiles.

'*Behold, the men,*' &c. The minuteness with which every fact in this transaction is described should not be overlooked. St. Luke dwells upon it as the most important event since the great day of Pentecost. It was the opening of the gate of the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles.

¹ Neander and others.

¹ ch. 11. 12. 19. ¶ While Peter thought on the vision, ² the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

¹ ch. 15. 7. 20. ¹ Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

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?

² ver. 1, 2, 22. And they said, ³ Cornelius the centurion, a just
^{&c.}
² ch. 22. 12. man, and one that feareth God, and ⁴ 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.

² ver. 45.
 ch. 11. 12. 23. Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, ⁵ and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

25. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*.

19. '*The Spirit said.*' The meaning of this vision is, therefore, indicated by another revelation. The form of the expression should be noted, as bearing witness to the personality of the Holy Spirit.

20. '*I have sent them.*' This expression testifies to the identity of the Holy Spirit with God, in whose name the angel spake, v. 5.

22. '*Was warned.*' The same word is used by St. Matthew xi. xii. It implies that the angel's message was given in answer to the constant prayers of Cornelius.

23. '*Certain brethren.*' Six brethren, i.e. Christian Jews, accompanied St. Peter. They appear to have been selected especially to bear witness of what might occur on so remarkable a transaction.

24. '*And the morrow after.*' They

passed one night on the road. Four days passed between the vision of Cornelius and the arrival of St. Peter at Caesarea.

'*Cornelius waited for them.*' Chrysostom remarks the piety and affection of Cornelius in calling his friends to partake of the spiritual blessings which he expected, and his undoubted faith in the fulfilment of God's promise. It may be presumed that he had previously used his influence to convert his kinsmen from idolatry.

25. '*And fell down,*' &c. The salutations of Eastern people to their superiors are far more humble than agrees with European notions of decorum; and this act of Cornelius may have been merely a mark of the respect and deference which he felt for the person of St. Peter, as one

26. But Peter took him up, saying, 'Stand up; I myself also am a man.

¹ ch. 14. 14,
15.
Rev. 19. 10.
& 22. 9.

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

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 shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

¹ John 4. 9.
& 18. 28.
ch. 11. 3.
Gal. 2. 12,
14.
ch. 15. 8,
9.
Ephes. 2. 6.

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?

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.

¹ ch. 1. 10.
' Matt. 28.
3.
Mark 16. 8.
Luke 24. 4.

who was divinely commissioned to teach him the way of salvation. In that case it would not be blamable, and indeed would be warranted by the highest examples. See Genesis xix. 1, xxiii. 7, xxxiii. 3, xlii. 6.

26. '*But Peter.*' The danger of such a custom, and its tendency towards idolatry and saint worship, are pointed out and condemned by St. Peter. Compare the marginal references. 'See thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant,' are the words of the angel, who appeared to St. John in the Revelation.

27. '*He went in.*' Cornelius had gone out of the house to meet him, in token of respect and gratitude for his visit.

28. '*It is an unlawful thing.*' The Jews at that time universally adopted the Rabbinical interpretation of the law, and not only abstained from intermarriage and alliance with Gentiles, but regarded all intercourse

with them as unlawful.¹ This was universally known,² and Cornelius would not have expected St. Peter to enter his house, had he not received a divine intimation. The Jews were, in fact, intended to remain a separate people until the coming of Christ; and an excessive scrupulousness was not unnatural.

30. '*A man,*' &c. See note, chap. i. 10. The following account given by Cornelius serves to impress the circumstances of a most important event upon the memory, and shows also the simplicity and fervency of his faith. It may be remarked also, that the style of his language in the original differs somewhat from that of the general narrative, and is just what might have been expected from a person in his station. St. Peter appears to have spoken the Greek language during this interview. It is possible that he was acquainted with it in early life, or he may have

¹ Schoetgen, Hor. Heb. in loc.; and Selden, de J. N. xix. 108.

² Juvenal, Sat. xiv. 103.

- ^a ver. 4, &c. 31. And said, Cornelius, ^athy prayer is heard, ^aand
¹ Dan. 10. 12. thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of
² Heb. 6. 10. God.
³ Deut. 10. 17. 32. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon,
⁴ Chron. 19. 7. whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of
⁵ Job. 34. 19. *one* Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he
⁶ Rom. 2. 11. cometh, shall speak unto thee.
⁷ Gal. 2. 6. 33. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou
⁸ Ephes. 6. 9. hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore
⁹ Col. 3. 28. are we all here present before God, to hear all things
¹⁰ 1 Pet. 1. 17. that are commanded thee of God.
¹¹ ch. 15. 9. 34. ¶ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, ¹² of
¹³ Rom. 2. 13, 27, & 3. 22, 29, & 10. 12, 13. a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:
¹⁴ 1 Cor. 12. 18. 35. But ¹⁵ in every nation he that feareth him, and
¹⁶ Gal. 3. 28. worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.
¹⁷ Ephes. 2. 13, 18, & 3. 6. 36. The word which *God* sent unto the children of
¹⁸ 1 Cor. 15. Israel, ¹⁹ preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (²⁰ he is
²¹ Ephes. 1. 20. Lord of all:)
²² 1 Pet. 3. 22. Rev. 17. 14. & 19. 16.

acquired a knowledge of it during his ministry.¹

33. '*Before God.*' The expression means that they were assembled in the presence of God, under His immediate and especial influence.

34. '*Opened his mouth.*' This form is only used on solemn occasions. See note, chap. viii. 35.

'*God is no respecter of persons.*' That is, He will not show any partiality, and will neither accept nor exclude any man on account of his race or descent. The Jews expected that they would be heirs of the Messianic kingdom, because they were descended from Abraham.

35. '*Is accepted, or acceptable.*' St. Peter does not say that such persons as he describes are saved by their works, or without Christ; otherwise he would have contradicted his own solemn assertion, v. 43, and

Cornelius would not have needed remission of sins. He evidently means, that the inner disposition and the obedient course of life which the law was given to direct and inform, and not the ceremonial observances and external privileges, on which the Jews depended, are the objects of divine approbation and favour. They are in fact proofs that the seminal principle of faith has already taken root. Cornelius believed and acted to the extent of his knowledge, when the Father drew him and gave him to the Son, by whom he was saved.

36. '*The word.*' The construction of this and the following verse presents some difficulty. St. Peter, if we may venture so to speak, is so anxious to bring the great truths of the Gospel before Cornelius that he interrupts himself, and recommences after a parenthesis. We may, perhaps, under-

¹ See article 'Peter,' in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

37. That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and ^abegan from Galilee, ^aLuke 4. 14.
after the baptism which John preached;

38. How ^aGod 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; ^aLuke 4. 18. ch. 2. 22. & 4. 27. Heb. 1. 9.
^afor God was with him. ^aJohn 3. 2.

39. And ^awe are witnesses of all things which he ^ach. 2. 32.
did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem;
^awhom they slew and hanged on a tree: ^ach. 5. 30.

40. Him ^aGod raised up the third day, and shewed ^ach. 2. 24.
him openly; ^aJohn 14. 17, 22.

41. ^aNot to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen ^ach. 13. 31.

stand the construction to be,—‘The word which God sent ye know, namely, that which became a thing spoken of throughout all Judea.’¹ ‘The word’ in this verse means probably the doctrine of Jesus; in the next, where a different word is used in the original, it means the transaction itself. I must acknowledge, however, that the translation of another commentator appears to me preferable, were it borne out by St. Luke’s style, viz. the Word designates the person of the Son; so that we should understand The Word whom God sent, &c., He is Lord of all.²

37. ‘*That word, I say, ye know.*’ Ye know of that transaction. St. Peter therefore assumes that Cornelius and his friends must have heard of Christ, as must needs have been the case, if his cohort had been long stationed in Palestine. Philip the deacon had also lately made many converts at Cæsarea, though as yet he had preached the Gospel only to those of the circumcision.

38. ‘*How God anointed.*’ That is, how God made and declared Jesus to be the true Messiah (whom Cornelius as a proselyte looked for), by giving Him the unction of the Holy Spirit secretly at the incarnation and publicly at His baptism,³ and by enduing Him with sovereign power over nature. The use which He made of that power proved even more convincingly that God was with Him. Goodness is more essentially divine than power.

39. ‘*We are witnesses.*’ The apostles, whose testimony was confirmed by the Holy Ghost.

‘*Whom they slew and hanged on a tree.*’ St. Peter draws attention to the fact that the Jews were virtually His murderers, by using the term ‘hanging on a tree,’ which was the legal⁴ expression for crucifixion in the Old Testament.

41. ‘*Not to all the people.*’ We may conjecture, without irreverence, that a manifestation of the risen Lord would either have produced a compulsory submission, or have hardened the

¹ Humphry.

² Heinsius. The construction would then be by attraction; as Kypke also takes it.

³ Bede; and Jerome on Isaiah lxi. 1. See Humphry.

⁴ Winer, Meyer.

^a Luke 24. 30, 43. before of God, *even* to us, ^b who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

¹ Matt. 28. 19, 20. 42. And ¹ he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify ^m that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge ⁿ of quick and dead.

² Cor. 5. 10. 43. ^o To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name ^p whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

³ Tim. 4. 1. 44. ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, ^q the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

⁴ Mal. 4. 2. 45. ^r And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, ^s because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

⁵ Jer. 31. 34. ^t ver. 22. ^u ch. 11. ^v Gal. 3. 14.

people beyond all possibility of repentance; both effects being contrary to the course pursued by Him who claims the heart, and willeth not that any should perish in their sins.

'Who did eat and drink with him.'

This was an important point, proving that the 'witnesses' had not merely seen Him in vision. The early Fathers attached great weight to such texts in their controversies with the heretics who denied the humanity and the bodily resurrection of our Lord.¹

42. *'Of quick and dead.'* The same expression is used 2 Tim. iv. 1, and 1 Peter iv. 5. Some commentators² understand it figuratively of those who live by faith, and those who are dead in sins; but the literal interpretation, which explains it to mean those who shall be alive at our Lord's coming, together with all past generations, is undoubtedly the only true one, and is sufficiently confirmed by such passages as 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, and Rev. xx. 13.

43. *'All the prophets.'* St. Peter takes for granted that Cornelius and his friends knew the prophets. The whole import of prophecy tended to show that the Messiah would establish a kingdom, the condition of entrance into which would be confession of His name, and the first privilege remission of sins.

44. *'While Peter yet spake.'* The apostle had not yet explained the mode of admission into the kingdom, when the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost anticipated his decision, and removed any doubts he might still entertain as to the propriety of admitting Cornelius without circumcision. The descent of the Holy Ghost is distinctly stated by St. Peter to have been accompanied with the same signs as at Pentecost. See note, chap. xi. 15.

45. *'They of the circumcision which,'* &c. That is, the men who accompanied St. Peter, who were Jews.

'On the Gentiles.' Notwithstanding their ceremonial uncleanness.

¹ Ignatius ad Smyrn. 3.

² Olshausen, and some Fathers. Also

the Augsburg Catechism ap. Humphry.

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^x in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry^x certain days.

^x ch. 11. 17.
& 15. 8, 9.
Rom. 10. 12.
^x 1 Cor. 1.
17.
^x ch. 2. 38.
& 8. 16.

46. '*Speak with tongues.*' The expression here is not the same as in Acts ii. 4. &c., for the word 'others' is omitted; and it might mean to speak under manifest inspiration, uttering words suggested or controlled by the Spirit. But it is more reasonable to suppose that Cornelius and his friends spoke the language of the Hebrews as the Spirit gave them utterance. So the Jews who were present could judge of the reality of the miracle.

47. '*Water.*' The water, the visible sign, was still required, though the inward grace had been bestowed. Both parts of the sacrament are generally re-

quisite for admission into the kingdom of Messiah, according to His ordinance.

'*As well as we.*' In the same manner, and with the same effects as the disciples at Pentecost.

48. '*And He commanded,*' &c. The apostles usually direct baptism to be administered by deacons or other ministers.

'*In the name of the Lord.*' Cornelius had already professed faith in God, the confession that Jesus was the Messiah, was the only condition of baptism still necessary. The words 'in the name' may refer either to the form of administering baptism, or to the profession of faith made by the convert.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1, 2. It is a striking, and should be regarded as a humiliating, fact that the piety and charity of a Gentile soldier surpassed the practice of the great majority of professing Christians. Of how many can it be affirmed that they keep their households in the fear of God, are abundant in almsgiving, and men of prayer? 'True religion consisteth in the love of God, and of man for God's sake. The former shows itself in the exercise of piety, the latter in that of charity. One leads us to God as the only person who can supply our wants. The other induceth us to supply those of our neighbours. Prayers are powerful and alms are powerful, and when they join their forces Omnipotence itself is pleased to be overcome by them. Alms give wings to prayer, causing it to ascend quickly towards heaven, and prayer giveth strength to alms, enabling them to follow after, till they enter the everlasting doors together, and present themselves before the Most High. They rise like vapours from the earth, and return like them with a blessing. But in order that they may produce this

effect a man must not be niggardly in his alms, he must not be inconstant in his prayers.'—BISHOP HORNE.

3, 4. Cornelius is about to be enrolled among the 'heirs of salvation,' and therefore he is visited by a 'ministering angel.' Heb. i. 14. The presence of that heavenly being does not elate him. There is no pharisaism in his religion, and that vision awakens him to a consciousness, not of his merits, but of his deficiencies. Without humility prayers are but hypocrisy, and almsgiving but an empty pretence. God accepts both only when they are the incense of a heart kindled by His Spirit.

5, 6. No external thing is great or little in the sight of God, or of the angels who surround His throne. The mention of a poor tanner's house does not misbecome the dignity of a heavenly visitant. Holiness was written on the walls and upon the vessels of that house, and the angel of the Lord, the great angel of the Covenant himself, encamped around it, and dwelt within it.

7, 8. Cornelius might have feared that what he 'ought to do' would be something painful or dangerous. Had it been an order to become a proselyte of righteousness—no improbable conjecture in his circumstances—that might have involved the loss of rank and fortune, and have subjected him to persecution. But he did not hesitate, he had not a thought of fear, all misgivings were swallowed up in hope, and his only anxiety was to know the perfect will of God that he might do it.

It should be remarked that the angel does not preach the Gospel to Cornelius, but directs him to the 'earthen vessel,' to which the treasure of salvation had been intrusted by Christ.

9. Observe the regularity of the apostle's prayer. He did not fear the charge of formality because he fasted, went to the house-top, and kneeled thrice daily in prayer.

10—16. In meditating on this vision we should remember not only that our Gentile forefathers were typified by those wild beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the air, but that our own nature is truly unclean by reason of fierce passions, grovelling habits, and unstable imaginations, unless God hath cleansed us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

17—24. Each incident in this transaction is minutely recorded; and if we remember that the object of this manifold work of grace was our own admission into the kingdom of Messiah, we shall not listen coldly to the movements by which the once alienated hearts of the first Christian apostle and the first Gentile convert were brought into contact and loving unity in Christ.

25—33. In the house of the centurion are two groups, who represent the subjects and ministers of the kingdom. On the one side, Cornelius and his friends, drawn nearer to each other by their common attraction to the region of light, on the verge of which they are now standing; on the other, the apostle, with his friends full of light, save on one point, from which the shadow is rapidly departing. But they all know and feel that they are in the presence of God, these to speak, those to hear, and both to do, all things which He might command them. Without the willing ear the preached truth is unavailing; but when these meet, the kingdom of God is revealed with demonstration of the Spirit and with power.

34—43. This discourse of St. Peter is peculiar, in that it was the first Christian sermon addressed to a Gentile, and that it was addressed to one prepared

by God's own angel to receive the whole truth. It contains a series of statements equally remarkable for conciseness and completeness. The impartiality of God's love—the nature and object of the Gospel—the power of its Author, and the mode of its publication—the leading points of our Lord's history, with evidence from miracle and prophecy—the announcement of the second advent, and declaration of forgiveness of sins through faith in His name. These points are brought to bear with power on the heart of Cornelius and his friends, who were thus prepared for the sudden illapse of the Spirit which completed and sealed their conversion. This discourse should be studied as a model by Christian missionaries, and applied as a touchstone to our own hearts.

44—48. It is equally unscriptural to rest on the outward form of the sacraments, and to dispense with it, for it is the ordinance of Christ, the seal and pledge of that work which is effectually wrought by the Spirit. Cornelius and his friends regarded the administration of the rite as a high privilege; for the Holy Ghost who poured out His gifts upon them taught them the use, not the disuse, of every means of grace. These converts also prayed the apostle to tarry with them certain days that they might be instructed in all those truths, which, although they were implicitly contained in his discourse, required patient and persevering study before they could be understood in their various bearings upon the inner life and outward habits of believers.

CHAPTER XI.

The first part of this chapter describes the effect produced at Jerusalem by the report that Cornelius had been admitted to baptism, and by St. Peter's account of the transaction. The importance of this event could not be more clearly shown than by the fact that the apostles themselves thought it necessary to institute a formal enquiry into the proceedings of St. Peter. The latter part of the chapter, from v. 19, represents another and more general application of the principle, that was admitted in the case of Cornelius; and gives an account of the establishment of the Church of Antioch, in which the denominations of Jew and Gentile were first abolished for the new name, which God had promised should be given. Isaiah lxii. 2.

A.D. 40—43.

1. AND the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem,
* ch. 10. 45. Gal. 2. 12. ^athey that were of the circumcision contended with him,

* ch. 10. 28. Gal. 2. 12. 3. Saying, ^bThou wentest in to men uncircumcised,
^cand didst eat with them.

1. '*That were in Judæa.*' Not only at Jerusalem, but in all parts of the country,¹ the tidings of this conversion produced a general excitement.

2. '*They that were of the circumcision.*' Those members of the Church who had been circumcised either as native Hebrews or proselytes. I am inclined to think that the latter are rather designated by this expression. As late converts they would be zealous, and probably averse to the reception of others on different and easier terms than themselves. One of the Fathers² asserts that Cerinthus, who was afterwards a notorious heresiarch in Asia

Minor, was active in raising this contention against St. Peter. This verse is however a sufficient proof that the apostle was not considered by the Church to be infallible.

3. '*Thou wentest in.*' It will be remarked that they do not accuse St. Peter of baptizing Cornelius and his friends,³ although that was the real cause of their indignation, but of an incidental breach of the Jewish law or custom. The dread of contracting ceremonial defilement was so deeply rooted that even St. Peter himself afterwards incurred the merited reproof of St. Paul for yielding to it.

¹ Meyer.

² Epiph. ap. Cramer Cat. in Act.

³ Chrysostom.

4. But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* ^dby order unto them, saying, ^dLuke 1. 3.

5. 'I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a ^{ch. 10. 9,} trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it ^{&c.} 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 thou not 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 ^{John 16. 13.} 'the spirit bade me go with them, nothing ^{ch. 10. 19. & 15. 7.}

Not that it is to be regarded merely as a prejudice: it may have been but an excess of precaution, and not unjustifiable, until God declared His will, and removed the prohibition against close alliance with the Gentiles.

4. '*But Peter rehearsed,*' &c. This was quite in accordance with the mode of argument usually adopted by the Hebrews. See Introduction to chap. vii. In this case a simple narrative was the best and most effective argument. St. Peter entirely exonerates himself of the responsibility, referring the whole matter to the expressed will of God.¹

6. '*When I had fastened,*' &c. St. Peter describes his own impressions, whereas in the preceding chap-

ter St. Luke merely stated the facts. This proves how accurately each minute fact has been recorded.

8. '*But I said,*' St. Peter repeats his own words to prove that he had felt equal repugnance with his accusers to any act of ceremonial defilement.²

10. '*All were drawn up.*' In the preceding chapter St. Luke says the 'vessel.' St. Peter dwells on the animals in the vessel, with reference to the charge made by his opponents.

11. '*Immediately.*' St. Peter uses this word, and 'already,' to show the direct and obvious connection between the vision and the transaction.

12. '*Moreover.*' The brethren therefore who accompanied St. Peter

¹ Chrysostom.

² Chrysostom.

^a ch. 10. 23. doubting. Moreover ^athese six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house :

^b ch. 10. 30. 13. ^bAnd 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 words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

^c ch. 2. 4. 15. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, ^cas on us at the beginning.

16. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, ^dJohn indeed baptized with water ; but ^eye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

^f Matt. 3. 11. John 1. 26, 23. ^g ch. 1. 5. & 19. 4. 17. ^hForasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁱwhat was I, that I could withstand ^jGod ?

18. When they heard these things, they held their

to Joppa went with him, doubtless as witnesses, to Jerusalem. St. Peter attaches so much importance to the whole transaction that he will not let it rest on his single testimony. This is at once a proof of his humility¹ and discretion.

14. '*All thy house.*' This verse explains more fully the purport of the angel's words, of which the substance only appears to be given in the preceding chapter. The house, that is, the family of Cornelius, were baptized with him.

15. '*As I began to speak.*' From this it is evident that the discourse of St. Peter was not concluded² when the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and his friends. An important circumstance, showing how completely the whole matter was directed and overruled by God.

'*At the beginning.*' That is, the

beginning of the new spiritual dispensation at Pentecost.

16. '*Then remembered I.*' St. Peter was reminded of our Lord's words ; because he saw the promise, which He had made to His disciples, realised in these Gentiles, who were filled with the Holy Ghost.

17. '*Unto us, who believed.*' That is, unto us, upon our believing ; when we embraced the faith.³

'*What was I, that I should,*' &c. Chrysostom remarks the great force and solemnity of this appeal. The apostle does not defend himself, but challenges his opponents to show how he could have acted otherwise, without incurring the greatest of all guilt, that of withstanding the known will of God.

18. '*And glorified God.*' They ceased from further opposition, and acknowledged this to be a new and

¹ Chrysostom.

² Meyer.

³ Scholefield.

peace, and glorified God, saying, °Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. ° Rom. 10. 12, 13. & 15. 9, 16.

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. ° ch. 8. 1.

20. And some of them were men of Cyprus and

surprising manifestation of His glorious attribute of mercy. Not but that the heaven remained in many hearts, and afterwards gave rise to long and painful struggles.

'Repentance unto life.' A change of character or nature, by which they might become partakers of spiritual life. Repentance is always represented as a gift from God the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit.

19. *'Now they which were scattered.'* &c. St. Luke refers to the previous narrative, chap. viii. 4, for the purpose of showing the general tendency of the converts to abstain from communication with the Gentiles. With these verses a new and distinct series of events is introduced, and the missionary work of the Church is fairly commenced.

'Phenice,' or Phenice, consisted then of a narrow strip of land, extending about 120 miles along the coast of the Mediterranean to the north of Judea. It is one of the most fertile and beautiful countries in the East, watered by numerous streams from Mount Libanus, and full of opulent towns and cities, of which Tyre and Sidon are famous as the chief commercial marts of the ancient world. The country derived its name from the purple dye¹ for which it was celebrated. The inhabitants were of the race of Canaan (Gen. x. 15), and

spoke a language which differed little from Hebrew. Phenice was subject to the Romans, and formed part of the province of Syria.

'Cyprus.' See note, iv. 36.

'Antioch.' At that time one of the most important and populous cities in the Roman empire, the capital of Syria, and residence of the proconsul, to whom the procurator of Judea was subordinate. It was situate in a beautiful plain on the river Orontes, was of vast extent, 4½ miles in length and 10 in circuit, adorned with splendid buildings, and according to all ancient authorities, the abode of an active and intelligent but very corrupt population. The numerous Jews in this city lived in a separate quarter, and were governed by their own ethnarch, or national chief magistrate. The city is now called Antakia, and contains about 10,000 inhabitants. The Christian Church in this place was long regarded as the central station for missions to the Gentiles, and as the metropolis of Eastern Christendom.²

'Preaching the word.' The expression here used in the original does not mean official preaching, but speaking and discoursing.

20. *'And some of them.'* That is, of those who fled from Jerusalem on the death of Stephen. These men, who were in part countrymen

¹ A contested point, but see Gesen. Mon. Phœn. p. 238.

² Gresswell computes the entire

population about that time at 300,000, Dissert. on Harm. vol. iv. p. 14.

³ See Chrysostom, Hom. xvii. de Stat.

Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch,

¹ ch. 6. 1. & spake unto ² the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

³ 29.

⁴ Luke 1. 66.

ch. 2. 47.

⁵ ch. 9. 35.

21. And ⁶ the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and ⁷ turned unto the Lord.

22. ¶ Then tidings of these things came unto the

of Barnabas, are distinguished¹ from those who preached to the Jews only.

'*And Cyrene.*' A large city in Lybia, in a district which was then rich and fertile, but is now nearly buried in the sands of the desert. The ruins are described by a recent traveller.² Cyrene belonged to Egypt under the Ptolemies, and we read that one quarter of its inhabitants were Jews, who enjoyed the full privileges of citizenship.³ The Christian religion was established here at an early period, and it is said that Lucius of Cyrene (see xiii. 1) was the first bishop,⁴ and that St. Mark, who was bishop of Alexandria, was the chief agent in Christianising the district.

The believers from these countries had been brought into early contact with Greek civilisation, and spoke no other language. Their hearts, now enlarged and freed from prejudice by the Gospel, would naturally yearn for the deliverance of that people from debasing superstitions.

'*Grecians,*' or '*Greeks.*' These two words are quite distinct in the original. By Grecians are meant Jews of the dispersion, who spoke the Greek language (see note, chap. vi.

1). Greeks were persons of Greek or Gentile origin, heathens who, whether they were attached to the Jewish religion or not, were not circumcised. The manuscripts vary in the reading of this word; but nearly all critics of eminence⁵ are agreed that we are to understand this latter class. It is not stated by St. Luke whether these men who preached to the Gentiles had heard of the baptism of Cornelius but it seems rather to be intimated that it was a separate and independent movement of the believers under the same spiritual guidance.

21. '*And the hand of the Lord.*' The Lord Jesus put forth His power in a peculiar manner to manifest His approbation of the bold step they were taking, and to make their preaching effectual.

22. '*And they sent forth.*' This is a very important fact, showing that the apostles did not look upon the new churches, which arose where the Gospel was preached either by themselves, or by the other disciples, as independent communities, but as members of an organised body. They selected for this mission of enquiry one who was equally remarkable for love and zeal, and who was naturally fixed on as the most proper apostle

¹ Meyer.

² Pacho Voyage dans la Marmarique.

³ Joseph A. xiv. 7, 2, xvi. 6, 1; Apion. 2, 4, Vit. 76; and Dio Cass. lvi. 32.

⁴ Nicephor. 2, 42.

⁵ E.g. Grotius, Griesbach, Bengel,

Kuinoel, Olshausen, Burton, Wieseler, p. 147, Alford and Meyer. The reading which these critics prefer is supported by some of the best MSS., by Chrysostom, Theophyl. and most ancient versions. Dr. Kaye, however, maintains the other reading.

ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth 'Barnabas, that he should go as far as ' ch. 9. 27. 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. " ch. 13. 43. & 14. 22.

24. For he was a good man, and "full of the Holy " ch. 6. 5. Ghost and of faith: "and much people was added unto " ver. 21. ch. 5. 14. the Lord.

25. Then departed Barnabas to "Tarsus, for to seek " ch. 9. 30. Saul:

26. And when he had found him, he brought him

for converts, who had received their first instruction and baptism from his countrymen, and perhaps his friends and acquaintance.¹

23. '*When he had seen,*' &c. The change of life in persons converted from such gross idolatry as was practised at Antioch, one of the most corrupt cities of the East,² was a visible sign of grace that removed any doubts, which he might have entertained, as to the sincerity of their professions. His exhortation includes a recognition of their admission into the Church, and an admonition to perseverance, which might be specially needed by a people who belonged to a race remarkable for levity and inconstancy.

'*With purpose,*' &c. This may be more literally translated, that they would remain steadfast to the purpose of their heart with the Lord,³ i.e. adhere to the resolution by which they were joined to the Lord.

24. '*A good man.*' Good appears to be used in the sense of candid and benevolent, qualities for which Barnabas was peculiarly distinguished.

'*Full of the Holy Ghost and of*

faith.' These qualifications seem to be specially mentioned, in order to show that Barnabas was able to appreciate and to continue the spiritual work which had been commenced.

25. '*To seek Saul.*' See note to chap. ix. 30. Saul was peculiarly adapted to carry on the work of conversion at Antioch, not only by his fervent zeal, and spiritual gifts, but by his singular power of influencing men's hearts, and convincing their understanding. His residence at Tarsus, a city which was on a par with Antioch in mental cultivation, had, doubtless, served also as a preparation for this work. Chrysostom dwells much upon the humility and disinterestedness of Barnabas in seeking this lion-hearted champion and eloquent preacher of the faith.

26. '*A whole year.*' A.D. 43. It will be observed that St. Paul generally resided a considerable time in cities of great importance; as, for instance, one year and a half at Corinth, and three years at Ephesus. His ministrations, however, were certainly not confined to those cities during his residence, but extended to the

¹ Hind's Hist. R. & P. p. 169.

² Herodian, 2, 6, 15.

³ Meyer.

¶ Or, in the church.

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.

^a ch. 2. 17.

& 13. 1. &

15. 32. &

21. 9.

1 Cor. 12.

28.

Ephes. 4.

11.

^b ch. 21. 10.

27. ¶ And in these days came ^aprophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

28. And there stood up one of them named ^bAgabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.

surrounding districts, in which he formed and organised separate but not independent churches.

This may be regarded as the proper commencement of St. Paul's public career as an apostle. 'Henceforth we see him, during a period of more than twenty years, in almost every variety of position and circumstances, actively engaged in the propagation of Christianity. Ready for every exertion and every sacrifice, wearied by no opposition, terrified by no danger, he lives and works, struggles and suffers without cessation for one great and sublime object.'¹

'*Christians.*' This name was probably given to the disciples by the Romans who lived at Antioch. Had it originated with themselves we should expect to meet with it in the apostolic epistles and discourses; but in the two other passages (Acts xxvi. 28; 1 Peter iv. 16) where it occurs, it is evidently alluded to as a term used reproachfully by the heathen. The Jews certainly did not apply it to the disciples, since it would have implied that those whom they called Nazarenes were followers of the Messiah. The name appears to have been first given at Antioch because

that was the first city in which the disciples formed a community, externally and evidently distinct from the Jews. It describes the profession of believers, as distinguished both from Jews and idolaters,² so justly and comprehensively that they gladly adopted it in their liturgies ('we thank Thee that we have been called by the name of Thy Christ'), and gloried in it when accused before the magistrates in times of persecution.

27. '*And in these days.*' Probably in the early part of the same year.⁴ These prophets were evidently persons whose gift and office it was to make known the mind of the Spirit, with reference either to present or future events touching the well-being of the Church.

28. '*Agabus.*' The name is derived from a Hebrew word, and signifies 'loving.'⁵

'*Signified by the spirit.*' Under the immediate influence of the Spirit. This expression indicates that the prophetic gift was not immanent, or perpetual, but vouchsafed occasionally.

'*In the days of Claudius Cæsar.*' Greece and Italy suffered four times from famine in the early part of this

¹ Hensen Der Apostel Paul, p. 44.

² Severus of Antioch ap. Cramer.

³ St. Clement's Liturgy ap. Humphry.

⁴ Wieseler, p. 149.

⁵ Simon Gnom. p. 15.

29. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send ^arelief unto the brethren ^b Rom. 15. which dwelt in Judæa: ^{26.}

30. ^dWhich also they did, and sent it to the elders ^c 1 Cor. 16. 1. by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. ² Cor. 9. 1. ^e ch. 12. 25.

reign; and a severe famine prevailed in Judea in the fourth year of this emperor, which coincides with A.D. 45. This date is of great importance in settling the chronology.¹

29. '*To send relief.*' This is the first instance of one Church sending contributions for the relief of another, an example which has been repeatedly imitated, and by no Church more frequently or liberally than our own. The Church of Jerusalem had many poor dependents, which may be partly accounted for by the absence of commerce and manufactures, the barrenness of the soil in the vicinity, and by the superabundant population attracted by the numerous and splendid festivals. It is probable that the famine had begun when St. Paul and St. Barnabas arrived. Relief was also sent to the Jews by Helena, Queen of the Adiabeni, a people on the Tigris, who, with her son Izates, was a proselyte

to Judaism.² There is a tradition that both became Christians, and it would be interesting to suppose that their charitable work brought them into contact with Saul and Barnabas, and thus led to their conversion.³

30. '*To the elders,*' or Presbyters. From this we learn that the temporalities of the Church were then under the control of the presbyters, here mentioned for the first time, to whom the deacons were entirely subordinate. The apostles decided all matters touching the general discipline of the Church, as well as questions of doctrine, but the Church of Jerusalem appears at this time to have been completely organised under its own bishop, St. James. 'It is probable that presbyters were appointed very early, and were the necessary consequence of churches being established in distant places, which the apostles could only visit occasionally.'⁴

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—3. We must be careful not to judge the brethren of the circumcision harshly or unjustly. Close and full enquiry into a matter which touches the law, and therefore concerns the honour of God, is in itself not only justifiable but necessary. The only question is, in what spirit the enquiry is conducted. If in a contentious spirit the result will be strengthened prejudice and increased bitterness; if in a candid spirit, it will lead to peaceful conviction and clearer knowledge of God's will. The apostles and brethren acquiesced in St. Peter's statement and glorified God.

4—17. St. Peter's answer is a model for those who may have to defend the

¹ Neander, p. 138; Wieseler, p. 149.
See Introduction.

² Joseph. Ant. xx. 2.

³ Burton's Lect. H. E. i. 142.

⁴ Burton's Lect. i. 97.

cause of truth when attacked in their own persons. He did not meet the charge by an acrimonious reproof of the prejudices, which he had long shared himself, although he must now have felt them to be most irrational. He did not employ those pointed arguments which often irritate without convincing, that subtle rhetoric which silences without persuading; but he makes a calm and simple statement of all the facts, which prove that he acted in accordance with the revealed will of God.

18. 'We ought to remark the expression here employed—"granted repentance." It teaches us to think and speak of repentance in a way in which it is not always thought or spoken of. It teaches us to judge of it as a gift or favour, that a man is allowed to return to God, to leave a course of sinful or worldly vanities, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven.'—'No man can repent unless the Spirit influence him. And that mercy, to be obtained, must be rightly sought; and to be rightly sought it must be sought of God—sought as an incalculable favour, sought as an unmerited favour.'—ARCHBISHOP SUMNER.

19—21. No nation ever stood in so responsible a position as England with regard to men of all diversities of origin and habits. All our national and domestic advantages are but talents intrusted to us that they may be occupied in the service of the Lord, and His hand will be with us so long and so far as we desire and attempt to do His will, and to promote His glory.

22—24. The Church, as a living body, preserves a perfect sympathy of affections and interests in all her true members. How deeply the tidings from Antioch thrilled in every Christian heart at Jerusalem! What tenderness and discretion were shown in their choice of an ambassador; one who would recoil from no sacrifice, who would give way to no untimely scruples or suspicions, and who was adapted by natural gifts and mental cultivation to obtain influence over the new converts; one in whom the Holy Spirit had developed the most touching and winning of Christian graces, candour, zeal, and faith, working effectually by love. Such was the labourer whom the apostles sent to gather in the first-fruits of the Gentile world.

25, 26. The increase which rewarded the labours of Barnabas gave occasion for the display of the brightest and rarest of Christian graces. Regarding not his own glory, but the service of the Lord, he sought the aid of one whose high endowments none could better appreciate than himself, and is contented to divide the spoil, so that the triumph of his Lord may be more rapidly completed. Where such a spirit dwells in the ministers and preachers of the Gospel, the Church puts forth all her power and gathers much people unto the Lord.

27—30. With the living faith came also its genuine first-fruits. God gives at once an occasion of exercising the grace which the Spirit infuses into the converted heart. 'The Spirit of God mightily working in them, unto obedience to God's will and commandments, they declare by their outward deeds and life, in the showing of mercy and charity (which cannot come but of the Spirit of God, and His especial grace), that they are the undoubted children of God, appointed to everlasting life.'—HOMILY ON ALMSGIVING. It was the ready faith of the converts of Antioch, their liberality in succouring the afflicted, and their perseverance in soundness of doctrine, when at a later period they were strongly tempted, that gave dignity and primacy to their Church, and made it 'a metropolitan, not on earth but in heaven.'—CHRYSOSTOM.

CHAPTER XII.

Each persecution of the Christians recorded in the Acts has some peculiar characteristic. That of which we read an account in this chapter is memorable as being the first in which the wild passions of the people were encouraged and sated by a powerful sovereign, and as occurring just at the time when the Christians were sending large contributions to relieve the distress of the poor at Jerusalem. It took place, most probably, during the visit of Paul and Barnabas.

The chapter is remarkable for its simple yet graphic narrative, and for the varied interest of the events. The summary given with our authorised version is singularly beautiful. 'King Herod persecuteth the Christians, killeth James, and imprisoneth Peter; whom an angel delivereth upon the prayers of the Church. In his pride taking to himself the honours due to God, he is stricken by an angel, and dieth miserably. After his death the Word of God prospereth.'

A.D. 44.

1. Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

1. '*Now about that time.*' That is, at the same time that the people of Antioch sent their contributions.

'*Herod the king.*' Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, and the son of Aristobulus and Berenice, was a very powerful prince. He was educated at Rome, in the palace of the Cæsars, with the Emperor Caligula, on whose accession (A.D. 37) he obtained a grant of the territories governed by Philip (Batanea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis) and of the tetrarchy of Lyسانias, with the title of king. To these dominions Peræa was added, by the same emperor, on the banishment of Herod Antipas (A.D. 39, or 40). On the accession of Claudius (A.D. 41), to whom he rendered important services, he obtained Samaria and Judea, with

Cæsarea, as the capital and royal residence. So that at this time he was king of all Palestine, with a large revenue and undisputed power. Josephus gives him a high character, but was probably influenced by his own zeal for the law, for which Herod professed a bigoted attachment. There can, however, be little doubt that this was a mere device to obtain popularity, since he complied with Roman customs to an extent quite irreconcilable with the principles which he professed, even introducing gladiatorial games. He was an able, showy, and popular sovereign, but cruel, licentious, and unprincipled.¹

'*Stretched forth his hands.*' This expression always denotes an act of aggression.²

¹ Joseph. Ant. xvii. 6, xix. 6; B. J. ii. 9, 11. Philo. leg. ad Caium. p. 1043. Neander, p. 140. Burton Lect.

H. E. i. 138, 139. Wieseler, p. 129 Baumgarten.

² Meyer.

^a Matt. 4.
21. & 20, 23.

2. And he killed James ^athe brother of John with the sword.

^b Exod. 12.
14, 15. & 23.
16.

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

^c John 21.
18.

4. And ^cwhen he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

'To vex certain of the church.' To persecute, doubtless by scourging and imprisoning, many of the disciples. At that season all the apostles, and vast numbers of other disciples, would be assembled at Jerusalem for the Passover.

2. *'He killed James.'* James the elder, son of Zebedee and Mary Salome. Beheading by the sword was a mode of execution among the Jews as well as the Romans, and especially inflicted upon those who were accused of 'seducing the people to strange worship.'¹ The Romish tradition that St. James preached in Spain, and was buried at Compostella, is quite unfounded, and contrary to the scriptural account, from which it is clear that the apostles had not extended their journeys beyond Palestine at the time of his death. One of the early Fathers relates that the accuser of St. James was so powerfully affected by his defence and conduct, that on the way to the execution he declared himself to be a convert, implored and obtained his forgiveness, and suffered death at the same time.² The martyrdom of St. James fulfilled his Master's prediction, Matthew xx. 23.

3. *'It pleased the Jews.'* There appears to have been no longer any difference of opinion between the opposite

sects and parties at Jerusalem. It is probable that the admission of the Gentiles, without circumcision, was the proximate cause of this general hatred of Christianity.

'The days of unleavened bread.' The seven days of the Passover, during which no leaven was used. See Exod. xii. 15, 16. Herod generally resided at Cæsarea, but came to Jerusalem at the great festivals, and availed himself of every opportunity of winning favour with the people.³

4. *'Quaternions.'* One quaternion, that is, a guard of four soldiers for each watch of the night, according to the Roman custom. Two soldiers kept the gate, and two slept within the prison. St. Peter lay between the latter, to each of whom he was bound by a chain attached to either arm.⁴ We learn from Josephus that Herod Agrippa had himself been bound to a soldier when he was imprisoned by Tiberius.

'After Easter.' It was not lawful for the Jews to put anyone to death during the festival, and Herod wished to impress the people with a conviction that he was zealous for the law. The word translated 'Easter' means the Passover. St. Luke, of course, alludes to the Jewish festival; but 'no man can doubt that hath any in-

¹ Lightfoot.

² Clem. Alex. ap. Euseb. H. E. ii. 9.

³ Joseph. Ant. xix. 8, 3.

⁴ Veget. Res. Mill. iii. 8.

5. Peter therefore was kept in prison : but || prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

¹ Or, *instant and earnest prayer was made.*
² Cor. 1. 11.
 Eph. 6. 18.
¹ Thess. 5. 17.

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, ^athe angel of the Lord came upon ^ach. 5. 19. 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 ^ewist : Ps. 126. 1.

sight into the affairs of the ancient Church, that in and from the time of the apostles there has always been observed an anniversary festival in memory of Christ's resurrection, which, from the old Saxon word Oster, signifying to rise, we call Easter-day, or the day of the resurrection.¹

5. '*Without ceasing.*' Or, rather, earnest² and importunate. By the Church we are to understand the various congregations in and near Jerusalem.

6. '*The same night.*' The Hebrews counted their days from evening to evening. The same night means, therefore, the night preceding the day when Herod would have brought him forth.

7. '*The angel.*' There can be no doubt that the angel appeared in a human form. See note, chap. i. 10.

'*A light shined,*' &c. That divine light which seems to have accompanied all manifestations from the spiritual world. Compare Luke ii. 9, Mark ix. 3.

'*His chains fell,*' &c. A striking instance of the law of miracles, viz. the suspension of the ordinary course of nature in the presence of a higher power. The angels and ministers of God are strong, and do His work without an effort, because they are the agents of His will.

8. '*Gird thyself.*' When the ancients slept, they unloosed the girdle which fastened the tunic, or inner garment, round the waist, and often used the outer robe, which here and elsewhere is called 'the garment,' as a covering. These minute circumstances appear to be mentioned in order to show that this was no hasty escape. Sandals were not usually worn except by women, or in the winter, or on a journey. Saint Peter would require them, as he was about to travel.

9. '*And wist not.*' This uncertainty of St. Peter is to be attributed to the excitement and confusion of mind produced by the presence of a heavenly

¹ Whately on the Common Prayer, p. 229.

² Lobeck on Phryn. p. 311.

not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought ¹he saw a vision.

^a ch. 10. 3,
17. & 11. 5.

10. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; ²which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

^b Ps. 34. 7.
Dan. 3. 28.
& 6. 22.
Heb. 1. 14.
^c Job. 5. 19.
Pa. 33. 18.
19. & 34. 22.
& 41. 2. &
97. 10.
^d Cor. 1. 10.
^e Pet. 2. 9.
^f ch. 4. 23.

11. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that ¹the Lord hath sent his angel, and ¹hath 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*, ¹he spirit. We may compare this with his feelings at the Transfiguration. Mark ix. 5, 6.

10. '*The first and the second ward.*' That is, the two guards, or soldiers, one of whom was stationed at the door of the prison, the other before the iron gate which opened into the city.

'*The iron gate.*' The city of Jerusalem was surrounded by three strong walls, and some critics suppose that the prison was between the two outer walls, and thus separated from the city.¹ It must be a matter of mere conjecture, but I should conceive that the prison was within the court of Herod's palace, which was separated from the city by a strong wall.²

'*Of his own accord.*' Not being touched by a visible hand.

'*Passed on through one street.*' Until St. Peter was entirely safe from pursuit.

11. '*Was come to himself.*' He is not restored to his usual state of waking consciousness until the departure of the angel. Hitherto he had acted, as it were, mechanically, and as in a dream.

'*Now I know of a surety.*' He was

not previously assured that the being who spake to him, touched him, and accompanied him, was a heavenly spirit: it might have been a man divinely commissioned and empowered to deliver him. But all was mystery and doubt. Now he recognises the agency of a ministering spirit.

'*From all the expectation.*' He was, therefore, fully aware how deep and general was the hatred of his countrymen. This must have been, of all trials, the hardest for one who loved his nation so strongly that he was specially called to 'the apostleship of the circumcision.' Galatians ii. 8.

12. '*And when he had considered.*' Either what had occurred,³ or where the disciples were likely to be assembled.⁴

'*The house of Mary the mother,*' &c. This Mary was either the sister or aunt of St. Barnabas, since her son John Mark was his nephew or cousin. Like him she appears to have regarded her property as belonging to the Church, and to have devoted her house to the purposes of common worship.

'*John, whose surname was Mark.*'

¹ Lightfoot.

² Fessel. ap. Meyer.

³ Grotius and Olshausen.

⁴ Meyer.

came to the house of Mary the mother of ¹John, whose ¹ ch. 15. 37. surname was Mark; where many were gathered together ^mpraying.

^m ver. 5.

13. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came ^{||} to hearken, named Rhoda.

^{||} Or, to ask who was there.

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 ⁿ Gen. 48. 16. said they, ⁿ It is his angel. ^{Matt. 18. 10.}

There is no reason for questioning the identity of this John Mark with the evangelist. He was converted (as appears from 1 Peter v. 13, 'and so doth Marcus my son') by St. Peter, and at a later period lived with that apostle, under whose direction he probably wrote his gospel. The connection between St. Peter and this interesting family is thus shown by various incidental notices, and accounts for his proceeding at once to the house of Mary.

'Where many were gathered,' &c.

From this passage we learn that the primitive Christians sometimes assembled at night for prayer, but as there was a special reason on this occasion, we cannot conclude as to their ordinary practice. We know, however, that soon after this time they had divine service before daybreak.¹

13. 'The door of the gate.' Or, the vestibule, the outer porch or hall. This door was not generally closed, except on occasions when danger was apprehended. See John xx. 19.

'A damsel came,' &c. She was probably the keeper of the gate;² her name means Rose, and is of Greek origin. Both Greeks and Hebrews often gave the names of flowers and

trees to their daughters, as Susanna, the lily, Tamar, the palm-tree, &c.

14. 'She opened not the gate,' &c.

The life and grace of this narrative have often been remarked. In her sympathy with the anxiety of her mistress and the brethren, Rhoda is quite beside herself for joy, and for a moment forgets to secure the safety of him for whom they are praying so fervently. It is evident that St. Luke received this account from an eye-witness; St. Paul and Barnabas, who were then at Jerusalem, were probably among the Christians assembled in the house of Mary.

15. 'It is his angel.' We should not, perhaps, be justified³ in drawing a doctrinal inference from this opinion of the Christians then present, but there can be little doubt that they meant it was his guardian angel. Our Saviour's words in Matt. xviii. 10 may possibly be understood of angels ministering to children generally, but the early Fathers were unanimous⁴ in the opinion that angels appointed to watch over individuals are spoken of both in that text and in Gen. xlviii. 16. 'The angel that redeemed me from all evil.' And that interpretation commends itself in the former

¹ Plin. Ep. 97; Bingham, xiii. 11.

² Kuinoel.

³ Chrysostom.

⁴ Origen, Basil, Chrysostom, &c.

16. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

° ch. 13. 16.
& 19. 23. &
21. 40.

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

passage as the simplest and most natural, although the latter must be understood of the angel of the covenant. It seems hazardous to explain these brief intimations by referring to other opinions prevalent among the Jews,¹ but not warranted by plain words of holy writ. The interpretation which some² have proposed, viz. 'his messenger,' is an unsatisfactory attempt to elude what appeared to them to be a difficulty.

17. '*Beckoning unto them.*' The gesture described by the original word is a downward waving of the hand such as is used to command silence, when a person is about to address an assembly.³ It is often used of St. Paul.

'*Unto James, and to the brethren.*' In other words, to the bishop and Church of Jerusalem. This passage is recognised as most important by all writers upon Church government. It was only as bishop of the Church of Jerusalem that James would be distinguished from all the brethren. There is some doubt whether this St. James, who is called the brother of the Lord, that is, his near rela-

tive, is to be identified with St. James the son of Alphaeus, who was an apostle.⁴

'*Into another place.*' It is uncertain where St. Peter remained until the time of the apostolic council, when we find him at Jerusalem, chap. xv. There is no ground for the assertion that he went to Rome; but it seems evident that he did not tempt God⁵ by exposing himself voluntarily to persecution, and therefore left Jerusalem for a season.

18. '*Among the soldiers.*' The troops who had escorted Herod were anxious for their comrades. The soldiers on guard must have been apprised of St. Peter's escape before the morning.

19. '*He examined.*' Tried them formally for breach of discipline. Keepers who allowed a prisoner to escape were liable to the punishment which would have been inflicted upon him after condemnation.⁶ An impartial enquiry into the circumstances would have convinced Herod of the innocence of the soldiers, since had they been bribed they would certainly have fled with St. Peter; and it might have recalled to his mind how his

¹ Lightfoot, Meyer, &c.

² Basnage, Hammond.

³ Wetstein.

⁴ Burton Lect. H. E. iv., and Ols-

hausen, but see Smith's Biblical Dictionary.

⁵ Chrysostom.

⁶ Philo. leg. ad C. p. 1034.

him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judæa to Cesarea, and *there* abode.

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 ^p their country was nourished by the king's *country*.

¶ Or, *bare an hostile mind, intending war.*
† Gr. *that was over the king's bed-chamber.*
p 1 Kings 5. 9, 11.
Ezek. 27. 17.

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.*

grandfather had also been put to shame when he attempted to make the wise men of the East his instruments to discover the Messiah.¹

The following narrative should be compared with Josephus. Ant. xix. c. 7.

'To Cesarea.' Herod went there to celebrate games in honour of Claudius Cæsar, probably the Quinquennialian games, which had been instituted by his grandfather in honour of Augustus. They were celebrated on the first of August, and were of an idolatrous character. A plain proof that his zeal for the law was a mere pretence. Mr. Lewin considers that the festival was kept to celebrate the safe return of Claudius from Britain, and assigns good if not conclusive reasons for this supposition. *Fasti Sacri*, § 1674.

20. 'Tyre and Sidon.' These being populous commercial cities, with a small territory, depended for supplies of provision upon the adjacent country of Palestine. This had been the case from ancient times. Ezekiel speaking of Tyre saith, 'Judah and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants, they traded in thy market wheat of Minnith.' See also 1 Kings v. 9 and Ezra iii. 7.

It is not probable that the Romans would have tolerated open hostilities, but Agrippa intended, and the Phœnicians feared, the suspension of commercial intercourse. The quarrel probably originated in commercial jealousies, since Cæsarea had become a rival of Tyre and Sidon under the energetic government of the Herods. Blastus was a Roman, to which circumstance his influence over Agrippa may probably be attributed.

21. 'Arrayed in royal apparel.' Josephus thus describes the dress and appearance of the king. 'On the second day of the public games he wore a robe of silver tissue, woven with admirable skill, and entered the theatre at day-break. Then the silver, being irradiated with the first beams of the rising sun, shone with marvellous lustre, producing an impression of thrilling awe in all who gazed on him.'

'Upon his throne.' This was a raised seat in the theatre, where it was not unusual for princes to address the people. On that occasion Herod Agrippa gave public audience to the embassy from Phœnicia.

¹ Chrysostom.

- ¹ 1 Sam. 25. 38. 23. And immediately the angel of the Lord ² smote him, because ³ he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.
- ⁴ Ps. 115. 1. 24. ¶ But ⁵ the word of God grew and multiplied.
- ⁶ Isai. 55. 11. 25. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ¶ ministry, and ⁷ took with them ⁸ John, whose surname was Mark.
- ⁹ ch. 6. 7. & 19. 20. Col. 1. 6. ¶ Or, *charge*. ch. 11. 29, 30. ¹⁰ ch. 13. 5. 13. & 15. 37. ¹¹ ver. 12.

22. '*It is the voice of a god.*' Josephus mentions these acclamations, and says that his flatterers invoked him as a god, and that he did not check their impiety.

23. '*The angel of the Lord.*' We are, of course, not to understand any visible appearance. Angels manifest themselves, according to holy scripture, only to men in whom the spiritual faculty is developed. But Herod and all the Jews were convinced, from the sudden and mysterious character of the disease, and from the occasion on which it developed itself, that it was of preternatural origin. St. Luke reveals the cause, and also the agent. The king died five days afterwards, in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

'*Eaten of worms.*' A form of disease specially noticed by St. Luke, the physician; similar terminations of diseases inflicted by divine judgments are recorded by Jewish and other ancient historians.

24. '*But the word of God.*' &c. The deliverance of St. Peter and the death of Herod had a great effect on the prosperity of the Church. Agrippa, the son of this Herod, was only seventeen years old at this time, and Judea

was again governed by a Roman procurator, Cuspius Fadus, who was very unpopular with the Jewish authorities, and little disposed to court their favour by persecuting the Christians.

'*They had fulfilled their ministry.*' When they had discharged the special work intrusted to them, by distributing the contributions from Antioch. See chap. xi. 30. The vision of which St. Paul speaks Cor. xii. 2, was vouchsafed at this time, fourteen years (or, more exactly, the fourteenth year current) before the autumn of A.D. 57, when that epistle was written.¹ It marked a crisis in the apostle's history, preparatory to the great work for which he was 'separated' by the Holy Ghost on his return to Antioch.

'*And took with them,*' &c. The duties of St. Mark as a travelling deacon, or subordinate minister attending on St. Paul, and his uncle St. Barnabas, would include ministration of baptism, assistance at the Lord's Supper, catechising converts, occasional preaching, and care of temporal affairs.² The office appears to have been analogous to that of Chazan in the Jewish synagogue.³

¹ Lewin, *Fasti Sacri*, 1672.

² Bingham, i. 292, 295.

³ Vitrina de Syn. p. 654.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—4. The contrast and the conflict between the Church and the world are strikingly illustrated in this narrative: the former being represented in the person of the persecuted apostle, the latter by the persecuting tyrant. The one actuated by an impious mixture of bigotry and vain glory, the other sustained by faith and hope: the one outwardly prosperous and triumphant, but foiled in spite of all precautions, and smitten in the noonday of his glory, the other afflicted and apparently helpless, but rescued by a heavenly minister, and exalted in the midst of his humiliation: the one enjoying the applause of the people and the favour of a corrupt priesthood, and supported by the emperor of the earth, the other having with him the prayers of the Church, the sympathy of his apostolic brethren, and protected by the King of Heaven. Broad and clear types of that antagonism between the children of the world and the children of God, which has endured from the beginning, and will continue unto the end, when the Lord 'shall consume that wicked,' of whom Herod was a shadow, 'with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of His coming.'

5. The champion of the faith is bound, but many are arming in his behalf, and the weapons of their warfare are irresistible, for they are supplied from the armoury of heaven. The Church would not know the fulness of her power, were not her energies developed by affliction—then she learns how effectual are the fervent prayers of those who are clad in the righteousness of Christ.

7—10. What the angel does for St. Peter should remind us of what Christ has done, and ever doth for His people. We lay in a dark prison, but His light shined in it, and revealed the Deliverer; we were sleeping, but He hath awakened and raised us up; we were fast bound, but at His word, the chain was shattered and fell off; we may be still amazed and perplexed, but He is at hand to instruct and guide us; we may be beset with difficulties, but He removes all obstacles from our path and opens the gate that leadeth into the city where He reigneth in glory. Note, on the other hand, that what Peter does we must do also. We must rise quickly when Christ calls us; we must gird ourselves, and wear the garments which He graciously provides for us; we must follow where He leads us, nor cease from exertion until we enter that rest which remaineth for the faithful soldier and servant of Christ at our life's end.

11. True and nominal Christians feel much alike in the excitement produced by unexpected deliverance from calamity and danger, but when they come to themselves, the heart speaks clearly, and bears witness to their respective conditions. The one relapses into apathy and forgetfulness of God, the other then learns for a surety how gracious are the visitations of his heavenly Father: he calculates the evils to which he would have been exposed, rejoices to have been 'made a partaker of Christ's sufferings,' and commits his soul with joy to the keeping of his 'faithful Creator.'

12—15. We should observe these few notices of a saintly family. Barnabas, once a rich Levite, now a poor and persecuted apostle of Christ, but rich in heavenly treasure: distinguished even among the apostles for that which St. Paul hath told us is the first of graces, viz. charity. Mary, a mother in Israel, consecrating her house to the service of God. Her son, a convert of Peter, a

companion of Paul, and after one lapse of infirmity, which was freely and fully forgiven, a faithful and diligent minister unto the end. Nay, the servants in such a household imbibed their fervent love for the saints, and Rhoda's name has been preserved among those who minister to their masters not with eye service, but as unto the Lord.

18, 19. The condition of Rhoda may be compared with that of the servants of Herod. They shared for a season in his splendour, and were employed as instruments of his wickedness, until they were broken and cast away for an involuntary failure. They were to be pitied, for they had probably no choice of masters; but woe to that servant, who being free to choose, prefers the wages of the profligate and irreligious to the service of a household where the Lord is known and feared.

20—24. In the account of Herod's death we are amazed at the extravagance of his guilt, and feel that his punishment, though extraordinary, was, so to speak, a natural vindication of the glory of Him whom he insulted. Yet what made this prince a very type of Antichrist? It was but the indulgence of one bosom sin, and that a sin so far from uncommon that 'of all the evils of our corrupt nature there is none more connatural and universal.' It was *only* pride. Of which St. Augustine saith truly, 'that which first overcame man is the last thing which he overcomes.' 'Some sins comparatively may die before us, but this hath life in it, sensibly, as long as we.'—LEIGHTON.

CHAPTER XIII.

This chapter introduces us to another great epoch in the history of the Church.

Much had been done to prepare the minds of believers for a wider application of the principle established in the case of Cornelius. The Gospel had been preached in some Gentile cities where the presence of numerous Jews afforded a medium of communication; and the Church had become conscious of the vastness and catholicity of the work which it was predestined to achieve; but as yet no missions had been sent forth for the express purpose of making Christ known to the Gentile world. What had been done was done without any previously arranged system; and it is, to say the least, doubtful whether any Gentiles had been admitted into the Church without undergoing such preparatory discipline as was imposed upon proselytes of the gate. Henceforth we have to trace the origin and progress of missions which were solemnly ordained by the Holy Ghost, conducted with the express sanction, and under the authority of the Church, and rapidly extended in all directions until the tidings of salvation resounded in the remotest quarters of the earth. We have no sufficient means of ascertaining the number of Christian communities at the commencement of this mission. We know, however, that vast numbers of Jews had been converted, and congregations of Christians formed in every part of Palestine, which remained under the immediate superintendence of the apostolic body. In Phœnicia and Syria there were also many churches of which the most important were those of Damascus and Antioch. Antioch, indeed, must be regarded as a second metropolis of Christendom. It was the first community in which the two elements of Judaism and Gentilism were blended and absorbed in one common Christianity; and, for some centuries it continued to be the centre of missionary enterprise in the East. Cyprus had been visited more than once by St. Barnabas, and Cilicia had been for some time the residence of St. Paul. In each of these countries, and in Arabia Petræa, we may be sure there were many individual converts, and most probably in each there were congregations of believers. It seems, moreover, reasonable to suppose that the converts made at Pentecost, and afterwards at the annual festivals, on returning to their own countries, generally succeeded in gathering around them a body of believers, forming a nucleus, so to speak, which may afterwards have been developed into a Christian church. Still, these were but movements, stirrings, as it were, of the human spirit, which served to prepare the way for the work of the apostle, whose 'praise is in all the churches,' as the evangeliser of the Gentile world.

A.D. 45—46.

1. Now there were *in the church that was at Antioch * ch. 11. 27.
& 14. 26. &
15. 35.

1. '*Certain prophets and teachers.*' ters, of the several congregations at
These teachers are probably to be Antioch. It cannot be ascertained
identified with the elders, or presby- which of the persons mentioned in



^b ch. 11.

22-26.

^c Rom. 16.

21.

^d Or, *Herod's foster-brother.*

certain prophets and teachers; as ^bBarnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and ^cLucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, ^dwhich had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the

this verse held the office of prophet or teacher; but some of them, as, for instance, Barnabas and Saul, seem to have combined both.

'*Barnabas.*' He is named first on this and on all occasions where the original apostles were not present; and he retained this precedence of rank until St. Paul had distinguished himself by the vast extent of his labours, and was specially recognised by all the Church as the Apostle of the Gentiles.

'*Simeon*' is said to have been one of the Seventy. See Luke x. 1.

'*Lucius of Cyrene*' is named Rom. xvi. 21, from which it appears that he accompanied St. Paul on his travels. He is said to have become the first bishop of his native city. See note, chap. xi. 20. The supposition that he is to be identified with St. Luke is unfounded.

'*Manaen.*' We learn from Josephus¹ that one Manaen, an Essene, gained the favour of Herod the Great by predicting his future dignity when both were children. This would account for the position of the younger Manaen, if, as is most probable, he was his son. The word used here may either mean that he was the foster-brother² of Herod Antipas, or educated with him at Rome. At the court of Antipas Manaen may have heard the preaching, and witnessed the martyrdom, of St. John Baptist, and perhaps have been present when One mightier than he was brought before that bad prince.

Thus converts were made among the courtiers of the persecutors of the Church, even as we find Christians in the household of Nero. See Phil. iv. 22, and compare Luke viii. 3.

'*And Saul.*' He is ranked with the rulers of the Church at Antioch, but is named last. See note on the next verse. The presence of Saul and Barnabas might have been inferred from the previous narrative, but they are named according to their station in the Church, on account of the great solemnity and importance of this transaction.

2. '*As they ministered.*' The expression used here, from which our word '*Liturgy*' is derived, denotes that they were engaged in divine service. It appears to have been a solemn meeting of all the leading members of the Church at Antioch, not improbably for the express purpose of learning the will of God concerning the great work of evangelising the Gentiles, which must have often presented itself to their minds, after the numerous conversions that had been made in their own city.

'*And fasted.*' Fasting and prayer were both usual on all such great occasions, more especially at the solemn time of ordination in the Christian Church;³ hence the observance of Easter days. See Matt. xvii. 21; Luke ii. 37; Acts x. 30, xiv. 23; 1 Cor. vii. 5. The former custom was always regarded as a means for promoting a calm and abstracted tone of mind,

¹ Epiphan. Hær. xxx. 4.

² Ant. xv. 10, 5.

³ Walch diss. de Menahem.

⁴ Alford.

Holy Ghost said, ⁴Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work ⁵whereunto I have called them.

3. And ⁶when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4. ¶ So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to ⁷Cyprus.

⁴ Num. 8.
14.
ch. 9. 15. &
22. 21.
Rom. 1. 1.
Gal. 1. 15.
& 2. 9.
⁵ Matt. 9. 38.
ch. 14. 26.
Rom. 10. 15.
Eph. 3. 7, 8.
⁶ 1 Tim. 2. 7.
⁷ 2 Tim. 1. 11.
Heb. 5. 4.
⁸ ch. 6. 6.
⁹ ch. 4. 36.

adapted for the reception of spiritual communications.

'*The Holy Ghost said.*' We are not informed as to the mode of utterance, whether by a miraculous sound, by an internal communication, or, as seems more probable, by an inspired prophet. The Personality and Godhead of the Holy Spirit could not be intimated more distinctly than by the words used of Him, and by Him, in this verse.

'*Separate me.*' Set apart for my peculiar service. This was done, as we read in the next verse, by a special consecration.

'*The work whereunto I have called them.*' The work of evangelising the heathen world. This destination appears to have been revealed at the same time, although St. Luke does not expressly say this. Saul had been called at first to be an apostle, but he did not enter upon the special duties, nor obtain the peculiar authority attached to that office, until this his solemn and public designation and appointment by the Holy Ghost. He would not otherwise have been named *last* among the preachers and prophets at Antioch. Henceforth he is never confounded with any subordinate minister of the Church, but speaks, acts, and is universally recognised, as an apostle.

3. '*And laid their hands,*' &c.

The miraculous call of the Holy Ghost did not supersede the rite of consecration by imposition of hands,¹ but authorised its administration by presbyters on this occasion. This consecration appears to have taken place on another day appointed by the Church, and also solemnised by prayer and fasting.

4. '*Being sent forth by the Holy Ghost.*' This refers to the last words of the preceding verse. The Holy Ghost who sent them forth acted by the instrumentality of the ministers of the Church.

'*Seleucia.*' A strongly fortified seaport, five miles to the north of the Orontes, and fifteen from Antioch. It derived its name from Seleucus Nicator, the first Greek king of Syria, by whom it was built. The site is now marked by a few ruins, and a village named Kepse.²

'*Cyprus.*' The direction of this journey appears to have been decided, in the first place, by St. Barnabas, as the elder disciple. He visited his native country first, having doubtless reason to expect that his missionary labours would be successful there, especially among the Jews, who were exceedingly numerous in the island. It is said that in the insurrection of the Jews, in the reign of Trajan, they slew 240,000 of the Christian and Gentile inhabitants.³

¹ Hinds, p. 175.

² Strabo, xiv., and Pocock.

³ Dio Cassius, V. Tr. p. 255.

^b ver. 46. 5. And when they were at Salamis, ^bthey preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also ¹John to *their* minister.

¹ ch. 12. 25.
& 15. 37.

6. And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found ^aa certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:

^a ch. 8. 9.

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.

5. '*Salamis.*' A seaport on the eastern coast of Cyprus, named by its founder Teucer after the small but famous island in the Gulf of Egina. It was a considerable city, formerly the residence of a king. It was nearly destroyed by the Jews in the insurrection, and afterwards demolished by an earthquake, but was rebuilt by Constantine, who gave it the name Constantia. The ruins are near Famagusta. On the west of Salamis Pocock saw a church and monastery dedicated to Barnabas, and a grotto where he was said to have been buried after suffering martyrdom in the reign of Nero.¹

'*In the synagogues.*' Throughout this mission we find the apostles preaching the Word first in the synagogues, in obedience to our Lord's injunctions. If converted, the Jews became able missionaries: if they rejected the Gospel, the apostles turned at once to the Gentiles, who received it with singular readiness, especially those who were already proselytes of the gate.²

'*To their minister.*' See note, chap. xii. 26.

6. '*Through the isle.*' A distance of about 100 miles. They preached the Gospel, doubtless, in the cities

through which they passed in this populous island.

'*Paphos.*' A seaport opposite the coast of Pamphylia, the capital of Cyprus under the Romans. It was about seven and a half miles distant from the old city,³ notorious for the worship of Venus. A few years before this time it had been overthrown by an earthquake and rebuilt by Augustus.

'*Bar-jesus.*' Or, the son of Jesus. This impostor was probably an Arabian Jew, since, in that language, Elymas or Elimon signifies a man of science and professor of philosophy or astrology.⁴ On the character of such impostors, see chap. viii. 9. They appear, not unfrequently, to have been encouraged by Roman magistrates of the highest rank.⁵ They were generally among the bitterest, and from their influence, the most formidable opponents of Christianity.

7. '*The deputy.*' Or, proconsul. Only those provinces were governed by proconsuls which were under the jurisdiction of the Roman senate. In the division of provinces between Augustus and the senate, the emperor at first reserved Cyprus to himself, but afterwards resigned it to the senate.⁶ A coin struck in the reign of

¹ Conybeare and Howson, i. p. 153.

² Hensen, p. 82.

³ Strabo.

⁴ Hyde de Rep. v. Persarum. p. 372.

⁵ Lucian, Alex. s. 30; Neander, p. 148; Conyb. and H. p. 159.

⁶ Strabo, xviii.; Dio Cassius, liii.

8. But 'Elymas, the sorcerer, (for so is his name by ¹ Exod. 7.
interpretation,) withstood them, seeking to turn away ^{11.} ² Tim. 3. 8.
the deputy from the faith.

9. Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) ¹² filled = ch. 4. 8.
with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him.

10. And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief,

Claudius names a proconsul of Cyprus. St. Luke uses the proper title, with his usual accuracy. These minute coincidences occur in every chapter of the Acts.

'*Sergius Paulus*.' He is called a prudent man, because he saw through the absurdity of heathen idolatry, and the insufficiency of heathen philosophy, and availed himself of every opportunity of searching after the truth. The system professed by Elymas, which was probably a mixture of Hebrew and Oriental gnosticism, may have contained enough of truth to justify enquiry, but not to satisfy a man who 'desired to hear the Word of God.' This character is peculiarly interesting as being the first instance of a man of rank who was brought directly from heathenism into the Church.

8. '*Withstood them*.' Probably by blasphemous falsehoods; had he used arguments, the apostle would have been satisfied with refuting them. Or he may have attempted to deceive the proconsul by some exercise of his pretended art, which is the more likely considering St. Luke's allusion to the meaning of his surname.

9. '*Who also is called Paul*.' This name is henceforth always substituted for Saul—the name of the persecutor has merged in that of the glorious apostle of the Gentiles. Many commentators follow Jerome (on Philem. i.) in supposing that he changed his

name in honour of his distinguished convert, but there appear to be no sufficient grounds for this assumption. The convert might often take his Christian name from the person to whom he was indebted for the knowledge of Christ, but it is not likely that the teacher should take his name from the disciple. Such an act would be without precedent. It seems more probable that, according to the custom of the Jews in every age of their history, he bore two names, Saul as a Hebrew, Paul as a Roman citizen.² This may be a sufficient reason why the latter name is used exclusively from the time of his entering fully upon his work, as apostle of the Gentiles, though probably St. Luke does not mention it here the first time, without reference to the name of the proconsul.

'*Filled with the Holy Ghost*.' Speaking under His immediate and plenary inspiration, by which he was enabled to detect the wickedness, and constrained to announce the punishment of Elymas.

'*Set his eyes on him*.' Dean Alford considers that this expression, which is used frequently of St. Paul, may allude to his weakness of sight, the result of the light on his conversion; but the same word is applied to St. Peter (chap. iii. 4) and to all the apostles (chap. i. 10). It simply denotes earnest attention.

10. '*Of all subtilty and mischief*.'

¹ Augustin, Olshausen, &c.

² Drusius, Lightfoot, Wieseler,

p. 222, note; Conybeare and Howson, i. p. 162.

* Matt. 13. ^{38.} "thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord ?

* Exod. 9. ^{3.} 11. 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.

12. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

13. Now when Paul and his company loosed from

The former word refers to his character, the second to his skill in imposture.

'*Child of the devil.*' One who derives principles and habits from the devil, a calumniator and blasphemer. St. Paul evidently alludes to the name Bar-jesus, son of Jesus, which the calumniator disgraced : as though he had said, thou who bearest the name of Jesus, but art in fact the child of the devil.

'*To pervert the right ways.*' That is, to attempt to turn aside the course of His mercy, viz. by opposing the conversion of Sergius Paulus.

11. '*Is upon thee.*' The decree is gone forth, and the punishment is already beginning.

'*For a season.*' As the blindness was to last but for a season, it may have been intended for a warning, as well as punishment. It has been remarked,¹ that the first miraculous act of St. Paul is to inflict that privation which had accompanied his own conversion ; and there is an ancient tradition, that Elymas became a Christian. Origen says, that 'Paul struck him blind by a word, but thus converted him by anguish to godliness.'

'*A mist and a darkness.*' The first word describes the physical cause, the second the effect, of the disease which clouded the organs, but did not destroy the faculty, of sight. St. Luke, as usual, is careful to describe the symptoms.

12. '*Believed.*' This involves conversion, with its consequences, viz. reception into the Church by baptism. We know nothing of the subsequent history of Sergius Paulus, since no credit is due to the tradition that he was appointed bishop of Narbonne by St. Paul.²

'*At the doctrine.*' Though he was first convinced by the miraculous sign, yet his conversion is attributed to the word of truth, which both enlightens the understanding and subdues the heart. There can be no doubt that many other converts were made on this occasion. Chrysostom remarks that the apostles did not remain at Paphos to enjoy the favour of their noble convert, but proceeded at once to meet new labours and perils.

13. '*Paul and his company.*' Henceforth Paul is always represented as the principal person, Barnabas, as we may be sure, willingly taking the second place.

¹ Chrysostom.

² Burton Lect. H. E. i. 148.

Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and

² John departing from them returned to Jerusalem. ² ch. 15. 38.

14. ¶ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and ³ went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. ³ ch. 16. 13. & 17. 2. & 18. 4.

15. And ⁴ 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 ⁵ any word of exhortation for the people, say on. ⁴ Luke 4. 16. ver. 27. ⁵ Heb. 13. 22.

'Perga.' A city of some importance, about seven miles from the coast, famous for the temple of Diana.¹ The ruins are described by late travellers.

'John departing from them.' He left as we know contrary to the wish of St. Paul (see chap. xv. 38), being, as it seems, deterred by the difficulty and apparent hopelessness of the work, and preferring to labour among his friends and kinsmen in Jerusalem. This was a sin of infirmity, and imperfect faith. It is highly improbable that he differed from his uncle and St. Paul as to the propriety of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. That would have been, under the circumstances, an act of presumption, and would not have been unnoticed by St. Luke.²

14. 'Antioch in Pisidia.' A city on the frontiers of Pisidia, towards Phrygia, built by Seleucus, king of Syria. At this time it had the privileges of a Roman colony.³ It lay directly to the north of Perga, in the highlands of Taurus. The Pisidians who inhabited this district were a hardy mountain race, who made frequent incursions into the plains, where, after the decline of the Syrian power, they occupied many fortified cities,

of which Antioch was the most considerable.⁴

'And sat down.' It was usual for teachers of the law to take seats in a certain part of the synagogue when they wished to indicate an intention of addressing the congregation.⁵

15. 'After the reading.' The Pentateuch was arranged in sections, so that it might be read through on the Sabbath days once in the course of each year, and portions of the prophets adapted to these sections were read afterwards. The people were then addressed either by the reader (see Luke iv. 16) or by some other member of the synagogue. Strangers were often called upon to speak by the minister of the synagogue.⁶

'The rulers.' Each synagogue was governed by a chief ruler, and a body of elders, who were also called presidents, or pastors.⁷

'Sent unto them.' They sent the chazan, or minister, whose office corresponded in some respects to that of a deacon in the early Church.

'Of exhortation.' Or, encouragement,⁸ viz. such an address as might stir up the feelings of the people and teach them to be more zealous in observing the law.

¹ Cicer. Verr. i. 20; Fellow's Asia Minor, p. 190.

² Hensen, p. 73.

³ Plin. v. 21.

⁴ Strabo, xii. 570.

⁵ Vitringa de Syn. p. 950, 985.

⁶ Vitringa, Winer.

⁷ Winer, ii. 550.

⁸ Meyer.

¹ ch. 12, 17. 16. Then Paul stood up, and 'beckoning with *his*
² ch. 10, 25. hand said, Men of Israel, and ³ ye that fear God, give
 ver. 26, 42, audience.
 43.

⁴ Dent. 7, 6, 7. 17. The God of this people of Israel ⁵ chose our
⁶ Exod. 1.1. fathers, and exalted the people ⁷ when they dwelt as
 Pa. 105, 23, strangers in the land of Egypt, ⁸ and with an high arm
 24. brought he them out of it.
 ch. 7, 17. ⁹ Exod. 6, 6. & 13, 14, 16.
¹⁰ Exod. 16, 35.

Numb. 14. 18. And ¹¹ about the time of forty years ¹² suffered he
 33, 34. their manners in the wilderness.
 Pa. 95, 9, 10. ch. 7, 36.

¹³ Gr. *ἐτροφοφόρησεν*, perhaps for *ἐτροφοδογήσεν*, bore, or, fed them, as a nurse beareth, or feedeth her child. Dent. 1. 31. according to the LXX, and so Chrysostom.

16. 'Then Paul stood up.' St. Paul is always represented as the chief speaker. There was no jealousy between the apostles. They had but one desire, to do the will of the Lord in the most effectual manner.

'Beckoning with his hand.' See note, xii. 16, &c., xxii. 1.

'Ye that fear God.' The usual designation for proselytes of the gate, who were not circumcised. See chap. x. They had seats in a separate part of the synagogue.

'Give audience.' The following discourse of St. Paul must be studied as a specimen of his usual mode of reasoning with the Jews, and bringing the general tenor and particular prophecies of Holy Scripture to bear upon their prejudices. It bears a striking resemblance to the discourse of St. Stephen, both in its arrangement and in the tone of foreboding and earnest warning with which it closes. St. Paul begins with a brief retrospect of the dealings of God with His people, to which the Jews always listened with lively interest. See Introduction to chap. vii.

17. 'The God of this people.' This states a fact, which was important in its bearings upon the point that St. Paul intended to establish, and was

well adapted to conciliate the feelings of his audience.

'Chose our fathers.' Elected them to be His own peculiar people. St. Paul thus guards beforehand against the supposition that as a Christian he undervalued the peculiar advantages of the Jews, 'to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.' Rom. ix. 4, 5.

'And exalted.' Both by increasing their number, and by giving signal marks of favour and protection.¹

'With an high arm.' The expression indicates a putting forth of the divine power, and represents the Lord as the 'Captain of Salvation,' advancing at the head of His people to defend them against all their enemies. The Fathers were unanimous, and undoubtedly right, in believing that these descriptions are always to be understood of the second person of the Holy Trinity.

18. 'Suffered he their manners.' Bore with their froward dispositions and evil habits. See vii. 39—43.

¹ Meyer.

19. And when ^bhe had destroyed seven nations in ^cDent. 7. 1. the land of Chanaan, ^ehe divided their land to them ^dJosh. 14. 1, 2. by lot. Ps. 78. 55.

20. And after that ^dhe gave unto them judges about ^eJudg. 2. 16. the space of four hundred and fifty years, ^funtil ^g1 Sam. 3. 20. Samuel the prophet.

21. ^fAnd afterward they desired a king; and God ^g1 Sam. 8. 5. & 10. 1. gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe ^h1 Sam. 15. 23, 26, 28. of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. & 16. 1.

22. And ^hwhen he had removed him, ⁱhe raised up ^jHos. 13. 11. unto them David to be their king; to whom also he ^k1 Sam. 16. 13. gave testimony, and said, ^lI have found David the son ^m2 Sam. 2. 4. & 5. 3. ⁿPs. 89. 20.

But the reading is doubtful, and it is probable that the word used by St. Paul spoke simply of the affectionate and parental care of God. See the marginal note.¹

19. '*He had destroyed.*' God is always represented as doing that, which he brings to pass by His instruments. For the names of the seven nations, see the marginal reference.

20. '*Four hundred and fifty years.*' St. Paul uses an indefinite expression, '*about,*' but the number agrees very nearly with the chronology of Josephus,² which appears to have been generally adopted at that time, and reckons 592 years from the Exodus to the building of the temple. This leaves about 450 years for the Judges, allowing for the reigns of Saul and David. Whitby reckons 339 years for the Judges, and 111 for the tyrants. There is, however, considerable difficulty, and the attempts which have been made to reconcile it with the statement (1 Kings vi. 1) are not satisfactory. Some critics³ suppose that the number has been incorrectly transcribed in one or the other passage.

21. '*Forty years.*' The Old Testament does not give the length of Saul's reign. Josephus names forty years.⁴

22. '*When he had removed him.*' This refers to the death of Saul (1 Sam. xxxi.) as the fulfilment of the sentence which had been pronounced on account of his disobedience. See 1 Sam. xv. Although David was designated as future king by the royal unction at the time of Saul's rejection (see 1 Sam. xvi. 12, 13), he was not raised to the throne until the death of Saul.

'*I have found.*' These words give the substance of the two passages, in which God declares His purpose. Compare the marginal references with Psalm lxxix. 20. Alford observes, the fact that such citations are left in their present shape in our text forms a strong presumption that we have the speeches of St. Paul verbatim as delivered by him.

'*Which shall fulfil all my will.*' This commendation of David applies to him as a king true, throughout his reign, to the worship of Jehovah, and, unlike Saul, obedient to His will when announced by his Messengers. See 1 Samuel xiv. 8, 9.

¹ Mill, Grabe, Griesbach, Tischendorf, and most of the later critics.

² Lightfoot. ³ Eg. Luther, Vitringa, and Biscoe. ⁴ Ant. viii. 2.

* 1 Sam. 13. of Jesse, ^ka man after mine own heart, which shall
14. fulfil all my will.
ch. 7. 46.

¹ Isa. 11. 1. 23. ¹Of this man's seed hath God according ^m to his
Luke 1. 32, promise raised unto Israel ⁿa Saviour, Jesus:
69.
ch. 2. 30.

Rom. 1. 3. 24. ^oWhen John had first preached before his
^m 2 Sam. 7. coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of
12. Israel.
Ps. 132. 11.
ⁿ Matt. 1. 21.

Rom. 11. 26. 25. And as John fulfilled his course, he said,
^o Matt. 3. 1. ^pWhom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But, be-
Luke 3. 3. hold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his*
^p Matt. 3. feet I am not worthy to loose.
11.
Mark 1. 7. 26. Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of
Luke 3. 16. Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, ^qto
John 1. 20, you is the word of this salvation sent.
27.

^q Matt. 10. 27. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their
6.
Luke 24. 47. ^ryou is the word of this salvation sent.
ch. 3. 26.
ver. 46.

23. '*Of this man's seed.*' This re-
ference to the promise would fix the
attention of the Jews, all of whom ex-
pected that it would be fulfilled about
that time.

'*Jesus.*' It is probable that all who
were then present had heard of our
Lord, but they may not have known of
the events which had occurred since
His crucifixion. It is remarkable how
simply St. Paul states the fact that
the promised Saviour and Messiah was
Jesus.

24. '*John had preached.*' John was
acknowledged by the Jews to be a
prophet; the baptism of repentance
was understood to be preliminary to
the baptism of Christ.

'*Before his coming.*' Before He
entered publicly upon His office as
anointed Prophet and Saviour.

25. '*John fulfilled.*' When he was
on the eve of terminating his ministry,
which appears to be called a course, or
race, with especial reference to his
office as forerunner of the Lord Jesus.
This expression is peculiar to St. Paul
and Luke.

'*I am not he.*' Namely, the Mes-
siah, who is not named, but, as the

person whom all expected, was present
to the minds of John and those
who came to question him. St. Paul
gives the substance, but not the
precise words, which we find in the
Gospels.

26. '*To you.*' According to the
promise, which included all the seed
of Abraham after the Spirit. The
Jews did not believe that proselytes of
the gate would have any part in the
kingdom of Messiah, and these words
may have excited some feeling of sus-
picion and irritation, although they
must have been touched by the affec-
tionate address of the apostles.

27. '*For they that dwell.*' The guilt
attached only to those who were present
at Jerusalem, and joining in clamour-
ing for our Lord's death, until the
Jews of the dispersion identified them-
selves with His murderers by rejecting
the Gospel and persecuting His
ministers.

'*Because they knew him not.*' Knew
not that He was the Messiah. St. Paul
thus suggests a mitigation of their
guilt. See note, chap. ii. 20—27; viii.
17.

'*Nor yet—day.*' The reading of

rulers, ^rbecause they knew him not, nor yet the voices ^rof the prophets ^awhich are read every sabbath day, ^rthey have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.

28. ^aAnd though they found no cause of death in *him*, ^ayet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29. ^aAnd when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, ^athey took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.

30. ^aBut God raised him from the dead :

31. And ^bhe was seen many days of them which came up with him ^cfrom Galilee to Jerusalem, ^dwho are his witnesses unto the people.

^a Matt. 27. 59. Mark 15. 46. Luke 23. 53. John 19. 38. ^a Matt. 28. 6. ch. 2. 24. & 3. 13, 16, 26. & 5. 30. ^b Matt. 28. 16. ch. 1. 3. 1 Cor. 15. 5, 6, 7. ^c ch. 1. 11. ^d ch. 1. 8. & 2. 32. & 3. 15. & 5. 32.

the prophets formed part of the regular service in the synagogues from the time of the Maccabees : as though it were to give the people warning of the speedy coming of Him to whom they all bear witness.

'They have fulfilled.' They were unconsciously instrumental in bringing about the fulfilment of such prophecies as Isaiah liii.; Daniel ix. 26; Psalm xxii. 16; Zechariah xii. 10.

28. *'No cause of death.'* No capital offence; they could not substantiate either the charge of blasphemy or of sedition before Pilate, who pronounced Him guiltless.

'Yet desired they.' Not so much as a right, but as a favour, thus involving themselves and Pilate in a double crime.

29. *'All that was written.'* It may be doubted whether St. Paul quoted the prophecies to which he alludes in his discourse, or whether he assumed them to be well known to his hearers. St. Luke probably gives the substance or general purport of his reasoning. In either case we have an additional proof of the general application to the Messiah

of those prophecies which are now contested by the Jews. See note, chap. iii. 17.

'The tree.' The cross, called a tree according to the legal form. See note, chap. v. 30.

'And laid him,' &c. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were both rulers and dwellers in Jerusalem, and though actuated by very different feelings, were equally instrumental with their countrymen in fulfilling those prophecies.

30. *'But God raised.'* The sublime brevity of this statement should be remarked. It stands out in solemn majesty as the rock on which all Christian hope and faith are securely founded.

31. *'Of them which came.'* St. Paul refers to the testimony of the first apostles and the hundred and twenty mentioned in the first chapter, because no man could suppose that so many persons could have been deceived *'many days'* by an illusion or vision; we must either accept their testimony, or assume that they concurred in a wild and motiveless fiction.

'Unto the people.' The people of Judea, who formed the body of the nation.

32. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that

* Gen. 3. 15. * the promise which was made unto the fathers,

& 12. 3. &

22. 18.

ch. 26. 6.

Rom. 4. 13.

Gal. 3. 16.

* Ps. 2. 7.

Heb. 1. 5. &

5. 5.

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

32. '*And we declare.*' We, that is, Paul and Barnabas, who received a special mission to evangelise foreign countries.

33. '*In that he hath raised up,*' &c. This verse is supposed by many commentators to refer to the incarnation of our Lord: but our version gives the right interpretation. St. Paul's object was to show that God had declared Jesus to be the true Messiah, which He did by raising Him after He had been condemned by the Jews; and that God had fully accomplished all His promises, which He did by declaring Him to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection, and exalting Him to be 'a prince and a saviour to give to His people repentance and remission of sins.'²

'*In the second psalm.*' This psalm was understood by all the Hebrews as directly and primarily applicable to the promised Messiah.

'*This day have I begotten thee.*' As this expression cannot apply to the Divinity, or eternal generation of Christ, it must be understood either of His incarnation, or His resurrection. By the former he was begotten into a state of humiliation and suffering; by the latter, in no forced or unnatural sense, He may be said to have been begotten into a state of glory. St. Paul undoubtedly adopts this latter interpretation; and on the same princi-

ple He is said to be the *first born* from the dead (Col. i. 18), and the *first begotten of the dead* (Rev. i. 5). The regeneration of believers is mysteriously connected with this birth of Messiah into glory. He 'hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' 1 Peter i. 3.

34. '*And as concerning.*' St. Paul proceeds to show that the resurrection which was predicted was one that would not be followed by a second death—that it was to be a resurrection unto a state of incorruption. This is the point which he is now anxious to establish.

'*To return to corruption.*' To a state of corruption. Not that our Lord's body had ever undergone any portion of that awful process, but it had entered the abode of corruption, namely, the grave. The word corruption is certainly not identical with death, or the grave, as some divines have supposed. It has but one meaning, which is, dissolution of the body.

'*I will give you,*' &c. St. Paul does not give the exact words of Isaiah (lv. 3), but the substantial meaning. God promised that He would make an everlasting covenant with His people, and that He would certainly fulfil all the promises of mercy and loving-kindness which He had made to David.

¹ E.g. Calvin, Beza, Kuinoel, and Olshausen. On the other side see Meyer and Alford.

² Luther, Hammond, Clericus, and Meyer.

the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'

^a Isa. 55. 3.
[†] Gr. *ra ôsa, holy, or, just things:* which word the LXX, both in the place of Isa. 55. 3. and in many others, used for that which is in the Hebrew, *mercies.*
^b Ps. 16. 10.
^c ch. 2. 31.
^d Or, *after he had in his own age*

35. Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*,
^bThou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

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:

37. But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

served the will of God. ver. 22. Ps. 78. 72. ¹ 1 Kings 2. 10. ch. 2. 29.

But He had promised that he should have a successor, the throne of whose kingdom He would establish for ever. 2 Sam. vii. 13—16. The Hebrews all understood that this promise, and the passage in which Isaiah refers to it, applied directly to the Messiah; and St. Paul deduces from it the indubitable inference, that the Messiah once raised from the dead would reign and live for ever; hence the force of St. Paul's own expression, 'Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.' Rom. vi. 9. The name David, which means 'beloved,' is used of Christ Himself in the Old Testament, but here it refers to that king, as the ancestor of the theocratic dynasty to whom the promise was originally made.

35. '*Wherefore.*' Namely, in order to express the same promise, that Messiah should be raised, not again to die.

'*He saith.*' That is, God speaking by His Holy Spirit.

'*In another psalm.*' Psalm xvi. 10. This passage has been referred to, chap. xi. 29, where St. Peter explains it exactly in the same manner and on the same grounds as St. Paul does on

this occasion. The coincidence is sufficiently explained by the plenary inspiration of both apostles; but it indicates that the people whom they addressed were prepared to find a Messianic application in this and similar passages. The Jews were then well aware that all Holy Scripture is full of Christ.

36. '*After he had served his own generation.*' Had done the work assigned to him, which was to rule the men of his own time¹ in righteousness. The marginal translation gives a less forcible meaning, but is preferred by some critics.²

'*By the will of God.*' This may refer either to the death of David, or to his serving his generation. The latter appears to be more in the spirit of our religion, which traces all good works to the will of God.

'*Fell on sleep.*' The usual expression for the departure of holy men. It is used of David, 1 Kings ii. 10.

'*Was laid unto his fathers.*' A common Hebrew phrase, which originated in the custom of family burial-places. Judges ii. 10, and elsewhere.

'*Saw corruption.*' Underwent that dissolution.

37. '*But he whom,*' &c. As David

¹ Meyer.

² Kuinoel and Olhausen.

38. ¶ Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that ^{*}through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins :

39. And ¹by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

40. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in ^mthe prophets ;

had undergone that corruption, and Jesus had not, it followed that He must be the promised Messiah.

38. '*Through this man.*' The meaning of this expression is, 'forgiveness of sins through this man (by means, that is, of His death and resurrection, for He died for our sins and rose again for our justification) is proclaimed unto you by His appointed ministers.' Our version appears to connect 'through' with 'preached.' The forgiveness is emphatic, viz. that forgiveness which the Messiah was expected to procure for His people.

39. '*All that believe.*' St. Paul thus states the condition of that forgiveness, viz. faith in Christ.

'*Are justified from all things.*' Are freed from the guilt of every sin. Faith makes them members of that body, of which the Head has suffered. Being justified by faith, they have peace with God. Thus, in his first recorded discourse, St. Paul states in the clearest and most decided terms that great doctrine of justification by Christ through faith, which is fully developed with all its consequences in his epistles.

'*From which ye could not,*' &c. This does not mean that men could be justified from some sins by the law of Moses, and that they can be justified from other heavier sins by Christ only; but that justification is not attainable through the law, which had a different object altogether, while it is bestowed

fully and freely upon them that believe in Jesus.

It is to be remarked that, in preaching to unbelievers, St. Paul and the apostles generally appeal to the resurrection as the basis of the Christian religion. If they could be convinced of that fact, the entire system of faith would follow as a consequence. Once admitted into the Church, they would perceive the various bearings of the atoning death of Jesus, and learn to refer the forgiveness of sins and justification to the blessed influences of that blood which alone cleanseth from all sin. Hence, while the fact of the resurrection is urged as a 'sign' and evidence upon those who are without, the epistles, which are addressed to believers, dwell principally upon the doctrines involved in the crucifixion of the Lord. This speech may be compared with that of St. Peter,—but each is characteristic of its author: while St. Peter dwells chiefly on repentance and baptism, St. Paul directs attention to the work of Christ, to which both owe their efficacy, and openly declares that the Mosaic law has no justifying power.

40. '*Beware therefore.*' It seems probable that St. Paul observed symptoms of dissent and disapprobation in his hearers, excited doubtless by what the Jews would generally consider to be an undervaluing of the law, to which they had always trusted for justification. They neither doubted

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.

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, "per-^{† Gr. in the week between, or, in the sabbath between.} suaded them to continue in ^{° ch. 11. 23. & 14. 22. ° Tit. 2. 11. Heb. 12. 15. 1 Pet. 5. 12.} the grace of God.

44. ¶ And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

their own ability to keep it, nor the inherent efficacy of burnt-offerings to abolish the guilt of involuntary sins.

41. '*Behold, ye despisers.*' St. Paul quotes the Septuagint version of this passage (Heb. i. 5), which varies slightly from the original. In this prediction of the judgments to be inflicted upon the faithless Jews when their temple was destroyed by the Chaldeans, St. Paul discerns a type of that heavier punishment which awaited his impenitent countrymen, when the second temple should in like manner be destroyed, and the nation finally dispersed. It is to be regarded as a solemn warning, which St. Paul doubtless repeated on all fitting occasions, and which was ere long justified by the events. Habakkuk delivered, and St. Paul repeated, the warning, each of them about twenty years before the destruction of the temple.

42. '*And when the Jews were gone out.*' The effects of this discourse exemplify the general results of St. Paul's preaching. It seems to have produced indignation in the Jews, who appear to

have left the synagogue hastily, lively feelings of interest in the Gentile proselytes, and a full adhesion of those who belonged to the remnant of grace.

'*The Gentiles.*' This word is wanting in many manuscripts.

'*The next sabbath.*' This is probably the correct interpretation¹ (see v. 44), but many critics² prefer that which is given in the margin, according to which the apostles were requested to preach or expound the Gospel during the week. The Jews were accustomed to meet in the synagogues on Monday and Thursday, as well as on the sabbath, and those days were called 'intermediate.'

43. '*To continue in the grace of God,*' &c. This expression signifies to hold fast that salvation which was graciously ordained and made known to them, and not to be turned aside by the prejudiced Jews. These men were, therefore, at once 'added to the Lord.'

44. '*Almost the whole city,*' &c. The apostles had, doubtless, employed the interval in instructing their converts,

¹ Kypke, Meyer, Humphry, Alford.

² Calvin, Beza, Rosenmuller, Schoetgen.

45. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and ¹spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

¹ ch. 18. 6.
¹ Pet. 4. 4
Jude 10.

46. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, ²It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but ³seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, ⁴we turn to the Gentiles.

² Matt. 10. 6.
ch. 3. 26.
ver. 26.
Rom. 1. 16.
³ Exod. 32.
10.
Dent. 32. 21.
Isai. 55. 6.
Matt. 21. 43.
Rom. 10. 19.
⁴ ch. 18. 6.
& 28. 28.
¹ Isai. 42. 6.
& 49. 6.
Luke 2. 32.

47. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, 'I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.'

and in conversing with men of all opinions in the public places, while the opposition of the Jews, and the discussions occasioned thereby, would tend to excite general curiosity and interest. This is a striking instance of the extent to which the dispersion of the Jews subserved the propagation of the Gospel.

45. '*The multitudes.*' The greater part consisted of Gentiles, whose admission to the preaching of the Messianic kingdom excited the jealousy and indignation of the carnally minded children of Abraham.¹

'*Spake against those things,*' &c. They probably opposed not the interpretation, but the application, of those prophetic Scriptures which St. Paul adduced.

'*Contradicting and blaspheming.*' It appears not to have been unusual in the synagogues to express assent or dissent; but such a disturbance as is implied by these words proves that the passions of the Jews were stronger than their reverence for God, whom they professedly met to worship. Their blasphemy doubtless consisted in calumnies against the Saviour.

46. '*Waxed bold,*' or spake out freely and unreservedly. The same

word is often used by St. Paul in speaking of his public preaching.

'*It was necessary.*' The necessity arose from the appointment of our Lord, who determined both the extent and the order of future missions before His departure. See i. 8.

'*Seeing ye put it,*' &c. The Jews rejected the Gospel, both through envy of the Gentiles, and because they did not recognise in it any adaptation to their own wants and condition. Their own judgment of themselves, in point of fact, excluded them from salvation.

47. '*So hath the Lord commanded us,*' &c. The passage which St. Paul quotes from the evangelical prophet (Isaiah xlix. 6) refers to the Messiah in His prophetic office, and was so understood by the Jews. But it applies in a certain sense to those who are appointed by the Messiah to speak and act in His name. They are His delegates and represent His person. The announcement of a work to be done by Him is therefore tantamount to a commandment given to His apostles. The passage is quoted to prove that the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles was no new or incidental result of the apostles' preaching, but

¹ Meyer.

48. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: "and as ^{ch. 2. 47.} many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

50. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and ^{2 Tim. 3. 11.} raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

51. ^{7 Matt. 10. 14. Mark 6. 11. Luke 9. 5. ch. 18. 6.} But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came into Iconium.

that it had been predetermined in the counsels of God.

48. '*As many as were ordained.*' The word ordained has caused much discussion. The original may mean either 'disposed' or 'appointed.' If we take the former sense, we must attribute the conversion of these Gentiles to their state of preparedness, and to the use which they had made of previous means of grace; if we take the latter, we must attribute it to the electing will of God. This seems to be the more natural and obvious meaning, and more in accordance with the general tenor of Holy Scriptures, which represent man as the cause of his own ruin, and God alone as the cause of his salvation. 'The word can never describe men as prepared, set in order, or disposed of themselves.' The ancient versions all give this interpretation even more strongly than our own. At the same time, it seems equally clear that it was not the object of St. Luke to state a doctrine, but a fact; viz. that those believed who had been appointed to believe, and it is unsafe, if not presumptuous, to deduce from such a statement any inference as to the grounds which determine the secret will of God. It should

suffice for us that His will is identical with right.

49. '*Throughout all the region.*' Through Pisidia. The apostles must have remained some time in this district, but it is uncertain how long.

50. '*The devout and honourable women.*' In most Gentile cities where the Jews were established, we hear of a large proportion of converts among the women. They appear to have been strongly attracted by the purity and sublimity of the Hebrew faith. The Jews skilfully availed themselves of their influence, and excited their passions against the Christians. They became either zealous converts, or bitter antagonists of the faith.

'*And chief men of the city.*' Some may have been proselytes, others were of course influenced by the 'devout and honourable women.'

'*Of their coasts.*' Or, boundaries of the country. The word 'coasts' formerly did not refer to the sea-coast only.

51. '*They shook off the dust,*' &c. This was in accordance with our Lord's injunction, Matt. x. 14.* It was symbolical of the rejection of those who rejected Christ. St. Paul alludes to this persecution, 2 Tim. iii. 11.

* Archbishop Sumner.

* Lightfoot and Wetstein.

^{*Matt. 5. 12.} 52. And the disciples ^{John 16. 22.} were filled with joy, and ^{ch. 2. 46.} with the Holy Ghost.

'Iconium.' A city of great celebrity,¹ both in ancient and medieval history. It was situate in a fertile plain to the east of Antioch in Pisidia, at the foot of Mount Taurus, and was the capital of Lycaonia. It is now called Conia, or Konieh, and has about 30,000 inhabitants.² Recent travellers describe it as a place of great beauty, and full of interesting

monuments. It is the residence of a pasha, and the capital of Carmania.

52. '*And the disciples,*' &c. Such was the contrast between the external circumstances and the inner feelings of the primitive Christians. In the midst of persecution they were full of joy, because they were full of the Holy Ghost, the comforter.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—4. This record throws great light upon the nature of the ministerial office, with its high dignity and solemn responsibilities. We learn that it involves a separation, or setting apart for a special work; that its conditions are a call of the Holy Spirit, and an external ordination by persons duly authorised thereto. For we must not suppose that such events are recorded merely as historical facts—they are ordinances upon the preservation of which, in all essentials, the integrity of the Church depends. We learn, moreover, from these verses under what circumstances special outpourings of divine grace are generally vouchsafed. A mighty stirring of the Spirit of Prayer is the usual precursor of singular manifestations of the Spirit of Power, which again are always followed by increased fervency in all devotional exercises. Nor should it be forgotten that fasting, so far from being a relic of Judaism, is twice mentioned as an observance of inspired teachers and prophets, at the very time that they were specially directed to send forth the tidings of a full and free salvation to the Gentiles.

5—12. Before the Word of God was spoken, Sergius Paulus and Elymas were both in a state of darkness; but there was this great difference between them—the one was an impostor and forger of lies, the other was a sincere enquirer for truth. None are so incapable of perceiving truth as those who are in the habit of deceiving others; none so near to the kingdom of God as men of candid and humble spirits. The Christian should pray that no allowed or unconscious tendency to deceit may make his heart impervious to saving impressions; and if he be overpowered by sudden temptation, that a seasonable chastisement may awaken and correct him.

13. It may be doubtful whether John Mark was influenced by fear of danger, or desire of ease, or love for his kinsmen after the flesh. But of this we may be sure, that he felt and deplored his error, which was afterwards forgiven, and

¹ Xenoph. Anab. l. 2, 19. Cicer. ad Fam. xv. 4, &c.

² Niebuhr, vol. iii. p. 131. Hamilton, vol. ii.

compensated by a life of self-sacrifice and arduous exertions. 'They only are justly accounted blessed whose minds are so regulated that the path of duty is the path of choice, whose will is bound up in the providence of God concerning them.'—ARCHBISHOP SUMNER.

16—22. The deep interest which the Jews always felt in the history of God's dealings with their forefathers should put Christians to shame, if they are ever tempted to listen with apathy or impatience to any portion of those Scriptures which to the spiritual ears speak throughout of Christ.

23—26. St. Paul follows the same course as St. Peter and St. Stephen in addressing the Jews, because he is led by the same Spirit. All sacred history serves but to prepare a way for the direct preaching of Christ; and our studies in the written Word are but lost time unless we learn from them the same lesson which he then pressed upon the Jews.

27—29. The perversity of man cannot impede the course of God's providence, but the guilt of our actions must be estimated, not by their effects, but by the principles and motives in which they originate.

30—37. The life of Christ is the life of the Church, of which His resurrection was the seal and pledge. As children of Adam, all must see corruption; but if a man live in Christ, and walk with Christ here, serving his generation according to the will of God, his sleep will be an awakening to bliss, his corruption will be raised in incorruption, and he will live with Christ in glory.

38—43. Contrast the effects of the preached Word on the two classes of hearers: to the believers it opened the fountain that cleanseth from all impurity, a full and free justification, absolution from the guilt and deliverance from the power of sin; while to the despisers it was a savour of death unto death, and sealed their condemnation.

44—48. The Jews perished in their unbelief, solely by reason of their own wilful and obstinate rejection of a salvation freely offered and pressed upon them. The passion which stimulated or caused that perversity was envy, the most malignant, but also one of the subtlest and commonest affections of our corrupt nature.

49—52. 'Rectified zeal is not more commendable and useful than inordinate and misguided is hateful and dangerous. Fire is a necessary and beneficial element, but, if it be once misplaced, nothing can be more direful. Thus, sometimes zeal turns to murder, sometimes to phrenzy, sometimes rude indiscretion. Wholesome and blessed is that zeal that is well grounded and well governed; grounded upon the word of truth, not upon unstable fancies; governed by wisdom and charity—wisdom to avoid rashness and excess, charity to avoid just offence.'—BISHOP HALL.

CHAPTER XIV.

The continuance and completion of the first apostolical mission to the Gentiles are described in this chapter. In the occurrences at Lystra we observe the first outburst of the tumultuous persecutions from which the early preachers of the Gospel suffered so much in all countries, and we learn in what manner the apostles were accustomed to argue with ignorant idolaters. Towards the end of the chapter, we also find a striking illustration of the dependence of all members of the Church upon each other and their Head.

A.D. 46—48.

1. 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.

2. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

3. Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, ^{• Mark 16. 20.} which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. ^{Heb. 2. 4.}

1. '*And so spake.*' With such power and persuasiveness. The topics were, doubtless, the same as at Antioch.

'*A great multitude.*' The incidental notices which show the rapid increase of the Gospel should not be unobserved.

'*Of the Greeks.*' These must have been proselytes to Judaism, otherwise they would not have been admitted to the synagogue,¹ but uncircumcised, or proselytes of the gate, or they would not be called Greeks. See note on chap. xi. 20.

2. '*Made their minds evil affected.*' By calumnies, probably grounded on

misrepresentation of the Messianic kingdom. The word, in the original, means to torment, embitter by irritating insinuations.

'*The brethren.*' This expression indicates that a Christian community was formed immediately.

3. '*Long time.*' It is uncertain how long, probably some months.

'*Therefore.*' On account both of the acceptance and the opposition which they met with. It was their duty to remain until the evil affection gave way, or burst out in overt acts of persecution.

'*In the Lord.*' The expression here

¹ Hensen, p. 76; and Meyer.

4. But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the ^bapostles. ^b ch. 13. 3.

5. And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, ^cto ^c 2 Tim. 3. 11. use *them* despitefully, and to stone them,

6. They were ware of *it*, and ^dfled unto Lystra and ^d Matt. 10. 23. Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

7. And there they preached the gospel.

used means in dependence upon the Lord Jesus.

'Which gave testimony.' By bestowing upon the converts the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.

'And granted signs and wonders,' &c. Miracles are called *signs*, as being evidences of a divine mission, *wonders*, as being calculated to startle and arrest attention. St. Paul appeals to miracles as the signs of an apostle. 2 Cor. xii. 12.¹

4. 'Was divided.' There was a schism among the inhabitants; but it is remarkable that the old idolatry seems to have disappeared without a struggle.

5. 'An assault,' or tumultuous preparation for an assault, which was prevented by the withdrawal of the apostles. Paley's remark is important: 'Had the assault been completed, had the history related that a stone was thrown, or even had the account of this transaction stopped, without going on to inform us that Paul and his companions were aware of the danger and fled, a contradiction between the history and the epistles (see 2 Cor. x. 25, 'Once I was stoned') would have ensued. Truth is necessarily consistent; but it is scarcely possible that independent accounts, not knowing how to guide them, should thus advance to the very brink of contradiction without falling into it.'

'Their rulers.' The Gentile magistrates and the chiefs of the synagogue appear to have guided the tumult. The intention of stoning must be referred to the Jews, who accused the apostles of blasphemy, a crime which would have legally involved this punishment. See note on chap. vii. 57.

6. 'Lystra and Derbe.' They may have fled to Derbe, as being in a different jurisdiction from Lystra. It was a resting-place for a short season, hallowed by many conversions. These places have been lately visited by Mr. Hamilton, who identifies Derbe with a place called Divlé, east of Caraman, and Lystra with Bin Bir Kilisseh, which lies on the direct road from Derbe to Iconium.² Two cities of Lycaonia, a wild, barren district lying among the highlands of Taurus. The inhabitants were a rough, hardy race, chiefly shepherds, but addicted to plunder, and little influenced by Creek civilisation. Their language was unintelligible to their neighbours, but it is uncertain whether it was a corrupt dialect of Greek³ or of Assyrian origin.⁴ Some critics, however, consider that it was akin to the Armenian.

'Unto the region,' &c. They appear to have remained here also some weeks or months.

7. 'And there.' There seems to have been no synagogue in either city.

¹ Paley Hor. Paul. c. xvi. § vii.

² Wieseler, p. 24. Hamilton, v. 11.

³ Guhling, ap. Winer, vol. ii. v. 7.

⁴ Jablonski, ed. Te Water, iii. 3. De Lingua Lycaonica.

* ch. 3. 2. 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 :

9. The same heard Paul speak : who stedfastly beholding him, and 'perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

* Isai. 35. 6. 10. Said with a loud voice, 'Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of ^{ch. 8. 10. & 28. 6.} Lycaonia, ^h 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.

The apostles, as we may conjecture, addressed the people wherever they found them in places of public resort.

8. '*There sat.*' This probably occurred in the forum or market place at Lystra. The lame man may have sat there waiting for alms.

'*Who never had walked.*' A very important circumstance in considering the miracle. See notes on chap. iii.

9. '*The same heard.*' The original denotes attentive hearing.

'*Stedfastly beholding him.*' The same expression is used of St. Paul (chap. xiii. 9), and of St. Peter (chap. iii. 4), where see note.

'*That he had faith.*' Faith in the Saviour whom Paul preached. We must remember that the apostles had the gift of discerning spirits. St. Paul did not judge by so unsure a criterion as the expression of the man's countenance ; he saw into his heart, 'being enlightened by the Holy Ghost, who dwelt in him.'¹

10. '*With a loud voice.*' Probably to call the attention of the people to the miracle.²

'*He leaped and walked.*' See note on chap. iii. 8.

11. '*Language of Lycaonia.*' This is stated to show that the apostles did not understand what was said, otherwise they would at once have condemned the superstition.

'*The gods are come down ;* &c. The belief in the ancient mythology, which is sometimes represented as having been nearly extinct in the time of the apostles, retained all its influence over the inhabitants of remote and unfrequented districts. The ancients believed that appearances of the gods were matters of frequent occurrence ;³ and there are many fabulous accounts of such events in Asia Minor. Jupiter and Mercury were believed to have visited this very district, and to have been hospitably received by Philemon and Baucis.⁴

12. '*They called Barnabas Jupiter.*' Jupiter was worshipped as the Supreme Deity, the Father of men and gods. He was also especially adored as the protector of states and cities. There was probably something peculiarly

¹ Chrysostom.

² Chrysostom.

³ Homer, Od. xvii. 484.

⁴ Ovid, Metam. 8, 611, &c.

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. ¹ Dan. 2. 46.

14. *Which* when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, ² they rent their clothes, and ran in among ³ the people, crying out, ⁴ Matt. 26. 65.

15. And saying, Sirs, ⁵ why do ye these things? ⁶ ch. 10. 26. ⁷ James 5. 17. ⁸ We also are men of like passions with you, and ⁹ Rev. 19. 10.

majestic and impressive in the appearance of St. Barnabas.¹

'*And Paul, Mercurius.*' Mercurius, or Hermes, was worshipped as the god of arts and eloquence. St. Luke assigns a sufficient reason why St. Paul should have been identified with this deity. The statements of his adversaries which he quotes (2 Cor. x. 1, 10) may perhaps justify the supposition² that he was inferior in personal dignity to Barnabas; but the notion that he was small of stature and of mean appearance rests mainly upon an apocryphal legend.³ Mercurius was always represented as a manly and well-proportioned youth.⁴

13. '*Which was before their city.*' It is probable that there were two temples of Jupiter at Lystra, one in the citadel, the other before the chief gate of the city. '*Which*' must be referred directly to Jupiter, meaning thereby his temple; for the heathens regarded their idols not merely as representatives, but, in a certain sense, personifications, of their gods, and the temples as their abodes. The same idolatrous tendency is observed among the worshippers at different shrines of the Virgin Mary.

'*Oxen and garlands.*' Oxen were sacrificed both to Jupiter and Mercury.⁵

'*Unto the gates.*' It is doubtful

whether this means the gates of the city,⁶ or, as in other passages, the vestibule or court-gate of the house in which the apostles abode. The latter appears more probable. The people looked upon that place as a temple which was inhabited by gods.⁷ The garlands seem to have been intended to deck both the gates of the house and the necks of the victims.

14. '*The apostles.*' This expression should be remarked. It proves that St. Barnabas was an apostle, which some persons have unreasonably denied.

'*Heard of.*' It is probable that they entered their house after the performance of the miracle, and were therefore not aware of what was taking place in the city.

'*They rent their clothes.*' A common sign of extreme grief or indignation, especially on hearing blasphemy. See Matt. xxvi. 65; Numbers xiv. 6; 2 Samuel i. 2.

'*Ran in.*' The word in the original means that they rushed out of the house.

15. '*Men of like passions.*' That is, subject to the same infirmities, and sharing the same nature.

'*And preach unto you.*' This is said to account for the miracle; although the apostles were not of a higher

¹ Chrysostom.

² Conybeare and Howson.

³ The Acts of Paul and Thecla.

⁴ Müller, Archæol. § 380.

⁵ Homer, Il. ii. 402, and Persius, ii.

44.

⁶ Neander and others.

⁷ Conybeare and Howson.

* 1 Sam. 12. preach unto you that ye should turn from "these
 21.
 1 Kings 16. vanities "unto the living God, "which made heaven,
 13.
 Jer. 14. 22. and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:
 Amos 2. 4. 16. "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk
 1 Cor. 8. 4. in their own ways.
 * 1 Thess. 1.
 9.
 " Gen. 1. 1. 17. "Nevertheless he left not himself without wit-
 Ps. 33. 6. & ness, in that he did good, and "gave us rain from
 146. 6.
 Rev. 14. 7.
 " Ps. 81. 12. ch. 17. 30. 1 Pet. 4. 8. " ch. 17. 27. Rom. 1. 20. " Lev. 26. 24. Deut. 11. 14. & 28. 12. Job 5. 10.
 Ps. 65. 10. & 68. 9. & 147. 8. Jer. 14. 22. Matt. 5. 45.

nature, yet they come with a peculiar office—as messengers of glad tidings, and announcing the living God.

'*These vanities.*' The false deities, for whom ye take us, and whom ye ignorantly worship. The word means that they are lifeless and powerless; in fact, having no existence but in the imagination of the superstitious.

'*The living God, who made,*' &c. God is contrasted with idols, as the source of all life and the creator of the universe. The heathens did not even imagine that their deities were the makers of heaven and earth. Their Jupiter, according to their own legends, was born at a period long subsequent to the formation of both. They differed as to the forming or moulding power, but universally held the eternal pre-existence of matter. Hence St. Paul saith,—'Through *faith* we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.' Hebrews xi. 3. It is important to observe how the apostle adapts his arguments to the intellectual position of his audience. In addressing heathens, he first appeals to the elementary principles of what is called natural religion; a mode of argument which, as Grotius observes, should be borne in mind by those who have to preach the Gospel to persons educated in idolatry.

16. '*Suffered all nations,*' &c. He left them without a special revelation of His attributes and will; without the

restraints and directions of a miraculously attested law. St. Paul expresses the same fact even more strongly (chap. xvii. 30): 'The times of this ignorance God winked at.' He does not account for this mysterious dispensation, but it appears to be intimated that a general revelation was not made until the resources of human intellect had been exhausted, and confessed to be unavailing, in the attempt to find out God.

17. '*He left not himself without witness.*' This verse shows to what extent natural religion might be expected to lead the Gentiles to the knowledge of God. It should have taught them the goodness and providence of the Supreme Being. The argument is carried farther in the epistle to the Romans, where it is proved that God gave them an internal witness; so that though less favoured than the Jews, they had a natural revelation, for the use and abuse of which they were responsible. Rom. i. 20, ii. 15. The guilt of the idolatrous heathens consisted in their neglect of these admonitions—in their apostasy from the patriarchal faith—in their superstitious and blasphemous inventions concerning the powers of the universe—and in their licentious and cruel ceremonies.

'*And gave us rain.*' The Jews justly considered rain to be a peculiar testimony to God's power and goodness. The most striking images in Eastern poetry are taken from

heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

18. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

19. ¶ 'And there came thither *certain* Jews from ' ch. 13. 45. Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, "and, " 2 Cor. 11. 25. having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, sup- 2 Tim. 3. 11. posing he had been dead.

20. Howbeit, as the disciples stood roundabout him, he rose up, and came into the city : and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21. And when they had preached the gospel to that

heavy showers after long droughts. It is the common type of the resurrection with Mahometans.¹

'*Filling our hearts,*' &c. The beauty of this verse has been often remarked. In the original it has a lyrical cadence, and has been supposed to be a quotation from some Greek poet.² This would be quite in accordance with St. Paul's custom. See chap. xvii. 28.

19. '*And there came thither.*' It seems from the word used here in the original, that these Jews arrived while the tumult was proceeding. It is hard to see how they could so soon have turned the feelings of the people into so contrary a direction, except by accusing the apostles of sorcery. In that case the people might be induced to believe that they declined divine honours through fear of the gods. This event gives us a lively idea of the troublous and imperilled existence of the first preachers of the faith. See 2 Cor. iv. 8, 11. The Jews were, however, the persons who stoned St. Paul on this occasion, with the consent of the people, who probably

singled him out as the chief speaker of what they now considered to be blasphemies against their gods. St. Paul alludes to this, 2 Cor. xi. 25, and 2 Tim. iii. 11.

'*Drew him out of the city.*' Dragged his body through the streets, and cast him out as unworthy of burial. No uncommon act of brutality among the Greeks.

20. '*As the disciples stood round him.*' The converts of Lystra appear to have followed the rioters, and, when they withdrew, to have surrounded what they believed to be his corpse, doubtless to mourn over him, or it may be to prepare the body for burial.

'*He rose up.*' This sudden restoration not only to life, but to strength, is certainly to be regarded as miraculous. The Jews would not easily have been persuaded that he was dead had he been only stunned, nor would he have been able to return to his usual avocations after such treatment, without a special interposition of divine power.³

21. '*Had taught many.*' The marginal translation gives the true sense

¹ Koran, vii. xxxvi.

² Humphry.

³ Calvin, &c. Meyer.

* Matt. 28. city, *and † had taught many, they returned again to
19. Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch.

† Gr. *Had*
made many
disciples.

7 ch. 11. 23.

& 13. 43.

* Matt. 10.

38. & 16. 24.

Luke 22. 28,

29.

Rom. 8. 17.

2 Tim. 2.

11, 12. & 3.

12.

* Tit. 1. 5.

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.

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.

24. And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

—they made many disciples. The same word is used by our Lord: 'Go ye therefore and teach—make disciples of all nations.' Matt. xxviii. 19. It involves baptism and subsequent instruction in Christian doctrine.

22. '*Confirming the souls,*' &c. This expression undoubtedly refers chiefly to the spiritual consolations and instructions which the apostles imparted. But it may not be questioned that baptism was followed by imposition of the apostles' hands, and it is probable that such means of grace may be included in the term 'confirming.'

'*To continue in the faith.*' The exhortation had special reference to the dangers and temptations by which they were surrounded.

'*We must.*' The necessity arises from the opposition which Christianity must encounter in a corrupt world. Or it may be referred still more simply to the divine will, which attaches such a condition to the entrance into the kingdom of God. The Hebrew Rabbis were not unaware that afflictions were necessarily to be undergone by the disciples of Messiah.¹

'*The kingdom of God.*' The kingdom of glory which will be revealed on the second coming of Christ.

23. '*When they had ordained.*' The word used in this passage certainly means that the apostles appointed, and probably that they selected the elders, or presbyters of the several churches.² Jerome (on Isaiah lviii.) interprets the word of ordination by laying on of hands. Titus and Timothy afterwards exercised the same authority as delegates of St. Paul in Crete and Ephesus. Tit. i. 5; 1 Tim. v. 22. The selection of the ministers appears, after the apostles' time, to have rested generally with the congregations, but the power of ordination was always restricted to the apostles and their successors in the government of the Church.

'*In every church.*' One elder in each church or congregation, though there might be more than one in each city.

'*Had prayed with fasting.*' See xiii. 1. We must understand this of a solemn fast observed by the whole body of believers in each city. The ember days are appointed in our church on the same principle.

24. '*After that,*' &c. They appear to have revisited all the places in which they had previously made converts.

¹ Vajikra Rabba F. 173, 4, ap. Meyer.

² Olshausen. See, however, Burton Lect. H. E. vol. i. p. 149, 150.

25. And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia :

26. And thence sailed to Antioch, ^bfrom whence ^bch. 13. 1, 3. they had been ^crecommended to the grace of God for ^cch. 15. 40. the work which they fulfilled.

27. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, ^dthey rehearsed all that God had ^dch. 15. 4, done with them, and how he had ^eopened the door of ^e1 Cor. 16. faith unto the Gentiles.

28. And there they abode long time with the disciples. ²Cor. 2. 12. Col. 4. 3. Rev. 3. 8.

25. '*In Perga.*' See xiii. 3.

'*Attalia.*' A seaport of Pamphylia, near the mouth of the Catarrhactes, built by Attalus, king of Pergamus. It is now a fortified place of some importance, beautifully situated round a small harbour, and is called Antali, Satalia, or Adalia.'

26. '*And thence sailed to Antioch.*' Although these apostles acted under the special influence of the Holy Ghost, by whom they had been directly called to the work, yet they still considered themselves to be, if not under the authority of the Church of Antioch, yet in close connection with it, and in a certain sense responsible to it for their proceedings. They were leading and ruling members, but still members of an organic whole. Neither Holy Scripture, nor the Primitive Church, offers any example of missionaries acting on their own responsibility.

'*Recommended to the grace,*' &c. Our version gives the exact meaning. Antioch was the place whence they had set out, the Church having previously commended them by solemn prayer with fasting to the grace of God, that they might be strengthened for the work. They return, having

now accomplished that work so far as regarded their late mission.

27. '*The church.*' All the congregations at Antioch, each with its own presbyter, or, as we should say, rector. See note, xiii.

'*All that God had done with them.*' The meaning of the words seems to be that God acted with them, by their instrumentality. See xi. 21. It may, however, be a Hebraism, and mean what God had done to or for them.²

'*Opened the door,*'—or rather a door. God admitted the Gentiles, so to speak, by a special and peculiar putting forth of His grace, into the spiritual temple of the Church. The expression implies that they had gone further in converting the Gentiles than formerly. Hitherto the Gentiles who received the Gospel had been previously proselytes of the gate; but those who were converted by the apostles on this journey had been in great part gross idolaters up to the period of their admission into the Church.³

28. '*Long time.*' See Introduction. The effect of the late mission must have been felt during the residence of St. Paul at Antioch: on the one hand,

¹ Winer, vol. i. p. 113. Conybeare and Howson.

² Ewald, Heb. Gram., p. 608.

³ Burton Lect. H. vol. i. p. 151.

the Church must have acquired a clearer insight into the impartiality and perfect freeness of the Christian dispensation, while, on the other hand, the lingering prejudices of the Juda-

ising party would be irritated to the last degree by the rapid disappearance of that line of demarcation which had hitherto separated them from their Gentile brethren.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—3. When the Gospel is preached by a faithful and united ministry, His Spirit is ever present, and makes their words effectual to the conversion of multitudes. That result must, however, be expected to call forth envious and malignant feelings; and unbelievers of the most opposite characters will generally be found unanimous in their hostility against the Christian brotherhood. Such hostility is no real evil to the Church; it serves but to elicit the higher graces of patient, persevering love and holy confidence in Him who giveth efficacy to the word of His grace.

4. Neutrality in religion is only practicable when there is a general indifference to matters of spiritual concernment; but when God's word is spoken out clearly and strongly, all men must choose their side, and will either take part with the people of the Lord, or with His enemies, by whom they are calumniated and persecuted.

5—7. Persecution is borne patiently, nay, cheerfully, by Christians; but it is courted only by fanatics. The apostles withdrew from the danger, not from fear, for they ceased not to preach the Gospel, but because they would not give an occasion of blood-guiltiness to those whom they yearned to bring under the influence of the Spirit of love.

8—10. If a bystander had been requested to point out the most pitiable object in that multitude who listened to the apostle's preaching, he would doubtless have fixed on the poor helpless cripple. But the grace of God was even then infusing faith, hope, and life into his heart, and making him an inheritor of joy and glory. The miracle of healing did but represent to the eye of sense the greater miracle of spiritual restoration which had already begun.

11—13. Observe the different effects of faith and of superstition: the one exemplified by the spectators, the other by the subject of this miracle. Faith is the channel by which life and power are conveyed to the helpless cripple; superstition, like a thick cloud, intercepts or distorts the light that cometh from above. Faith fixes its eye upon the invisible source of all blessings; superstition deifies the earthly instrument. Faith brings man to the knowledge and adoration of the only true God; while superstition wastes the gifts of God, and offers them in sacrifice to lying vanities.

14. The folly and extravagance of sin amaze men of spiritual minds, but do not excite in them any feelings akin to ridicule. The apostles rent their clothes with horror, where the mere philosopher would have looked on with haughty indifference.


15—17. Observe the tone and purport of the apostles' discourse. There is no reviling, no expression of bitterness or scorn, but an earnest appeal to that

unquenchable light which bears testimony to the power and love of the Creator in the innermost heart of the most ignorant and degraded sinner. On the other hand, there is no compromise. The sinner is taught that the idols which he worshipped must be forsaken, that he must turn at once unto the living God, or that light will be but the witness of his condemnation.

19, 20. 'Charity is always glorious, but never appears more so than when shining forth from a dark cloud of affliction; when it evinces that our thoughts are not so engrossed by our own sufferings as to forget those of others; when we are not unmindful to perform kind offices to those around us in moments of deep affliction.'—BISHOP HORNE. Such charity was indeed shown by St. Paul, whose first and last thoughts were ever for the brethren, and who made all his trials and crosses subservient to their edification.

20—22. The followers of a crucified Saviour must needs pass through tribulation in the way which He hath trodden; but they have sufficient motives to encourage them, and His all-sufficient grace to sustain them. 'That grace enables them to look through the sufferings of the present time, to the glory which shall be revealed. Faith shows them heaven opened, and Jesus, who was crucified, standing at the right hand of the Majesty on high; it shows them a long and goodly train of those who once carried their crosses, but are now crowned, and receive palms from the Son of God, whom they confessed in the world.'—BISHOP HORNE.

23—28. The unity of the Church in that primitive age was attested by the harmonious co-operation of all its members. Her missionaries were sent forth with her blessing, established all things in accordance with her model and in subordination to her authority, and returned home sure of sympathy with their trials, and of joy in their success. We should be grateful that so many traces of this unity, for which our Saviour supplicated His Father on the very night of His passion, have yet been preserved in our own Church, and we should strive earnestly to prove our gratitude by praying and working for the peace and prosperity of our Zion.



CHAPTER XV.

St. Luke proceeds to give an account of the circumstances which led to the first general council of the Church, as well as of its proceedings and decision — a most important epoch, which should be carefully studied. The Hebrews were too much attached to the law of their fathers, and too deeply convinced of its divine authority, to be easily reconciled to what appeared to them to be tantamount to its abrogation; nor could they at first perceive that Christianity, while it dispensed with its external forms, retained and exalted its spiritual principle. Mingled too with these natural feelings were others less excusable, and far more obstinate and dangerous,—viz. pride in their exclusive privileges, and contempt for the less favoured Gentiles. The former feelings influenced the most eminent Christians, until the will of God was miraculously revealed to St. Peter: the latter produced violent and lengthened struggles within the Church, and terminated in a permanent schism. The Jewish seceders formed a sect afterwards known by the name of Ebionites, who retained the ceremonial law, and gradually cast away the vital and essential truths of Christianity. In reading this chapter, however, we must be on our guard against hasty and presumptuous judgments. Our prejudices probably lie in a different direction from those of the Hebrew zealots; and, unless we understand the points then at issue, we shall not duly appreciate the wisdom of the apostolic decree. Several distinct views were then held by conscientious believers. None doubted any longer that Gentiles could be received into the Church without previously becoming proselytes of righteousness. That point had been settled finally in the case of Cornelius. But many still thought that the Gentiles, when converted, were bound to observe the whole law in order to be fit subjects of Messiah's kingdom. They considered that the Old Testament, which, taken literally, might seem to favour this view, was confirmed by our Lord's authority, and they were not prepared to accept a spiritual interpretation. Others, again, were of opinion that the law was still binding upon themselves as circumcised Jews, but that the Gentiles were free from its obligation, since all believers were completely justified by the grace of Christ. This opinion was entertained by some of the most conscientious Hebrew Christians, and was only blameworthy when it was connected with a feeling that the combination of Jewish observances with Christian privileges constituted a higher state of religious life. Others, again, in whom a more complete appreciation of the spirituality of the Gospel had been developed, were now convinced that all the peculiarities of Judaism were rapidly to disappear in the Christian Church; that not only the Gentiles, but the Jews also, were released from the bondage of ceremonial forms; and that there was great danger lest the fundamental principles of the faith should be obliterated or obscured by the prevalence of Judaizing notions. St. Paul is the chief representative of this opinion, while the apostles St. James and Peter were undeniably inclined to the second; as, indeed, is proved in the case of St. James, by the fact that he

was highly esteemed by the Jews for his punctilious attention to all the forms of the law. It is evident that such wide divergences of opinion might have issued in a fatal schism, had not all passions been restrained and regulated by the Spirit of God. Under His influence the hearts of the apostles and all true Christians were enlarged, and the council adopted a decree which satisfied all lovers of peace. The prejudices of the Hebrews were so far consulted that the Gentile converts were specially directed to observe the precepts which were previously binding upon proselytes of the gate, while the Jews were left free to act as they had been wont in matters touching the law. The authority of Paul and Barnabas was fully recognised, and two other disciples, imbued with the same spirit, were commissioned to support them on their return from Jerusalem to Antioch. Henceforth the position of those who held extreme Jewish opinions was no more the same. Since the Holy Ghost had decided, that which might once have been but an excess of scrupulousness became a schismatic and heretical prejudice. So deeply rooted was this prejudice that we find St. Paul contending against it to the end of his career. It was the immediate cause of his greatest trials during his ministry, and it gave occasion to the clearest and fullest declarations of the distinctive truths of Christianity that are to be found in the inspired writings.

A.D. 48—49.

1. AND ^acertain men which came down from Judæa ^bGal. 2. 12. taught the brethren, and said, ^cExcept ye be cir- ^dJohn 7. 22. cumcised ^eafter the manner of Moses, ye cannot be ^fver. 5. saved. ^gGal. 5. 2. ^hPhil. 3. 2. ⁱCol. 2. 8, 11, 16.

2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small ^jGen. 17. ^kLev. 12. 2.

1. '*And certain men.*' These men falsely represented themselves to be commissioned by the apostles at Jerusalem. See v. 24. They were half-converted Pharisees, and are described by St. Paul as 'false brethren, unawares brought in.' Gal. ii. 4. They appear to have left Jerusalem when they were resisted by the apostles, and to have gone to Antioch, counting on their own position as members of the mother Church, and hoping to subvert the authority of St. Paul by appealing to the prejudices of their countrymen.

'*The brethren.*' The Gentile converts of Antioch.

'*Ye cannot be saved.*' The zealots who formerly believed that circumcision was necessary as a preliminary condition of admission into Messiah's

kingdom, being driven from that position, still taught that it was indispensable as a completion or ratification of baptism. Proselytes to Judaism were baptized, as well as circumcised, and they considered that proselytes to Christianity, which, in their opinion, was but a perfected form of Judaism, were in an analogous position. Circumcision involved the obligation to observe the whole law, and thus subverted the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ.

2. '*No small dissension.*' A vehement defence of the truth, when invadively assailed, is quite in accordance with the precepts of that wisdom from above, which is first pure, and then peaceable. Compare St. Paul's expressions, Gal. i. 3, 9.

'*They determined.*' The Church at

dissension and disputation with them, they determined that ^{Gal. 2. 1.} Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

^{Rom. 15. 24.} 3. And ^{1 Cor. 16. 6.} being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, ^{11.} declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and ^{5 ver. 12. ch. 14. 27. & 21. 19.} they declared all things that God had done with them.

Antioch, of whom, perhaps, the great majority were Gentiles. It is supposed by most commentators¹ that this journey to Jerusalem is the same with that to which St. Paul alludes in the second chapter of Galatians. If so, the determination of the Church of Antioch was made in consequence of a special revelation of the Holy Spirit, communicated to them most probably by St. Paul himself. Antioch was the mother Church of the Gentiles, and it was of the most vital importance that it should act, and be known to act, in perfect harmony with the mother Church of all Christendom.

'And certain others of them.' Titus accompanied St. Paul, and, as we learn from the apostle, was not compelled to be circumcised. See Gal. ii. 1 and 3. He was probably selected on that account as a distinguished Gentile convert who had received the gift of the Holy Spirit in uncircumcision. His name is not mentioned in the Acts.

'Unto the apostles and elders.' The apostles were consulted as governors of the universal Church, the elders as

representatives and ministers of the Church in Judea.

3. *'Being brought on their way.'* The elders and leading members of the Church escorted them, probably to a considerable distance, to show them honour. This was tantamount to a declaration that, notwithstanding the attacks made on their authority, the Church recognised them as inspired apostles, and felt no doubt as to the issue of the conference.

'Phenice and Samaria.' The converts there were not prepossessed against the Gentiles, not having been nurtured in Hebrew prejudices. It must, however, be regarded as a proof of the thorough change of feelings produced by the Gospel, that these men rejoiced so truly in the admission of heathens into the Church. The spirit of all ancient religions was essentially national and exclusive. Christianity alone could make brothers of aliens.

4. *'They were received.'* This expression denotes the public reception of Paul and Barnabas in their official capacity as ambassadors from the

¹ Theodoret, Baronius, Pearson, Hug, Winer, Olshausen, Anger, Hem-

sen, &c. See, however, Wieseler, p. 180.

5. But there *rose up* certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, ¹That it was need-¹ful 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.

7. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, ¹Men *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, ²which knoweth the hearts, bare them

Church of Antioch.¹ St. Paul informs us that private conferences, either before or (as seems more probable) after this public reception, were held with the principal rulers of the Church, St. James, St. Peter, and St. John, in reference to the great principles which this question involved. Gal. ii. 2.

'*And they declared.*' The object of the narrative was to show the apostles that God had wrought by their instrumentality, and so had, in fact, decided the question now referred to the Church in Jerusalem.

5. '*But there rose up.*' These persons had originated the movement, and were now prepared to support it with vehemence. It is evident that the party was numerous and influential at Jerusalem, but it is certain that it was not countenanced by any of the apostles.

'*To circumcise them.*' The Gentile converts, who are not named, but had been referred to as the object of God's work in the preceding narrative.

6. '*Came together.*' This was a formal and solemn assembly of the Church, consisting of the apostles, and presbyters, and many of the brethren. These were probably dele-

gates from the several congregations in and near Jerusalem. It appears evident that they took no part in the discussion, but signified their assent to the decision of the apostles. See verses 12 and 22.

7. '*Much disputing.*' The difference of opinion seems therefore to have extended even to the presbyters.

'*Peter rose up.*' St. Peter speaks first, as the apostle who had been specially directed to admit the Gentiles into the Church, in the case of Cornelius, and also as the foremost among the apostles. See note, i. 15. We may also regard this as a further fulfilment of our Lord's declaration. Matt. xvi. 18, 19. St. Peter on this occasion opened the gate of the kingdom of heaven, and loosed a heavy yoke.

'*A good while ago.*' A long time, comparatively speaking—about half the period that had elapsed since the first Pentecost. It was scarcely reasonable to agitate a question which had been settled in principle about ten years. See Introductory Chronology.

8. '*Which knoweth the hearts.*' This attribute of God is specified to show that it is the inward disposition, and not any outward distinction,

¹ Meyer.
N 2

ch. 10. 44. 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.

12. ¶ Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave

which constitutes stress or hardness to Christian piety.

St. Peter fully admits that none can enter or remain in Messiah's kingdom without purification, but he insists that that has constituted the internal character of which circumcision was but a sign in all believers alike. Faith is the unconditional cause of purification, which is effectually wrought by the Spirit of Christ, who dwells in the heart of believers. Observe the harmony between St. Peter's doctrine and that of St. Paul in his address to St. Peter, Gal. ii. 14—21.

10. 'Why tempt ye God.' By resisting or questioning His will, when it had been so plainly declared.

'To put a yoke.' We are not to suppose that the law was a yoke because it involved much exertion, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, but because it burdened the consciences of those who, misapprehending the objects for which it was instituted, sought to be justified by it. That error filled the minds with anxiety and slavish terrors, and led to the introduction of a vast number of minute and punctilious observances, intended to guard against the approximation to any such transgression as might involve a forfeiture of the blessings promised to the true

Israelites.' St. Paul cheerfully submitted to the law himself, but when it was proposed as a condition of acceptance to his converts, he declared plainly that, if they were circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing. Gal. v. 2.

'Neither our fathers nor we.' This is a remarkable appeal addressed to the consciences of the Hebrews by the apostle of the circumcision. Gal. ii. 3. They knew that they could not fulfil the law so as to be secure of salvation on that ground.

11. 'But we believe.' So far from deeming it necessary to impose such conditions upon the Gentiles, St. Peter points out that the Hebrew Christians trusted for salvation to the free grace of Christ alone. He repudiates all reliance on the works of the law not less distinctly than St. Paul.

'Even as they.' The Gentile Christians are evidently meant.* It is the object of St. Peter to show that Jew and Gentile are saved in the same manner and on the same grounds, not by works, but by grace. The older commentators[†] suppose that 'they' refers to the forefathers of the Jews.

12. 'Kept silence.' The authority of St. Peter put an end to the 'much disputing,' and induced the assembly to listen patiently to the arguments of

* Neander, p. 162.

† Meyer.

‡ Corn. & Lap. Piscator, Calvin, &c.

audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. ^{ch. 14. 27.}

13. ¶ And after they had held their peace, James ^{ch. 12. 17.} answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me:

14. Simeon hath declared how God at the first ^{ver. 7.} 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' ^{Amos 9. 11, 12.} the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and

Barnabas and Paul, which were based mainly, as it appears, on the fact that God had declared His will, during their mission, by as great miracles as in the case of Cornelius. Miracles are here again appealed to as credentials from God, and apparently as indispensable attestations of any new revelation of His will.

13. '*James answered.*' St. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, and near relative of our Lord (see note, xii. 17), speaks with that authority which, on the Romanists' hypothesis, would have belonged to St. Peter. The opinion of St. James would have peculiar weight, both because he was head of the church to which the embassy was sent, and because he was known to be personally a strict observer of the law.¹

14.—18. The arguments of St. James are simple and decisive. He rests upon the testimony of the apostle Simon Peter, and of the prophet Amos, which sufficiently proved that the election of the Gentiles formed part of the scheme of Divine Providence from the beginning. He appeals to Peter rather than to Paul and Barnabas,

because they could not be judges or witnesses in their own cause.²

14. '*Simeon.*' This is the original Hebrew form of the name Simon, which was more commonly in use at that time.³ This is one indication of the accuracy with which St. Luke records the proceedings of the council.

'*At the first.*' In the case of Cornelius.

'*To take out,*' &c. To elect a peculiar people from the Gentiles, who henceforth should be united with the spiritual Israel in the adoration of God's name, as their Lord and Father.

15. '*The words of the prophets.*' St. James appeals to the testimony of the prophets generally, and selects one text as an example.

16. '*I will return.*' St. James gives the spiritual signification rather than the exact words of Amos. The prophecy speaks of the restitution of the kingdom of David, which began by the Incarnation of Christ, and will be completed by His second coming. In the meantime the process of rebuilding is continued by the gradual conversion of the Gentiles.³

¹ Joseph. Ant. xx. 9, 10.

² Hensen, p. 91.

³ Alford.

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.

18. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

^a ver. 28. 19. Wherefore ^amy sentence is, that we trouble not ^b1 Thess. 1. them, which from among the Gentiles ^care turned to God:

20. But that we write unto them, that they abstain

'*The tabernacle of David,*' or his tent, viz. his house and family:¹ a common metaphor among the Arabians.

17. '*The residue of men.*' In the original we read, the residue of Edom. But the Edomites, as a nation most hostile to Israel, were types of the idolatrous heathen. The Jewish writers frequently call Christians Edomites.

18. '*Known unto God.*' This verse expresses devout admiration of the wisdom and love of God, who had decreed the salvation of the Gentiles from the beginning.

19. '*My sentence is.*' As Chrysostom remarks, this expression proves that the highest authority at that time belonged to St. James. He says again, that the question was decided by St. James 'because the government of the Church of Jerusalem was entrusted to him.'²

'*We trouble not.*' Impose any unnecessary or additional restraint. The expression seems to imply that the Gentiles had spontaneously adopted

the rules which he is about to lay down.

20. '*That they abstain.*' The object of these prohibitions, which were substantially the same as those observed by proselytes of the gate,³ appears to have been principally to take away all reasonable pretext for complaint on the part of the Jews, who held each of the practices forbidden to be abominations.

'*Pollutions of idols.*' The flesh of victims offered to idols (see v. 29), part of which was either eaten at banquets given by the offerers to their friends, or sold in the public market.⁴ The reasons for this prohibition, and the extent to which it was considered binding, will be best understood by referring to 1 Corinthians viii. and x.

'*Fornication.*' Interpreters of the Bible have been surprised to find this prohibition among enactments referring to ceremonial observances. Some have therefore supposed that spiritual fornication or idolatry,⁵ others that marriages within prohibited degrees, were intended.⁶ But

¹ Olshausen.

² Hom. xxxiii. p. 255 B. & 256 B.

³ Neander, p. 164. Wieseler, p. 185, note. Buxtorf, Lex. Rab. See also Clementin. Hom. vii. 4.

⁴ Spencer de Leg. p. 693; Cudworth, § 6; Pott on 1 Cor. i. p. 305, ap. Meyer.

⁵ Beza, Selden.

⁶ Wieseler, l. c.

⁷from pollutions of idols, and ⁸from fornication, and ⁹from things strangled, ¹⁰and from blood.

21. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, ¹¹being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

22. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with

it is far more probable that the word is to be understood in its usual signification of acts of sensual defilement. These were directly connected with idolatrous rites throughout the East,¹ and especially in those countries where most of the converts resided. Syria was notorious for its licentious festivals. A special enactment was moreover called for on general grounds. The Gentiles lived almost universally in habits of licentiousness, and did not consider fornication to be sinful or disgraceful. Their conscience was, in fact, silent and dormant, and needed to be awakened by a direct command.² 'It is a coincidence worthy of notice, that the denial of a moral obligation in this particular has formed a prominent feature in the ethical systems of the most celebrated modern infidels.'³

'Things strangled, and from blood.' This must be regarded as a concession to the feelings of the Hebrews, which were no mere prejudices, but founded on the law of God. See Gen. ix. 4; Lev. xvii. 13, 14; Deut. xii. 23, 24. But the obligation of these prohibitions ceased when those feelings gradually died away after the abrogation of the ceremonial law. The Greek Church has, however, ad-

hered to the letter of the decree,⁴ although the early Fathers understood it to be only valid for a season.⁵

21. 'For Moses.' It is questioned whether this verse assigns a reason for the prohibitions, inasmuch as the constant reading of the law would make attendants at the synagogues very sensitive to violations of its precepts;⁶ or whether it is intended to state that the Hebrews needed no special directions, since they heard the law regularly, and had no wish to be freed from its observance.⁷ The former explanation is probably correct. The decision would leave the Hebrews free to observe, and the Gentiles free to dispense with, the ceremonial law, especially with reference to circumcision.

'That preach him.' 'The Church, as a witness, preached the revealed truth of God by reading publicly the sacred scripture.' See Hooker,⁸ who refers to this passage. It is true that the doctors of the law addressed the people on the sabbath days, but not always, nor perhaps generally with direct reference to the lesson from the law. The passage is conclusive as to this use of the word 'preaching.'

22. 'Then pleased it.' It was formally determined by the council,

¹ Compare Numbers xxv. & xxxi., 1 Peter iv. 3, and see note, chap. vii. 41.

² Rom. i. 29; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 13, 18; Ephes. v. 3.

³ Hinds, History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity, p. 187.

⁴ Suicer Thes. i. p. 113, and Neander.

⁵ Hinds, p. 185; Augustin, c. Faust, xxxii. 18.

⁶ Hensen, Meyer.

⁷ Schol. ap. Matth. Chrysostom, Neander, p. 164, note 2.

⁸ E. P. V. xix. 1, 2.

⁷ Gen. 35. 2.
⁸ Exod. 20. 3.
⁹ 23.
¹⁰ Ezek. 20. 30.
¹¹ 1 Cor. 8. 1.
& 10. 20, 28.
Rev. 2. 14,
20.
¹ 1 Cor. 6. 9,
18.
Gal. 5. 19.
Ephes. 5. 3.

the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*,
 * ch. 1. 23. Judas surnamed *Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

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:

* ver. 1.
 Gal. 2. 4. &
 5. 12.
 Tit. 1. 10,
 11.

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:

as representing the universal Church, of which all the chief governors were present.

'*With the whole church*,' i.e. all members of the Church, who were not only present at the council, but evidently took part in the deliberations, as afterwards they are known to have done in councils held at Rome and Carthage.

'*Judas Barsabas*,' supposed by some¹ to have been a brother of Joseph Barsabas (chap. i. 23), is known only from this passage.

'*Silas*,' called also Silvanus in St. Paul's epistles (2 Cor. i. 19, &c.), became illustrious as one of the companions of the apostle. At a later period he appears to have been connected with St. Peter. See 1 Peter v. 12. He is said to have been appointed the first Bishop of Corinth.²

'*Chief men*,' or men holding high ministerial rank in the Church, probably both as prophets and presbyters. They represented the Church of Jerusalem, and were delegated from the apostolic council.

23. '*Wrote letters*,' or an epistle. This important document states briefly the

authoritative decision of the apostolic council on the points in question, condemns the troublers of the Church, and confirms the authority of Barnabas and Paul. The explanation of the principles by which they were guided in this decision was left to the delegates.

'*Greeting*.' The usual form of salutation among the Greeks is here employed. The Hebrew form, from which the Arabic is derived, expresses a desire for the peace, as the Greek does for the happiness, of the persons addressed.

'*And Cilicia*.' From the mention of Cilicia, it appears that the Judaizing teachers had raised commotions in that province also. They always pursued St. Paul with peculiar activity and bitterness, and would naturally try to subvert his authority among his own countrymen about Tarsus.

24. '*Which went out from us*.' The character of the persons who caused the divisions is clearly shown: they went out from the Church, but were not of it. See 1 John ii. 19.

'*Subverting*.' The word so translated means unsettling, turning up the

¹ Grotius, Wolf.

² Doroth and Hippol. ap. Winer, ii. 459.

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.

foundations. The arguments of these Judaisers, in fact, overthrew the foundations of Christianity by direct inference. See Galatians v. 4.

25. '*Being assembled with one accord*,' or having arrived unanimously at the same conclusion. It was important to state that whatever diversity of opinion might have prevailed previously, no dissentients were now to be found among the members of the council.

'*With our beloved*.' The expressions of affection and esteem in this and the following verse were obviously calculated to confirm and increase the authority of Barnabas and Paul.

26. '*Hazarded their lives*.' These apostles appear to have been accused of corrupting the Gospel from ambitious or interested motives.¹

27. '*By mouth*.' To prevent any accusation, or suspicion, of forgery. The practice of forging epistles was exceedingly common at that time, as is well known to every classical scholar, and is alluded to by St. Paul,

2 Thess. ii. 2. The false brethren, who had assumed a false authority themselves, would not hesitate to accuse others.

28. '*To the Holy Ghost and to us*.' The decision is attributed to the Holy Ghost, and to the apostles speaking under His plenary inspiration, and thereby guided to that conclusion. The will of God had also been attested by miraculous outpourings of the Holy Ghost.² The same expression was afterwards used in stating the decision of general councils of the Church.

'*To lay upon you*.' This expression indicates the consciousness of full authority in the members of the council.

'*Necessary*,' that is, under the present circumstances. It is necessary, in the highest sense of the word, as an essential principle of the moral law, to avoid giving offence by self-indulgence in matters which are of themselves indifferent, and thus obstructing the cause of truth.³

29. '*Meats offered to idols*.' This

¹ Meyer.

² Whitby.

³ Nitzsch ap. Kuinoel.

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, ¹exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*.

33. And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let ¹go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

34. Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

explains the expression 'pollutions of idols,' used above, v. 20.

'*Ye shall do well.*' Such conduct will be right, and conduce to the peace of the Church.¹

Thus terminate the proceedings of the first general council. It was summoned at a most critical epoch, and at once decided the doctrine and established the peace of the Church. It was undoubtedly a judicial proceeding, and an act of sovereign authority; but the circumstances under which such powers were claimed and exercised were so peculiar as to make it very questionable how far it is to be regarded as a precedent for after-ages. The reader will however find the subject fully discussed in the great works upon the constitution of the Church. See Hooker, Field, Thorndike, Potter, and especially the 21st Article of our own Church.

30. '*The multitude.*' A general meeting of all the congregations at Antioch.

31. '*The consolation.*' Most of the ancient commentators give this interpretation, which is very suitable to the context. The marginal read-

ing 'exhortation,' however, is probably more correct,² provided that we understand an exhortation of consolatory purport.

32. '*Being prophets.*' This qualification enabled them to speak fully as to the will of God, and convincingly as to the bearings of the decision upon the entire system of Christian doctrine and practice.

'*And confirmed.*' Tranquillised and settled their minds (see v. 24), which had been so much agitated.

33. '*A space.*' Sufficient time to satisfy all enquiries, probably one or two months.

'*In peace.*' They received public testimonials of the grateful and affectionate feelings of the Church on taking leave of Antioch.

34. '*It pleased.*' It appears that after the public leave-taking Silas found himself unable to resist the solicitations of St. Paul or the yearnings of his own heart, and that he therefore resolved to remain and share the labours of the apostle. This verse is not found in the best MSS. It was probably an explanatory note taken into the text from

¹ Meyer.

² Beza, Piscator, Meyer.

35. ^aPaul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, ^bch. 13. 1. teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36. ¶ And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren ¹in every city ¹ch. 13. 4, where we have preached the word of the Lord, ^{13, 14, 51. &}and ^{14, 1, 6, 24, 25.}see how they do.

37. And Barnabas determined to take with him ^{= ch. 12. 12, 25. & 13. 5. Col. 4. 10.}John, whose surname was Mark.

38. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, ²who departed from them from Pamphylia, and ²Tim. 4. 11. Philem. 24. ^{= ch. 13. 13.}went not with them to the work.

the margin. The statement, of course, is quite correct.

35. '*With many others also.*' If we are right in supposing that this is the time alluded to in the second of Galatians, some events of great importance occurred. The fusion of the Gentile and Hebrew elements was not speedily completed, and many Jews who believed that the Gentiles were under no obligation to observe the law still doubted whether they were not themselves bound to keep apart from them in order to avoid ceremonial defilement. It seems that even St. Peter, who went to Antioch before the departure of St. Paul, either shared these scruples, or was carried so far in order to conciliate his countrymen, as to incur the just rebuke of St. Paul; and that Barnabas was also led away for a short time. This last relic of intolerance was abolished by St. Paul's fearless and uncompromising zeal, and the full equality of the Gentile converts was henceforth denied only by those whose Judaizing tendencies terminated in a schism. They formed however a powerful and influential

body in the interim, and were the bitter opponents of the apostle in all the churches which he established. Hitherto unconverted Jews had been his chief opponents; from this time to the end of his life he was engaged in perpetual controversies with Judaizing Christians.¹

36. This verse states the occasion of the second great missionary journey of St. Paul, by which the Gospel was first introduced into Europe.

'*Let us go again.*' The primary object of St. Paul was therefore to visit the churches already established in Asia Minor, in order to ascertain their state, to instruct them concerning the late transactions, and to complete their organisation.

37. '*And Barnabas determined,*' &c. He was doubtless induced by affection for his nephew. Mark may have returned from Jerusalem to Antioch with them, or with St. Peter.

38. '*But Paul thought not good.*' It is evident from this verse that Mark was deterred from going with them to the work by culpable feelings. He had returned to his mother and friends at Jerusalem. The apparent

¹ Neander, p. 293, who, however, fixes a different time for these trans-

actions. See Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, article St. Peter.

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 ;

° ch. 14. 26. 40. And Paul chose Silas, and departed, °being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

° ch. 16. 5. 41. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, °confirming the churches.

severity of St. Paul was undoubtedly grounded upon a deep spiritual insight into the character of Mark, and a knowledge of what qualifications were indispensable in a missionary. The religion of the cross was not to be propagated by any who were not prepared to sacrifice all for Christ's sake.

39. '*Contention.*' The word certainly means angry excitement, a symptom, as must be allowed, of human frailty in the apostles, yet originating in very different feelings. St. Paul's anger was a holy and unselfish indignation—that of Barnabas arose from wounded affection. The Church did not suffer from their temporary separation, but the fields of

labour opened to the two apostles were henceforth of very unequal extent. Barnabas and Mark went, as it would seem, without the express sanction of the brethren, among their own kindred, and doubtless laboured in that limited district with faith and success. But St. Paul and Silas proceeded, with the full approbation and public blessing of the Church, to the most extensive triumphs yet achieved by the preaching of the Gospel.

41. '*And he went.*' By land, visiting all the cities on his route. It is clear that numerous churches had been founded in both countries, and principally, as we may be assured, by the instrumentality of St. Paul.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

In order to read this chapter with profit, and derive from it practical lessons for our own guidance, we must distinguish between the dispositions and principles in which the dissensions originated, and the particular form under which they were manifested. The form depended upon local and temporary circumstances, and cannot recur without considerable modifications at any period of Church history ; the dispositions and principles are inherent in the nature of fallen man, and have evinced their power under all circumstances and in every age. Our earnest prayer should be offered for deliverance from pride, envy, and superstition, and for a spiritual apprehension of all saving truths.

1, 2. Disputes on religious questions cannot be terminated but by an appeal to what all parties admit to be a sufficient authority ; but as such questions concern the honour of God, and the well-being of His people, no authority can be sufficient but that of His own Word. He then spake by the mouth of the inspired apostles ; He speaks now by the written Word, to which alone lies our ultimate appeal. Doubts as to the interpretation of that Word must needs

arise, by reason of our limited capacity and natural corruption; and they can only be removed by candid and laborious enquiry, under the guidance and with the assistance supplied by the Church. Such is the plain doctrine of the English Church, as set forth in the 6th and 20th Articles of Religion.

3—5. One test of genuine charity is the feeling which we experience on hearing of any great movement in the Church. The single-hearted believer rejoices when he is told of conversions; the formalist too often listens with suspicion or distrust; and even good men are too apt to impose as conditions of grace upon others what may have been useful as means of grace to themselves.

7—11. How thoroughly the Spirit of Grace had penetrated and transformed the heart and mind of St. Peter! He no longer sees any difference between the Jew and the Gentile, whose hearts are purified by the same faith. He regards the ceremonial law as a burden when it is not used as a preparatory discipline, but observed as a condition of salvation. He trusts to be saved entirely and exclusively by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. May God's Holy Spirit pour into our hearts the same loving, enlightened, and hopeful faith!

13—21. St. James rests his decision entirely on the testimony of the Word, spoken by a fellow apostle and written in the Book of Life. The text may have been hitherto obscure to him, though doubtless familiar to his mind; but now the veil is completely taken away, and the letter is transformed into a living truth. Thus the Christian does not always discern the significance of holy words which rest in his memory, until some unforeseen circumstance arouses his attention, when he is guided by the Spirit to perceive their full bearing upon his own state, or the welfare of the Church.

21—30. We may learn many important lessons from the decree of the apostolic council, which appears, to careless and superficial readers, to touch on matters of only temporary significance. It will teach us not to judge unfavourably of our fellow Christians because they may differ from us in some external forms, provided that they worship the same Saviour without idolatrous practices, and continue in the unity of the Church. The churches in Jerusalem and Antioch had many outward points of difference, but there was peace and spiritual harmony between them. We are further admonished not to indulge in any habits which may give offence to our brethren, although they may seem to us to be innocent. On the other hand, we must remember that an aptitude to take offence at such habits belongs to an imperfect state of Christianity, and denotes weakness of faith: while a harsh expression of feelings engendered by that aptitude indicates an envious, bigoted, and unchristian spirit. Without an enlarged charity, both the weakness and presumption of believers will constantly have a tendency to produce and to perpetuate schisms in the Church.

30—35. The best proof that dissensions between Christians have been removed is an increased energy in every Christian work. The Church of Antioch proved that they truly rejoiced in the consolation, by listening devoutly to the exhortation of the Spirit; while the preachers of the Word were strengthened in love and faith, and prepared for greater exertions in propagating the Gospel of Christ.

36—41. Severity ought not to be confounded with harshness—this always originates in a deficiency, that frequently proceeds from a fulness of love. St. Paul loved the Church, and therefore he would not have her served by a

lukewarm minister—he loved John Mark, and therefore he would not leave his sin unchastised. We doubt not that the great change, which is afterwards to be remarked in the character of St. Mark, was mainly owing to the apostle's reasonable reproof, working upon a tender and regenerate heart. What compassion we must feel for Barnabas, tempted to oppose and separate himself from his beloved friend—departing, as would seem, without the blessing of the Church¹—shut out for a season from a wide and glorious field of Christian usefulness—and bearing about with him the consciousness of wrong. But he was a good man, and we may be fully assured that the Holy Ghost soon dispersed this cloud from his spirit, and taught him henceforth to keep his natural affections in subordination to the higher law of Christian love.

¹ Compare v. 39 with v. 40.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Gospel had hitherto been confined to Asia, the cradle of humanity, and the earliest scene of all divine manifestations; we have now to contemplate its introduction into Europe, where both the mental and spiritual faculties of our race have attained their highest development under its influence. The occurrences in the first European city visited by the apostle were significant of the opposition which Christianity was to encounter in this quarter of the world, and of the triumphs which it was to achieve.

A.D. 49—51.

1. THEN came he to ^aDerbe and Lystra: and, behold, ^ba certain disciple was there, ^cnamed Timotheus, ^dthe son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek:

2. Which ^ewas well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and ^ftook and circumcised him because of the Jews which

^a ch. 14. 6.
^b ch. 19. 22.
Rom. 16. 21.
^c 1 Cor. 4. 17.
Phil. 2. 19.
^d 1 Thess. 3. 2.
^e 1 Tim. 1. 2.
^f 2 Tim. 1. 2.
^g 2 Tim. 1. 5.
^h ch. 6. 3.
ⁱ 1 Cor. 9.
Gal. 2. 2.
See Gal. 5.
2.

1. '*Then came he to Derbe.*' There are three roads by which travellers cross Mount Taurus in going from Cilicia to Pisidia. St. Paul probably took the middle route,¹ which passed from Tarsus through Derbe to Lystra.

'*Was there.*' Evidently at Lystra. It is, however, doubtful whether Timothy was a native of Lystra or Derbe, probably of the latter. See note, chap. xx. 4.² We learn from St. Paul's second epistle to him (chap. i. 4) that his mother Eunice, and his grandmother Lois, were women of unfeigned piety, converts to Christianity, and that they had instructed him early in the Holy Scriptures.

St. Paul calls him his child, from which it is evident he had converted him on his former journey.

'*His father was a Greek.*' It is probable that he was a proselyte of the gate, not an idolater, considering the piety of his wife, and the education which he allowed his child to receive.

2. '*Which was well reported.*' Timothy must have been actively employed in the service of Christ to have acquired in so short a time among the brethren of these two cities the reputation of being a devoted believer.

3. '*Him would Paul have.*' The mixed descent of Timothy would

¹ Wieseler, p. 24; but Meyer and Alford prefer Lystra.

² Wieseler, p. 26; Neander, p. 234; and Olshausen.

were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

4. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, ^{ch. 15. 28, 29.} that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

^{ch. 15. 41.} 5. And ^{so} were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

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,

make him peculiarly useful in a mission addressed both to Hebrews and Gentiles.

'And took and circumcised him,' &c. The Jews, knowing that his mother was a Hebrew, would have been strongly prejudiced against his ministry had he remained uncircumcised, since they would not regard him as a Gentile convert, and as such specially exempted from the observance of the Mosaic law, but rather as an unfaithful or apostate Jew. We may be assured that Timothy, acting on St. Paul's principles (1 Cor. ix. 20), willingly submitted to a rite which in itself was now become a matter of indifference, and which his early education had taught him to regard with reverence. Neither of these reasons applied to Titus, or other converts from Gentilism whom St. Paul refused to circumcise.

On this occasion it seems that Timothy was ordained by St. Paul at Lystra, having been called by the Holy Spirit, speaking, as it appears, by the mouth of inspired prophets. The ordination was the same as that of priests in our Church, by the imposition of hands, both of the apostle,

as chief ruler, and of the presbyters, as representatives of the Church. See 1 Tim. iv. 14, and 2 Tim. i. 6.

'They knew all,' &c. They knew that his father would not have permitted his circumcision in infancy. Now he was a free agent. It is doubtful whether his father was still living.

4. *'The cities.'* That is, the cities in Pisidia, which was so closely connected with Cilicia, to which country the apostolic epistle had also been addressed, that Tarsus was considered to be the metropolitan city of both districts. The contest between the two parties had evidently extended to these cities.

5. *'The churches.'* In this verse St. Luke terminates his account of the Church in this district. Lystra and Iconium were cities of importance in the early age of Christianity; numerous ruins of churches, evidently built in the first centuries, are still found at Bin Bir Kilisseh, the site of the ancient Lystra.¹

6. In this verse St. Luke refers briefly to events of great importance, which must have occupied a considerable time, probably not less than

¹ Hamilton.

7. After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

half a year. Different reasons have been assigned for this fact, of which the most probable is that St. Luke, having already given an account of the spread of the Gospel in Asia, proceeds rapidly to describe its introduction into Europe.

'*Phrygia.*' A hilly but fertile district, separated from Pisidia by the heights of Taurus, and bounded by Galatia, Bithynia, and Caria. The conversion of the numerous cities in this region (of which there were sixty-two, according to Hierocles) seems to have been carried on partly by St. Paul, partly by evangelists under his authority. Of these Epaphras was the most distinguished, who founded churches in Colossæ, his native city, in Hierapolis, and Laodicea.¹ Many Jews settled in Phrygia in the time of the Maccabees.²

'*Galatia.*' A populous district to the east of Phrygia and Bithynia, watered by the river Halys. The inhabitants were descended from a mixed horde of Gauls and Celts, who ravaged many countries in Western Asia in the third century before Christ, and finally settled in the region of Phrygia, to which they gave the name of Galatia. According to Jerome³ they continued in his time to speak their ancient language, which was nearly the same as that used by the Treviri on the banks of the Lower Rhine.⁴ The two leaders by whom they were first commanded were named Leonorius and Lutharius, or Luther.⁵ We learn many interesting particulars concerning this first visit

to Galatia from St. Paul's epistle to the Church of that country; he was in great bodily suffering and infirmity, and was received by that people with the most affectionate sympathy, and preached the Gospel with great success, working also miracles among them in attestation of his mission. See Gal. iv. 13—17, and iii. 5.⁶

'*Were forbidden of the Holy Ghost.*' It is uncertain whether the prohibition was given by an internal communication, or by a word of prophecy: both modes of spiritual intimation were familiar to St. Paul. See Acts xx. 22, 23, and 2 Cor. xii. It seems probable that they were forbidden to undertake the mission into Asia and Bithynia on that occasion, lest it should delay their progress into Europe,⁷ towards which they were guided, though as yet unconsciously, by the Spirit. It appears to have been the intention of St. Paul to extend his journey to all the districts of Asia Minor.

'*Asia.*' The provinces on the sea-coast, including Mysia, Lydia, and Caria.⁸ It comprised the most beautiful and populous countries of Asia Minor. The conversions in these countries were numerous in the following years, and their churches were among the most famous in ancient Christendom.

7. '*Mysia.*' A district at the north-west extremity of Asia Minor, bounded by Lydia and Bithynia.

'*The Spirit.*' All the best MSS. have 'the Spirit of Jesus,' an important reading, as it bears witness to the

¹ Neander, p. 236, note. Wieseler, 28.

² Joseph. Ant. xii. 3, 4. See Jost, Geschichte des Judenthums, p. 349.

³ Gal. i. 2.

⁴ Winer, vol. i. p. 185.

⁵ Olshausen Einl. Gal.

⁶ Hemsen, p. 110; Wieseler, p. 29, 30.

⁷ Lightfoot.

⁸ Wieseler, p. 33—35; and Winer.

^b 2 Cor. 2.
12. 8. And they passing by Mysia ^bcame down to
² Tim. 4. 13. Troas.

9. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night;
¹ ch. 10. 30. There stood a 'man of Macedonia, and prayed him,
saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10. And after he had seen the vision, immediately
^b 2 Cor. 2.
13. we endeavoured to go ^binto Macedonia, assuredly
gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach
the gospel unto them.

doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son.

8. '*Passing by.*' They traversed Mysia without staying in any city until they arrived at Troas.

'Troas.' A large and important seaport, built by Antigonus, near the site of ancient Troy. We learn from Socrates, the Church historian (vii. 37), that it was a very warm, healthy place, much frequented by invalids. This may have induced Luke, the physician, to settle there. The ruins are of great extent, but the village on its site, called Eski Istampol,¹ consists only of eight or ten houses.

9. '*And a vision.*' St. Paul now learns why he was not permitted to visit Asia and Bithynia. Europe was to be christianised. It is not said whether the vision appeared to St. Paul in a dream; but it seems far more probable, both from the form of the expression² and from the purport of the communication, that he saw the man of Macedonia either awake or in a trance.³

'*A man of Macedonia.*' Grotius supposes this to have been the guardian angel of the country, and refers to Daniel x. 12 and 20. We may rather presume that the vision sym-

bolically represented the real wants and unconscious yearnings of the Gentile world. Compare Rom. viii. 19—22.

'Macedonia.' An important country on the north of the Ægean sea, bounded by Thrace, Thessaly, and Epirus. It was known to the Hebrews by the name of Chittim (see 1 Macc. i. 1), which it derived from Kittim, the son of Javan, and grandson of Japheth. Genesis x. 4. The kingdom rose to great celebrity under Philip and Alexander. In the time of St. Paul it was a proconsular province of the Roman empire.⁴

10. '*Immediately we endeavoured.*' This is the first occasion on which St. Luke numbers himself among the companions of St. Paul. There can be no doubt that he joined the apostle at Troas,⁵ but it is uncertain whether he had known him previously. According to Eusebius⁶ and Jerome, St. Luke was born at Antioch, and was an early convert to Christianity. It is probable that he was living as a physician at Troas (see note on v. 7), and his connection with St. Paul at this time may have had some reference to the apostle's bodily infirmity.⁷

'*Assuredly gathering.*' It appears

¹ Pocock. See Fellow's Asia Minor, p. 61.

² Meyer.

³ Calvin, Olshausen.

⁴ Tac. Annl. l. 76.

⁵ Irenæus. See Introduction.

⁶ H. E. iii. 4.

⁷ Wieseler, p. 36.

11. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

12. And from thence to ¹Philippi, which is || the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: ^{Phil. 1. 1.} ^{|| Or, the first.} and we were in that city abiding certain days.

13. And on the †sabbath we went out of the city ^{† Gr. sabbath day.} by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

14. ¶ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller

therefore, that St. Paul communicated the vision to his companions, including St. Luke, and consulted them on its purport. This would imply that St. Luke was no new convert.

11. '*Samothracia*.' An island in the *Ægean* sea, about halfway between Troas and Neapolis. It was famous for its mysteries. It is now nearly deserted.

'*Neapolis*.' A seaport of Macedonia, to the north of the island of Thasos, now called Napoli. It belonged to Thrace until a short time before St. Paul's visit. Probably there were few Jews and no synagogue, since St. Paul proceeded at once to Philippi.

12. '*Philippi*.' A city on the Strymon, about ten miles from Neapolis. It was formerly named Crenides, but derived its name from Philip, by whom it was rebuilt. It was famous for the battle between the forces of Brutus and Cassius, and of Augustus (then called Octavian) and Antony, by which the fortunes of the Roman empire were decided (B.C. 42).

'*The chief city*.' Or, the first city which they would meet with in that part of Macedonia. Amphipolis was

the chief city of the eastern division, and Thessalonica of the whole country of Macedonia.'

'*A colony*.' A city occupied by a colony of Roman citizens. Augustus established a colony of disbanded soldiers at Philippi,² after the termination of the civil wars. Roman colonists were governed by their own laws, and retained their full privileges.

13. '*Where prayer*,' &c. From this it appears either that there were not many Jews, or that they were not legally tolerated at Philippi. The proselytes, most of whom, as usual, were women, had a *proseucha*, or small place inclosed and set apart for devotional purposes, near the river Strymon.³ This was convenient for their lustrations or purifications.

14. '*Thyatira*.' A city on the confines of Lydia and Mysia, famous for its purple tapestry, which is named in an inscription found among the ruins.⁴ The art of dyeing is still practised in the modern town, called Akhissar. There is still a Christian church, and also a school in the place, both in a satisfactory state.

¹ Corn. a. Lap. Wolf, Bengel, Olshausen. See, however, Mannert. Geog. vol. vii. p. 438.

² Dio, Chrysa. ii. p. 445.

³ Epiphan. Hæc. lxxx. 1; Hemsen, p. 113, note; Meyer.

⁴ Spohn, iii. 93.

of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose ^mheart^e the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

^m Luke 24.
45.

15. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And ⁿshe constrained *us*.

ⁿ Gen. 19. 3.
& 33. 11.

Judg. 19. 21.

Luke 24. 29.

Heb. 13. 2.

^o 1 Sam. 28.

^p Or, of Py-
thon.

^r ch. 19. 24.

16. ¶ And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, ^acertain damsel ^opossessed with a spirit ^{||}of divination ^pmet *us*, which brought her masters ^pmuch gain by soothsaying:

17. The same followed Paul and *us*, and cried,

'The Lord opened.' The Lord Jesus quickened the conscience of Lydia, by an act of preventient, or preventing grace through His Holy Spirit. The heart is closed, shut up and impervious to the preacher's discourse, until He opens it, by removing prejudices and evil affections.

15. *'And her household.'* It is not said that Lydia and her household were baptized the same day. Her household consisted probably of slaves employed in dyeing and weaving, and of her own children. This and similar passages may not prove that infants were baptized, but they lead naturally to that conclusion. If the children of converts were not brought into the Christian covenant, they would have remained aliens from the kingdom of Christ. The burthen of proof must lie upon those who would withhold Christian privileges from the little ones whom Jesus loved.

'If ye have judged me.' Lydia well understood that true faith must work by love, and be manifested by deeds of love, 'especially to them who are of the household of faith.'

'Constrained us.' Evidently with some difficulty. We may reasonably suppose that Lydia was foremost among the Christians in Philippi, who were always conspicuous for their liberality in supporting the cause of the Gospel. See Phil. iv. 14—16.

16. *'And it came to pass.'* St. Paul seems to have remained some time, probably two or three weeks, in the house of Lydia, and to have made many converts.¹ The transaction, which we have now to consider, occurred on a following sabbath.

'A spirit of divination.' Or, as in the margin, of Python. The heathens believed that she was inspired or possessed by Python, the name of Apollo, as the Deity presiding over oracles.² The word Python occurs here for the first and only time. It marks a crisis in St. Paul's history, who was thus first brought into direct conflict with the superstitions of the West.

'Her masters.' Valuable slaves were often the property of a corporation, or of several masters.³

17. *'These men,'* &c. The testimony of evil spirits to the divine

¹ Wieseler, p. 39, 40.

² Spanheim on Callim. Apol. 35.

³ Walch, diss. ii. v.

saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18. And this did she many days. But Paul, ¹being ²grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. ³And he came out the same hour.

19. ¶ And ⁴when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, ⁵they caught Paul and Silas, and ⁶drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

20. And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, ⁷do exceedingly trouble our city,

21. And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

authority of the Gospel is a striking fact, of which we have many instances both in this book and in the Gospels. It is a very mysterious subject, nor can it be determined whether the confession was forced and reluctant, or uttered in a mocking and malevolent tone. The former is the more probable supposition.

18. '*And Paul being grieved.*' The apostle was grieved, for such words from such lips were a blasphemy.¹ Fanatics and impostors readily availed themselves of such means of acquiring influence over the people. Truth rejects all impure and superstitious adjuncts.

'*Said to the spirit.*' This verse is decisive as to the individuality of the evil spirit. It was not merely an evil influence, but a personal agent of the evil one.

19. '*When her masters,*' &c. The changed demeanour of the damsel proved that she was restored to a sound mind. She was no longer subject to the influences, or open to the

communications, of the powers of darkness.

'*The marketplace.*' The public tribunals were always held in or near the market-places of ancient cities.

20. '*The magistrates.*' Roman colonies were governed by magistrates called duumvirs, or prætors. The word used in the original corresponds to the latter title.²

'*These men,*' &c. The Romans tolerated the quiet and private profession of religions not adopted by the state,³ but they did not scruple to put them down by violence when they became troublesome. Indeed, an ancient Roman law forbade the worship of foreign or new gods.⁴ Though nearly obsolete, it was easily revived when popular fury was excited against any innovations. The Jews were repeatedly expelled from Rome, and were generally hated by the people. The Christians were regarded for some time by the Roman magistrates more as a Jewish sect. The masters of this damsel did not accuse

¹ Severus ap. Cramer. See also Neander.

² Aristot. Pol. 7, 8; Kuinoel, Meyer, &c.

³ Wetstein and Casaubon.

⁴ Cicero de leg. ii. § 14, 27; Liv. xxxix. 16.

22. And the multitude rose up together against them : and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

7 2 Cor. 6. 5.
& 11. 23, 25.
1 Thess. 2.
2.

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.

25. ¶ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God : and the prisoners heard them.

26. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken : and

* ch. 4. 31.

St. Paul of exorcising the spirit of divination, because that could not be recognised as a legal offence.

22. '*And the multitude rose up,*' &c. This is remarkable as being the first persecution of the Church originating with heathens. It occurred in the first European city in which the Gospel was preached, and represents in a lively manner the trials undergone by the Christian Church during the first centuries of its struggles with heathenism. The mob generally began, and the magistrates willingly directed, the persecution.

'*Rent off their clothes.*' According to the Roman custom, the lictors tore off their garments, and inflicted the scourging on their naked bodies.¹ The tumult and noise may have prevented St. Paul from claiming his privilege as a Roman citizen; but it is more probable that he willingly gave an example of patient endurance of sufferings so often inflicted on his brethren.

23. '*Many stripes.*' The Jewish law prohibited magistrates from inflicting more stripes than 'forty save one.'

The Roman punishment was far more severe.

24. '*The inner prison.*' The prisons of the Romans were generally dark, low-roofed dungeons.

'*In the stocks.*' A common but very severe punishment among the Greeks and Romans. The feet, and sometimes the hands and neck, were fixed in a plank of wood bound with iron.*

25. '*Prayed, and sang praises.*' The sufferings of the apostle and Silas banished sleep, but could not affect their hearts. They rejoiced that 'they were counted worthy to suffer shame' and anguish for the sake of Jesus.

'*Heard them.*' Were listening to them with admiring wonder.

26. '*A great earthquake.*' See note, chap. iv. 31. This must be regarded as a miraculous attestation of the divine favour and protection. It might also be intended to show, in this first contact of Christianity with the Roman magistracy, that whatever authority was exercised by the latter was simply permissive, and that it was controlled and overruled, and would,

¹ Liv. ii. 5; Cicero, Verr. v. 62.

* Wetstein; Wolf, Cur. p. 1244.

immediately ^aall the doors were opened, and every ^bone's bands were loosed. ^cch. 5, 19, & 12, 7, 10.

27. And the keeper of the prison awaking 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.

28. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

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, ^bSirs, what must I do to be saved? ^cLuke 3, 10, ch. 2, 37, & 9, 8.

31. And they said, ^cBelieve on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. ^dJohn 3, 16, 36, & 6, 47, 1 John 5, 10.

when necessary, be suspended by a higher power.

'Bands were loosed.' The doors might possibly be opened by the concussion of the earthquake, but the loosing of the chains was a separate miracle.

27. *'Keeper of the prison.'* The keeper was generally an old soldier in military stations, and in colonies like Philippi, consisting chiefly of veterans.

'He drew out his sword,' &c. The keeper would have been liable by law to a cruel death had the prisoners escaped. In the frenzy of rage he resolves to commit suicide. This act was not regarded as a crime by the heathen—many of their philosophers approved and recommended it; and in this very district Brutus and Cassius, men esteemed as models of every heathen virtue, had destroyed themselves. Christianity alone has taught men to judge aright of life and death.

28. *'Cried with a loud voice.'* The keeper was apparently standing at the outer door, and at some distance from the apostle.

'We are all here.' The other prisoners, though liberated, appear to have been awestruck, and, following

involuntarily the example of Paul and Silas, they did not attempt to leave the prison.

29. *'And came,'* &c. The trembling of religious awe is finely contrasted with the recklessness of despair. He fell down recognising his prisoners as objects of the divine favour.

30. *'To be saved.'* The keeper had doubtless heard before that what the apostle professed to teach was a way of salvation. He is now convinced that they were commissioned by the most high God to declare the conditions. That at such a season he should have been solely anxious to secure his salvation is a sure sign that his heart had been opened and quickened by the Holy Spirit.

31. *'Believe on the Lord Jesus.'* Faith is thus pointed out as the condition of salvation, that is, of justification in this life, and of eternal happiness hereafter. That condition, however, involves both repentance and obedience, since it unites the convert to Him who bestows both by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost.

'And thy house.' The household of the jailer are to be brought with him

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,
^a Luke 5. 29. ^d he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in
 & 19. 6. God with all his house.

35. And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, 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.

into the kingdom of Christ—a circumstance to which St. Luke refers thrice in these three verses. Although many Gentiles had been converted from idolatry, this is the first individual heathen whose conversion is described.

32. '*The word of the Lord.*' The fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, faith in the atonement and power of the Lord Jesus being impressed on the listeners' hearts by the Spirit, prepared them for immediate admission into the Church.

33. '*And washed their stripes.*' The marks of the Lord Jesus, which they bore on their lacerated bodies, must have given intensity to the keeper's convictions. Seeing the spirit in which they bore such anguish, he might be enabled partly to comprehend the work of Him by whose stripes we are healed.

'*Was baptized, he and all his.*' Probably by sprinkling, not immersion, in that place and at that hour.

34. '*Brought them.*' Literally, brought them up. The house was above the prison.¹

'*And rejoiced.*' The transition from

a state of despair to one of salvation and rejoicing is exceedingly striking. The connection between rejoicing and believing is even more strongly marked in the original—he rejoiced as one who believed.²

35. '*The serjeants.*' Literally, the rod-bearers, that is, the lictors who bore each an axe bound up in a bundle of rods. They attended Roman magistrates on all public occasions.

'*Let these men go.*' The magistrates may have heard of the earthquake, and of the conduct of Paul and Silas; or, more probably, on enquiring further into the matter, found that the accusation against them could not be sustained. The expression used in the original has a contemptuous form, and seems to imply that they wished to evade the consequences of an illegal act, but to retain an appearance of authority.³

36. '*Go in peace.*' The keeper of the prison was not aware of St. Paul's legal claim to exemption. He presumed, therefore, that he and Silas would gladly depart, and addressed them with the parting salutation of a Christian friend.

¹ Meyer.

² Meyer.

³ Meyer.

37. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, ¹being Romans, and have cast ²us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

38. And the serjeants told these 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 ³desired them to depart out of the city. ⁴*'Matt. 8. 34.'*

40. And they went out of the prison, ⁵and entered ⁶into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

37. '*Unto them,*' i.e. the lictors, who followed the keeper into the prison.

'*Uncondemned, being Romans.*' A double illegality; under any circumstances the punishment should have been preceded by a regular trial, and St. Paul and Silas, as Roman citizens, were exempt from scourging,¹ unless they were condemned upon an appeal to the people, or to the emperor, and thus forfeited all their civil rights. It appears from this passage that Silas was also a Roman citizen, which may account for his bearing the Roman name Silvanus, given to him in the epistles of St. Peter and St. Paul.

'*Thrust us out privily.*' If St. Paul had submitted to this proceeding, it would have been tantamount to a confession that he had violated the law. The beating was public, and a clandestine release could not compensate for the disgrace. The conduct of the apostle proves how completely his piety was free from fanaticism. He bore persecution with cheerfulness, but did not court it; and

though he rejoiced in enduring shame when it conduced to the glory of Christ, he knew how to vindicate his character and rights with dignity.

38. '*And they feared.*' They had, in fact, rendered themselves liable to the highest penalty of the law. An injury inflicted on a Roman citizen was punished, as high treason, by death and confiscation of property.²

39. '*And they came,*' &c. This was a public declaration of the legality of St. Paul's conduct; a very important circumstance at that time.

40. '*Entered into the house,*' &c. It is probable that the brethren, or Christian Church which was already formed at Philippi, assembled at first in the house of Lydia. St. Luke appears to have remained in this city for a considerable time, having probably been directed by St. Paul to organise the Church. No Christian community gave more abundant and affecting proofs of love and faith than this, the first-fruits of Europe. See Phil. i. 5—7, 29, and iv. 15, 16.

¹ Dion. Halic. v. p. 292; Liv. 2, 8, and 10, 9.

² Dion. Halic. ii. p. 725; Grotius.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—3. Few names of apostolic men shine with a brighter—none with a purer—lustre than that of *Timotheus*. In childhood a student of the Holy Scriptures; in youth made wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus; a zealous member and minister of the Church, well reported of by man, and called specially by the Spirit; the chosen and beloved companion of St. Paul; ever willing to submit to pain, self-denial and self-sacrifice, so that he might win souls to Christ; in early manhood a bishop and ruler of the Church: such was *Timothy*, one of the most distinguished among those who were appointed by the apostles as their delegates and successors in the government of the Church of Christ. No Christian parent should forget that *Timothy* was indebted, under divine grace, for the dispositions and attainments which adapted him for these high duties, chiefly to the pious care of his mother, *Eunice*.

4, 5. We find the several branches of the Church peaceful and prosperous, settled in faith, and increasing in numbers, whenever they are careful to maintain the doctrine of the apostles and to submit to their authority. The main object of the decrees then ordained was the preservation of peace and unity; and the warmth of our prayers and earnestness of our endeavours for the same will be among the most certain tests of our union with the Great Head of the Church.

6, 7. The establishment of the kingdom of Christ in various lands has ever been mysteriously directed and controlled by the Holy Spirit. The talents and energies of His servants are instruments which are effectual only when He wields them. Happy are they who are conscious of His guiding presence, and who rejoice to surrender their own purposes upon the faintest intimation of His will.

9, 10. All the miseries of man, all physical and mental evils, proceed from sin, which separates him from God, paralyses his conscience, and plunges him in an abyss of guilt and wretchedness, from which there is but one deliverer and one deliverance. Rightly then did the apostle conclude that a cry for help must needs indicate that one want of fallen man, and could not be answered adequately save by bringing the sufferer to Him who alone is mighty to save.

11, 12. Glory be to God most High for sending the tidings of peace and salvation to our own quarter of the world, for this first stirring of spiritual life in Europe. The powers which then enthralled the world have disappeared: Rome with its legions, Greece with its schools of art and thought, are but phantoms of the past; but the cross which St. Paul then erected still remains the centre of a spiritual empire which will endure until heaven and earth shall pass away.

13—15. A woman was the first convert in Europe; a woman who had sought God, so far as her means of knowing Him extended; who prayed to Him and worshipped him without ceasing; a woman with a large heart, which received the Lord Jesus when He opened it, and with Him the fulness of love, and all Christian graces; a matron ruling her household with authority, and bringing them also to the obedience of faith; no solitary recluse, but diligent in the

business of her station, which neither kept her from Christ, nor interfered with her life in Christ: such was Lydia, the first Christian woman of Europe.

16—24. The first persecution in Europe was, like all that followed it, base in its origin, riotous in its proceedings, illegal in its execution, disgraceful to the people, but still more to the magistrates, who used the sword intrusted to them for the 'terror of evil-doers' in a vain attempt to cut off the preachers of truth. These things were done in a state proud of its enlightenment and civilisation, and may be expected to recur should the kingdoms of Europe ever cease to recognise the sovereignty of God in Christ.

The damsel of Philippi may be regarded as a type of the heathen soul, alienated from God, possessed by a lying spirit, existing in a state of wild, dreamy, half-conscious lunacy; not without some power of recognising truth, but utterly unable to embrace or realise it,—a state which could only be enlightened by the expulsion of the delusive glare, and healed only by the influences of the Spirit and by the name of Jesus.

25—28. Contrast the spiritual and the natural man in the hour of trial. Paul and Silas were suffering great bodily torture, and knew this to be but the foretaste of persecutions which awaited them throughout their earthly existence; but their hearts were full of rejoicing and gratitude, for they had 'regard to the recompense of the reward.' The keeper, probably a veteran soldier, who might have faced death on the battle-field without terror, gave way at once to desperation when menaced with disgrace, and thought only of escaping from an ignominious punishment by self-murder. No courage is steady and consistent save that of the man who rests upon the Rock of Ages.

29—34. The suddenness of the keeper's conversion has many parallels in this narrative; but it is singular in that it seems to have been accompanied with no bitterness of compunction. He had doubtless sinned in utter ignorance, and cast off at once the old man, together with his works, when regenerated in the baptismal font. It was to him simply a transition from darkness and misery to a realm of light and joy. They who have sinned against light may not experience such a change of emotion, but even they will rejoice amidst all the sorrowings of penitence, knowing that they have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins.

CHAPTER XVII.

Introduced into Europe, the Gospel penetrates at once to the heart of its civilisation. St. Paul preaches at Athens. The forms which had so long attracted the worship of the natural man are touched by the Cross, and lose their power; while the schools of philosophy are discomfited on the Hill of Mars.

1. Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

1. '*They.*' St. Luke now reverts to the third person; since the departure from Troas he has written '*we.*' From this change it is reasonably inferred that he remained at Philippi. The companions of St. Paul are not named, but Timothy either travelled with him or joined him soon, probably at Berea. See v. 14.

'*Amphipolis.*' The capital of the first division of Macedonia, and an Athenian colony, situate on the river Strymon, about twenty-eight miles from Philippi. It was a position of great importance, commanding the only easy pass along the sea-coast.

'*Apollonia.*' A city situate twenty-five miles to the south-west of Amphipolis, in the Macedonian province of Mygdonia.¹ The exact site is not known. St. Paul probably remained one night only in each of these cities. It may be presumed that there was no synagogue, and few Jews or proselytes in either. It seems to have been the custom of the apostles to fix upon a few central positions, and to leave the intermediate places to be visited by

the evangelists and missionaries whom they appointed on their departure. These places might thus fall under the care of St. Luke, or of the minister of Thessalonica.

'*Thessalonica.*' The capital of all Macedonia, and the residence of the Roman governor of Greece and Illyria. It was a rich and populous city, and connected by commercial intercourse with many countries in Europe and Asia; a circumstance of great importance in the propagation of the Gospel. After the battle of Philippi, A.C. 42, it was made a free city, and St. Luke's narrative throughout accords with this fact. See notes on verses 5 and 6. It is now called Salonica, and is a great seaport, with 70,000 inhabitants, at the north-east of the gulph of Salonica, formerly called the Thermaic Gulph, from Therme, the ancient name of the city. The Jews had settled there in great numbers.²

'*A synagogue.*' Or, '*the synagogue,*' that is, the synagogue which was attended by the Jews in that district.³

¹ Winer.

² Winer, Sonnini, Cramer's Greece, vol. i. p. 237.

³ Grotius, Meyer.

2. And Paul, as his manner was, ^awent in unto ^bthem, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

3. Opening and alleging, ^bthat Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, ^{||}whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

4. ^cAnd some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and ^dSilas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

5. ¶ But the Jews which believed not, moved with

2. '*As his manner was.*' St. Paul invariably addressed himself in the first place to the Jews. See note, xiii. 46. From the two epistles of the apostle to this church we learn many interesting particulars concerning this visit. A great number of idolaters were converted. 1 Thess. i. 9. St. Paul supported himself chiefly by manual labour, yet not without twice receiving assistance from the Christians of Philippi. 1 Thess. ii. 9, and Phil. iv. 16. The second advent of the Lord Jesus was preached with more than usual power, probably with reference to the great persecutions undergone by the Gentile converts (1 Thess. ii. 14); but this led to some misapprehensions which were corrected in the second epistle. It seems evident from these facts that St. Paul remained some time after the three sabbaths spoken of in this verse. The two epistles give a lively idea of the faith, endurance, and fervent charity of the believers in this city.

'*Reasoned with them.*' Or, discoursed with them, as was customary for teachers of the law.

3. '*Opening and alleging.*' This describes the purport of his discourse. He opened, or expounded, the meaning of these passages of the Holy Scriptures, which were regarded by the

Jews as prophecies concerning Christ, but were imperfectly understood by them, and he alleged or made it clear by his exposition that Messiah was to suffer, and that Jesus was the Messiah. The course of his argument was doubtless the same as that adopted by St. Peter (chap. ii. iii.)—both apostles following our Lord's address to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. Luke xxiv. 26. The reasonings which St. Paul addressed to the heathens whom he converted here were of course of a different character. See xiv. 15—17, and the speech to the Athenians in this chapter.

4. '*And consorted.*' The original rather implies that they were allotted, as it were, i.e. granted by God to Paul and Silas.¹

'*A great multitude.*' Here, as in most places, the Gentile proselytes showed more readiness to embrace the Gospel than the Jews.

'*Of the chief women.*' The general profligacy of the inhabitants of this city, and especially of the women, was notorious. Hence we may presume that women of character would feel strongly attracted towards a religion which inculcated a high standard of morality.

5. '*Which believed not.*' Or, were disobedient. They were not only

¹ Meyer.

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 ;

invited, they were commanded, to acknowledge Christ their King.

'Moved with envy.' The calling of the Gentiles was, as usual, the great stumbling-block to the Jews. St. Paul dwells much upon their envious character in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, ii. 14—16.

'Of the baser sort.' Literally, of the frequenters of the forum, or market-place. This was the usual resort for the idle and profligate, who were foremost in disturbances in all ancient cities.¹ They depended, to a great extent, for their subsistence on the distributions of food made by persons who offered sacrifice to the gods, and would therefore be easily excited against the preachers of the Gospel. It is to be remarked that the fiercest opponents of Christianity among the heathen were found among the dregs of the undisciplined and uneducated populace, who were habituated to scenes of licentiousness and cruelty by the public games.

'The house of Jason.' Jason was a kinsman of St. Paul (Rom. xvi. 21), and appears to have been a person of some station and property. The word 'Jason' is Greek, but it was the usual modification of the Hebrew name Jesus.

'To the people.' That is, before the assembly of the people, which met regularly in the forum. The word for

'people' in the original is used only in the case of a free city, having a complete municipal organisation. See note on v. 1. At such meetings acts of great cruelty and injustice were frequently perpetrated with a show of legality.

6. *'And certain brethren.'* The Christians seem to have met at the house of Jason for prayer.

'The rulers of the city.' The civil magistrates were native Thessalonians, who administered the internal affairs of the city under the authority of the Roman governor. Here, again, the word used by St. Luke marks the exact character of the office. The same word is used in an inscription found at Thessalonica.

'These that have turned,' &c. The form of the accusation is remarkable, showing the craft and malice of the Jews. The two points about which the magistrates were most solicitous were the preservation of the public peace, and submission to the authority of the Roman Emperor, for which they were responsible to the governor. The tumult, which the Jews themselves excited, is adduced as a proof of the turbulent character of the Christians; and the preaching of Jesus, whom they well knew to be no pretender to an earthly dominion, was represented as rebellion against Cæsar. The expression

¹ Suicer Thes. i. p. 66; Ast. on Theophr. chap. vi. p. 85.

7. Whom Jason hath received : and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. ^{5 Luke 23. 2.}
^{John 19. 12.}
^{1 Pet. 2. 13.}

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.

10. ¶ And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea : who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. ^{6 ch. 9. 25.}
^{ver. 14.}

11. These were more noble than those in Thessa-

used by them shows incidentally what great effects had been already produced by the promulgation of the Gospel. A revolution had, in fact, commenced, which ceased not until it had subverted the heathen world.

7. '*These all.*' All these Christians who recognise Jesus as their king.

'*The decrees of Cæsar.*' The laws and decrees against high treason.

'*There is another king.*' Or, that another is king, viz. Jesus. The accusation was probably sustained by reference to the expressions which the apostle had employed in speaking of the reappearance of the King of Glory. See 1 Thess. iv. 16, 2 Thess. i. 7—10.

8. '*They troubled.*' The magistrates were probably aware that the accusation was unfounded, or they would have ordered the arrest of the leading Christians; but they feared the jealousy of the Romans too much to dismiss the charge.

9. '*Taken security.*' The object of this security must have been that nothing should be done which could disturb the public peace, or give offence to the Romans. Jason and the

other Christians seem to have deposited a sum of money, to be forfeited in case of disobedience. Jason may have pledged himself not to receive St. Paul, or to send him from the city.¹ It is probable that some tumultuary proceedings followed, and that the Gentile converts especially were maltreated by their countrymen after St. Paul's departure. 1 Thess. ii. 14.

10. '*Berea.*' A city in the third district of Macedonia, on the river Lydias, about fifty miles to the west of Thessalonica.² It is now called Kara Fera, or Verria, with a population of from 15,000 to 20,000 souls.

11. '*These were more noble,*' i.e. of a more liberal and ingenuous disposition.

'*They received the word.*' It appears from this that they had not yet heard of our Lord, and had not received communications from Judea.

'*Searched the scriptures daily.*' Not contented with the discourses on the sabbath, they met daily to examine the passages, from which St. Paul proved the doctrine of a suffering Messiah, and identified Him with Jesus.

¹ Hensen, p. 132; Neander, p. 254.

² Wieseler, p. 41; Cramer's Greece, i. 231.

lonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and 'searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

¹ Iml. 24. 16.
² Luke 16. 29.
³ John 5. 39.

12. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

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.

¹ Matt. 10.
²².

14. ¹ 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

12. '*Therefore.*' It followed as a result from their faithful searching that they found the Saviour. It is gratifying to find the Berean Church steadfast in the faith when severely tried by the Arian heresy in the fourth century. This we learn from two epistles addressed to the bishops and clergy by St. Basil, A.D. 375.

'*Of honourable women.*' Women of character and distinction. These converts seem to have been partly proselytes of the gate, and partly idolaters; the former being converted in the synagogue, the latter by separate addresses and conferences.

13. '*But when the Jews,*' &c. From this it appears that St. Paul must have remained some weeks at least at Berea.

'*Stirred up.*' The word '*also*' refers to '*stirred up*'; the Jews came thither and then also excited a tumult, or storm, as at Thessalonica, by addressing themselves to the populace. The expression in the original is very forcible.

14. '*Paul.*' The Jews always directed their attacks with peculiar malice against the apostle of the Gentiles, who therefore withdrew alone on this occasion. St. Luke had remained at Philippi.

'*As it were to the sea.*' Or, as the word should be rendered, towards the sea.¹ There can be no doubt that St. Paul went by sea to Athens: had he travelled by land, he would have passed through many important cities. The voyage would occupy about three days with favourable weather.²

15. '*Brought him.*' It was usual for the Christians to escort the apostles to some distance when they left a city; but these brethren gave a singular proof of their reverence and affection for St. Paul, by accompanying him so far as Athens.

'*Athens.*' The spirit of Christianity was thus brought into contact with the intellect of heathendom. Athens was the very centre of Grecian culture, the teacher and model of the European mind. The

¹ Raphel, Meyer.

² Wieseler, p. 42.

unto Athens; and ¹receiving a commandment unto ^{ch. 18. 5.} Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

16. ¶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, ^{his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city} ^{= 2 Pet. 2. 8.} ^{¶ Or, full of idols.} wholly given to idolatry.

17. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with

Romans derived their knowledge of art and science principally from Athens, and their mental development was almost exclusively moulded by its orators, poets, and philosophers. Although at that time it was a mere dependency of the Roman empire, without any political influence, yet the sons of the noblest families, all indeed who were ambitious of distinction for learning and talent, still frequented its schools, and regarded its professors as the best exponents of moral and scientific truth. Athens was in fact the intellectual metropolis of heathen civilisation. But there was no distinction of which the inhabitants were so proud as of their singular devotion to the worship of the gods.¹ The city was full of altars, victims, temples, and processions; their mysteries were esteemed the most solemn and awful in the world; and while they scrupulously retained every rite which had the sanction of antiquity, they readily adopted novelties brought by impostors from every land. They were at the same time rigidly intolerant of any practical innovation in the national religion, and punished those who spoke or wrote against the established forms with prompt severity. The fact that a state of high mental activity, a philosophy that recoiled

from no results of pantheism or atheism, co-existed with degrading superstitions and wild fanaticism, is one fraught with the most important suggestions. St. Paul is here placed in a position of direct antagonism to false philosophy and false religion. We shall observe how he assails both.

16 '*Paul waited for them.*' He was alone, and probably intended to remain quiet until he should have the assistance of these ministers. Some time appears to have elapsed after the departure of the Bereans before he came forward.

'*Was stirred in him.*' Was much excited and distressed. The folly and wickedness of idolatry cause horror and indignation in good men.

'*Given up to idolatry.*' The marginal translation 'full of idols' is more accurate.² In no cities were the statues of the gods more numerous, nor attracted more attention, than at Athens. The image of Minerva, the tutelary goddess of Athens, was the work of Phidias, and the master-piece of Grecian art.³

17. '*Therefore disputed he,*' &c. This powerful feeling induced him at once to enter upon his work. As usual he began with the Jews, but, contrary to his wont, addressed the unconverted heathens in the public place in the course of the same week.

¹ Wetstein, Hemsén, p. 139; Paus., i. 24, 3; Strabo, x. p. 472; Liv. xliii. 27.

² Meyer, Viger. ad. Herm., p. 638.

³ Plin. xxxvi. 5.; Thuc. ii. 13.; Cramer's Greece, vol. ii. p. 339.; Rawlinson's Bampton Lectures, p. 245.

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 Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this || babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

1 Or, base fellow.

'*Devout persons.*' Proselytes of the gate. Even at Athens the Jews had made some impression. It is not stated whether St. Paul's preaching produced any effect upon them.

'*The market.*' The forum of Eretria, where the people assembled daily in great numbers. It was surrounded by beautiful buildings. On one side was the famous 'Painted Porch' where the Stoics held public disputations on philosophy.¹

18. '*The Epicureans.*' The tenets of these so-called philosophers resembled those of the Sadducees in some important points. They denied the creation and providential government of the world, the spirituality and immortality of the soul, and referred all moral laws to selfishness, or rather to sensuality. No sect was so remote from the truth, and we read of very few converts from them at any age of the Church. It may be assumed, however, that many persons held these opinions in a kind of reckless despair of ascertaining any high truth. No sect counted such numbers of adherents.

'*And of the Stoicks.*' These persons, on the other hand, rather resembled the Pharisees. They believed in the power and wisdom of God, held a lofty, though, in many essential points, an erroneous system of morals, and counted among their followers many of the noblest characters of antiquity. Some

distinguished Christians of the first two centuries were trained in their schools; but their pride and sternness of character generally opposed invincible obstacles to the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus.

There were other sects of philosophy at Athens, not less famous than these; viz. the Academicians, or followers of Plato, and the Peripatetics, who were disciples of Aristotle; but their schools were at some distance from the forum, and St. Paul does not seem to have met them on this occasion. Their opinions were opposed to the two systems held respectively by the Stoics and Epicureans, and were far less antagonistic to Christianity. The omission of all reference to them is certainly not undesigned.

'*What will this babbler.*' The word in the original means a picker up of grains, properly a bird so called, hence an idle parasite, and common jester. The scoffing and contemptuous tone of this question evidently belongs to the Epicureans.² The Stoics looked upon the matter in a more serious light.

'*He seemeth.*' &c. The Stoics presumed that St. Paul wished to introduce the worship of Jesus as a new divinity, whose claims were supported by an account of His miraculous resurrection. Chrysostom, and some other commentators³ are of opinion that they took the word '*Anastasis*,'

¹ Cramer's Greece, vol. ii. p. 318.; Winer, vol. i. p. 112.

² Hemsen, p. 142.

³ Ecumen, Selden, Hammond, Spencer.

19. And they took him, and brought him unto
 || Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new || Or, Mars'
 doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? Hill.

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.)

22. ¶ Then Paul stood in the midst of || Mars' hill, || Or, the
 court of the
 Areopagites.

i.e., resurrection, to be the name of a goddess. It is an interesting fact, the Athenians put Socrates to death on the charge of being a setter forth of strange gods.

19. '*Unto Areopagus.*' It has been much questioned whether this was a judicial proceeding. The Areopagus, or Mars' Hill, was the supreme court of judicature at Athens, and charges of impiety, or innovations in religion, fell under its special cognisance.¹ It is more probable that it was a public inquiry before some members of the court, but not, strictly speaking, a trial; we read of no accusers, witnesses, or sentence, and the mere introduction of a foreign worship would not be illegal.² It is well known that religious matters were treated with great levity by the magistrates at that time, excepting in cases when a popular feeling had been previously excited. The form of the question, '*may we know,*' is studiously courteous, and quite in accordance with Athenian manners.

20. '*Strange things.*' Things that excite our astonishment. The resurrection of the dead was a doctrine that had never been heard of by any heathen people.

21. '*For all the Athenians,*' &c. This characteristic of the Athenians is noted by many ancient writers.³ They were equally remarkable for ready wit and idle curiosity. It is computed that there were not less than 340 places in Athens where people met merely to talk on politics and other subjects.⁴

22. '*In the midst.*' The Areopagus was built in the form of an amphitheatre. St. Paul stood in the centre.

'*And said.*' The discourse of St. Paul before this court is a living proof of his apostolical wisdom and eloquence: we observe here how Paul, according to his own expression, could become a Gentile to the Gentile, and, by arguing from their own avowed principles, win the Heathens for the Gospel.⁵ The speech is also remarkable for elegance, purity of style, and skilful arrangement.

'*Ye are too superstitious.*' This expression in the original has a signification which would be so far from offending the Athenians that they would accept it as a just and even flattering description of their character. It means literally having great fear or reverence for the gods, and

¹ Meursius, Areop., Perizon. in Ælian, v. 15.

² Wetstein and Hemsen.

³ Demosth. ad Ep. Phil., and Phil.

i.; Dicæarchus v. Græciæ.

⁴ Meursius ap. Kuinoel.

⁵ Neander.

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.

^a ch. 14. 15. 24. ^aGod that made the world and all things therein,

^b Matt. 11. seeing that he is ^cLord of heaven and earth, ^ddwelleth

^e ch. 7. 48. not in temples made with hands;

^f Ps. 20. 8. 25. Neither is worshipped with men's hands, ^gas

was taken either in a good sense, as very pious, or in a bad sense, as irrationally fearful and superstitious.¹

St. Paul uses it evidently in the strictly literal or middle sense. He appeals to their fear of the invisible world² without touching upon the false direction which it took in them.

23. 'Your devotions,' or the objects of your devotions,—temples, altars, and statues.³

'An altar,' &c. Two Greek writers, who visited Athens about this time, speak of altars inscribed to unknown gods⁴, and it is certain from these words of St. Paul that he had seen one inscribed to the, or rather to an, unknown god. The views of the persons who erected these altars cannot be positively ascertained. It seems probable that when any public calamity occurred, which the Athenians attributed to the wrath of some deity, without knowing what offence they might have given to any one in particular, they set up an altar and offered sacrifices to an unknown god.⁵ It was, however, a just and true, though probably an unconscious expression of a feeling which lay at the root of many ceremonial observances among the

heathen. The world by wisdom knew not God, but some knew and deplored their ignorance.

'Ignorantly worship.' Worship without knowing His nature or attributes. St. Paul undoubtedly considered the inscription to be a testimony to the innate idea of God which is universal in man. See Rom. i. 19. 21. 23.

24. 'God that made the world.' This verse directly opposes the common opinion that the deity dwelt in the temples, and declares the creative and sovereign power of God, which was partially recognised by the Stoics, but denied by the Epicureans. The declaration, however, would be listened to by both as no irrational philosophical tenet.⁶

'Made with hands.' A very striking application of the words which Paul had heard St. Stephen speak in his last discourse. vii. 48.

25. 'Neither is worshipped with,' &c. This leaves worship on its right footing, as a duty on the part of man, while it refutes the gross notions of idolaters, who believed that the gods were to a certain extent dependent upon the ministrations of the priests,

¹ Wetstein: see especially the quotation from Arist. Pol.

² Chrysostom.

³ Suicer Thea. p. 942.

⁴ Pausanias, i. 1. 4., and Philostr.

v. Apol., 6. 3.

⁵ Diog. Laert. Epim. 3; Meyer.

⁶ Ullman, Stud. und Krit., 1832, p. 388; Philo. ii. p. 1087.

though he needed any thing, seeing ¹he 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 ²the bounds of their habitation;

27. 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, ³though he be not far from every one of us:

28. For ⁴in him we live, and move, and have our

and even that they were fed by the fumes of sacrifice.¹

'*Life and breath.*' The former word denotes the life, or living principle; the latter, the continuance of life, which is sustained by breath.² St. Paul thus shows that the worshipper is in a state of the most absolute dependence on the Deity, and therefore cannot render any service to him, except as a token of gratitude and reverence.

26. '*Of one blood.*' This is opposed to one of the most mischievous and widely-spread opinions of the ancient world, which was closely connected with polytheism, viz., that men sprung from different stocks, and were literally aliens in blood. No opinion tended more to harden and brutalise the hearts of men; they lost all sympathy with foreigners, and treated their slaves as beings of an inferior and hostile nature. The Athenians especially prided themselves on their peculiar origin, believing that they were indigenous, or native children of their own soil. The subject has been scientifically investigated, and the diversities of language, complexion, form, &c., have been satisfactorily

accounted for on the hypothesis of a common origin of all races of mankind.³

'*Hath determined.*' The separation of mankind is thus represented by St. Paul as part of the divine scheme of government.

'*The times before appointed.*' This seems to refer to the periods of national growth, maturity, and decay, each of which, as well as the places of settlement, is subordinate to the general plan of divine Providence.⁴

27. '*That they should seek.*' The object of these arrangements was, therefore, to teach men to seek the Lord by making them sensible of their dependence on Him. St. Paul evidently refers to the acknowledgment (ver. 23) that their search was unavailing, while he shows that the failure must have been their own fault, since God never withdrew himself from His creatures. He remains nearer to each of us than our own hearts.

28. '*For in Him.*' This great truth was not denied by Gentile philosophers, and St. Paul is appealing to the consciousness of his hearers. One ancient writer says, 'Since we are not dwelling in isolation, apart or

¹ Aristoph. Aves., 186., &c.

² Meyer.

³ Prichard, History of Man. See

also four admirable articles by Quatrefages, 'Revue des deux Mondes.'

⁴ Hensen.

7 Tit. 1. 12. being; 7as certain also of your own poets have said,
For we are also his offspring.

29. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God,
* Isa. 40. 18. *we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto
gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's
device.

* ch. 14. 16. 30. And *the times of this ignorance God winked
Rom. 3. 25.

far from God, but existing in the midst of Him.'¹ This opinion, however, was rather of a physical than moral and religious character. They regarded the Deity, so to speak, as the element in which man lived. The origin of life, movement, and all existence is attributed to God, in this sense, by many ancients.

'Of your own poets.' The quotation is from the *Phænomena* of Aratus, a Greek poet of Cilicia, in fact, a native of Tarsus, and therefore a countryman of St. Paul. He lived about 270 years before our Lord. It is also found in a poem of Cleanthes, the disciple and follower of Zeno, who founded the Stoic sect of philosophy. It is an interesting fact that St. Paul studied, and made use of the writings of profane authors. See introduction to chap. ix. Gamaliel was much blamed by his bigoted countrymen for encouraging these studies.

'His offspring.' The heathens held this truth also, but not in its high moral significance. They believed in a physical derivation from one universal existence.²

29. 'Is like unto gold.' Some philosophers had asserted the obvious truth, that God could not be adequately represented by any image; but their teaching had no effect upon the people, nor was it intended to affect popular superstitions. The argument here employed by St. Paul

is peculiarly striking, and calculated to make a deep impression upon the Stoics. He argues, from the dignity of human nature, against the worship of graven stones, which are infinitely less precious than the intelligent creatures of God. From the spot where St. Paul stood he could see, and probably pointed at the colossal statue, called by the Athenians, 'The Goddess,' which represented Minerva, or Athena, the tutelar deity, standing with spear and shield on the Acropolis.

'Art and man's device.' The expressions in the original are very striking. They show that St. Paul thoroughly appreciated the skill and genius of the artist, sternly as he condemned the abuse of such gifts.

30. 'God winked at,' or 'overlooked.' He did not inflict such punishment as man deserved. He did not destroy or extirpate idolaters, but preserved the world until the coming of Christ. This does not imply that the ignorance was without guilt (They did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and therefore He gave them up to a reprobate mind. Rom. i.), but it was a mitigation of their guilt.

'But now commandeth.' When repentance is preached in the name of Jesus, the position of man is altogether changed; he is commanded, and must obey under penalty of absolute condemnation.

¹ Dio Chrys. i. p. 384.

² Dörner. Einl. vol. i. p. 115; Cicero de leg., i. 8; Lucret., ii. 990.

at; but ^bnow commandeth all men every where to repent :

31. Because he hath appointed a day, in the which ^che will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath || given assurance unto all *men*, in that ^dhe hath raised him from the dead.

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 be-

31. St. Paul gives a concise statement of that doctrine which is most calculated to alarm the conscience of sinners. He dwells exclusively upon the judgment of the world, of which the resurrection of the appointed Judge is the miraculous assurance and pledge. It is evident that St. Paul reserved for a second discourse the statement of the conditions and privileges of the Gospel covenant. The first object in preaching to the ignorant heathen must be to quicken the dead or dormant consciousness of man's sin and God's righteousness.

32. '*And when they heard,*' &c. The Stoics believed in the eternity of the spiritual principle in man, but neither they nor any sect of philosophers had a clear and full persuasion that the individual soul would retain a separate and conscious existence after the dissolution of the body. The resurrection of the body, which alone makes a futurity of compensation intelligible, was a tenet utterly unknown to them, and contrary to all their notions of matter and spirit.¹ The Epicureans would be disposed to

mock, and the Stoics seriously to reject the doctrine.

'*We will hear thee again.*' These words may imply hesitation, but it is more probable that they were not said in earnest. St. Paul does not appear to have addressed them again, and he would certainly not have neglected an opportunity had it been offered. He appears not to have remained long in Athens, perhaps not more than two or three weeks, until the return of Silas. Timotheus was sent to Thessalonica. Though the immediate effect of the Apostle's sermon was not great, the Parthenon in time became a Christian church. Athens ceased to be a city full of idols, and the repugnance of the Greeks to images became so strong, that it was a principal cause of the schism between the churches of the East and West in the 8th century. See Homily on Idolatry, part 2.²

34. '*Dionysius the Areopagite.*' A member of the supreme court of judicature. He is stated on good authority, to have been the first bishop of the church of Athens³, and is said

¹ See Origen e. Cels. i. 7; Tertullian de Præsc., 7.

² Humphry.

³ Const. Ap., vii. 46; Enseb. H. E. iii. 4, iv. 23.

lieved : among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

also to have died there as a martyr. The writings attributed to him are spurious.

'*Damaris.*' She appears to have been a woman of some station, but is known only from this brief notice.

The church of Athens never rose to any great eminence, yet many Christian Fathers were partly educated there, and it has existed with

an unbroken succession of bishops from the time of St. Paul unto the present day. It is also interesting to know that the first apology for the Christian was written by an Athenian Bishop, Quadratus, and that the church was remarkable in early ages for good order, and all Christian graces.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—4. Persecution had, as usual, the twofold effect of purifying the faith of the genuine converts, and of opening a wider field of exertion to the preachers of the Gospel. So God makes all things work together for the good of His Church. These things should teach the Christian never to despond, when the free course of the Gospel appears to be obstructed by prejudice, or turned aside by persecution. So long as the sufferings and resurrection of Christ are faithfully preached, that Gospel will find its way into many hearts, winning multitudes of those who have already attained to a partial knowledge of the truth, offering a resting-place and secure abode to many gentle and loving spirits, and subduing even some proud and self-righteous hearts to the obedience of faith. The words of St. Bernard well express the feelings which should sustain and animate the faithful soldiers of Christ : ' God exhorts us to fight ; He helps us to conquer ; He is present at the conflict ; He raises us up when we fall ; and He crowns us after the victory.'

5—9. The Jews, who prided themselves, not without reason, upon their superiority to heathens in religious knowledge and general morality, were found ready to join the basest and most profligate idolaters in persecuting Christians. This unscrupulous use of the worst means to effect its purposes has been the prominent characteristic of false zeal from the beginning. The truth, which is a savour of life unto life to those who open their hearts to receive it, becomes a savour of death to those who obstinately oppose it. The evil which the Jews did not suspect in their own hearts burst out in acts of deadly malignity, when they rejected Him who offered them salvation from the power, guilt, and penalties of sin. No heart remains in the same state after hearing the Word of Truth. It will be irritated or hardened, if it be not subdued and changed.

11. True nobility of the soul consists in its affinity to the Divine Nature which is especially shown by candour and diligence in searching for Divine Truth. A hearty and persevering search is ever rewarded with success, provided always that it proceeds in the way marked out by God, and that every

movement of the inquiring heart is hallowed by prayer. The Bereans sought Christ where He at once hides and manifests himself, in His own written Word; and they sought him under the guidance of one, whom He had empowered to interpret its mysterious intimations. We have the same Word, and the same interpreter, who 'being dead yet speaketh' in his writings, and the same Spirit, who is ever ready, as He alone is able, to reveal the 'glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

14, 15. The Jews were permitted to succeed for a season. They drove the apostle out of Macedonia, and thwarted, so far as they could foresee, the gracious purposes of God towards the Gentiles. St. Paul was driven, as it were, in self-defence to assault the stronghold of false religion and false philosophy. Their envy had but one evil effect; it excluded them from participation in the triumphs of their long-expected Messiah.

16, 17. The spirit of any thoughtful man would be deeply stirred by the forms which presented themselves to the eye of the apostle at Athens. But with what feelings? Would not those forms be regarded by many as attestations to man's high endowments and still higher aspirations, or even as indications of somewhat in him akin to the divinities, who seemed almost to move, and live, and reign in those shapes of majesty and beauty? St. Paul viewed them with other feelings. He beheld in them but awful signs, that souls, which cast off allegiance to the One Creator, are reduced by a just but terrible retribution into servitude to the lowest creatures, so that they worship inanimate things, stocks and stones, as their gods. If they proved that this people retained in their spiritual degradation the capacity for receiving and appreciating that beauty which is one with truth, this did but give intensity to his desire to show them the 'king in His beauty,' and to open to them the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are hid in Christ.

18—20. Remark the difference between the curiosity which merely arises from a love of novelty, and that which proceeds from a love of truth. That terminates, as it did with the Athenians, in mockery and incredulity; this, as it did with the Bereans, in the knowledge of Him, who is the way, the truth, and the life.

22—32. This discourse of St. Paul is to be studied as a model by every preacher who may be called upon to address men of education and refinement, to whom the Gospel is unknown or distasteful. Simple, but skilful in its arrangement, calm and conciliating in tone, but earnest, straightforward and uncompromising in spirit, it touches upon a great variety of topics, but all converge towards his one object, that of making the soul sensible of its need of Christ. It appeals to man's consciousness, to the works of creation, to the order of the universe, to the providential government of the world, and to the confessions and declarations of the deepest thinkers, which testify to the being and spirituality of God, and therefore to the unreasonableness of that idolatry to which, either in its grosser or more subtle forms, every unbeliever is 'wholly given up.' The apostle concludes with bringing before them that fact by which alone the mysteries of existence can be cleared up, and the conscience at once subdued and quickened—a fact not resting on speculation, but attested by the most awful miracles, viz. that God will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained.

32—34. It is painful to think that the description of these unbelievers should apply to so large a proportion of nominal Christians. How many mock the awful truths of religion—how many postpone the consideration of them to a more convenient season! While they deliberate, the opportunities disappear, the warning voice ceases, the conscience sinks into alumber, and death comes while the hesitating and wavering Christian is utterly unprepared to appear before Him who will exact a severe account from those who practically despise the riches of His long-suffering grace, and court the day of vengeance.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The visits of St. Paul to the cities in Europe had hitherto been brief, sufficient to plant, but not to complete the organisation of, a Christian community in each. At Corinth, however, he abode for a considerable time, during which it is evident that the Church of Christ took firm root in the most civilised province of this quarter of the world. This chapter should be carefully studied, in conjunction with the Epistles written by the apostle during his sojourn, and with those which he addressed to the Church after his departure. The latter portion gives a brief account of an important journey undertaken by St. Paul previous to his settlement at Ephesus, and introduces a person remarkable in the history of primitive Christianity, the eloquent, learned, and zealous preacher of the Gospel, Apollos of Alexandria.

A.D. 52.

1. AFTER these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

2. And found a certain Jew named ^aAquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; ^{19.}
²Tim. 4. 19.

1. '*Corinth.*' A beautiful city on the isthmus which connects the Peloponnesus, or Morea, with the rest of Greece; at that time the Capital of Achaia, and residence of the Roman proconsul. It was destroyed by the Romans 146 A.C., but had been lately rebuilt by Cæsar, and was then famous for its extensive commerce, the skill of its artists, and the general civilisation of its inhabitants.¹ It was at the same time notorious for extreme corruption and licentiousness, especially in connection with the worship of Venus.²

2. '*Aquila.*' This distinguished Christian, whose parents lived in Pontus (a province in the north of Asia Minor, where there were many Jews, See 1 Peter i. 1; Acts xi. 9),

appears to have visited Rome as a merchant, and very probably was converted there to Christianity.³ It is doubtful whether a Christian Church was established at Rome at this early time; but it seems highly reasonable to suppose that the Gospel was preached, with some success, by the Pentecostal converts on their return from Jerusalem to Rome. Acts ii. 10. Aquila seems to have been an opulent merchant. The Christians were wont to assemble at his house, both in Ephesus and Rome. Aquila and Priscilla, or Prisca (Rom. xvi. 3), were both Roman names. It was customary for the Jews to bear Gentile names when they lived out of Palestine.

'*Claudius had commanded.*' This

¹ Strabo, viii. 263; Aristid i. 22.

² Dio Chrysostom, ii. 119; Winer,

i. 672; Cramer, iii. 25.

³ Olshausen; Neander, p. 274.

(because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome :) and came unto them.

3. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, ^band wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

^b ch. 20. 34.
1 Cor. 4. 12.
1 Thess. 2. 9.
2 Thess. 3. 8.
^c ch. 17. 2.

4. ^cAnd he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

^d ch. 17. 14, 15.

5. And ^dwhen Silas and Timotheus were come from

edict is said by a Roman historian to have been issued in consequence of tumults among the Jews, raised, as he asserts, by an insurgent named Chrestus.¹ This is most probably an erroneous statement. The tumult seems rather to have been caused by the envy of the unbelieving Jews, and their attempts to destroy Christianity. The edict was, apparently, promulgated very early in the year 52 A.D., during the absence of Agrippa, king of Chalcis, by whose influence it appears probable that it was afterwards repealed.²

3. '*Tentmakers.*' The exact meaning of this expression has been disputed. Tents were made both of leather and of goats' hair in Cilicia,³ the native country of St. Paul, and were sometimes very small and portable, for the use of travellers in the shelterless deserts of Asia.⁴ The general demand for these makes it probable that St. Paul was employed in preparing them whenever he supported himself by manual labour, as was the case both here and in Macedonia.

4. '*And he reasoned.*' The tenor of St. Paul's preaching in the synagogue was doubtless the exposition of types and prophecies referring to Messiah, by which he persuaded some

Jews and proselytes of the gate, that they were to look for a suffering and atoning Saviour.

5. '*And when Silas,*' &c. This must have occurred very soon after St. Paul's arrival at Corinth, since Silas and Timotheus had been directed to return with all speed. Upon their arrival, St. Paul wrote the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, either late in A.D. 52, or early in the following year. The second Epistle to that Church was written, probably, about twelve months later, and certainly at Corinth. The student should read the Epistles in chronological order while he follows this history. He will thus attain a clear and lively idea of the thoughts which occupied the mind of the Apostle, and formed, as we may be assured, the subject-matter of his preaching.

'*Was pressed in the spirit.*' The meaning of this expression seems to be that St. Paul was constrained by the Spirit to press the distinctive points of Christian doctrine upon the Jews with increased urgency. But the best MSS. read, '*was pressed by the word;*' i. e. was engaged in preaching the word with much earnestness and anxiety, on account of the opposition which his doctrine at length encountered.

¹ Suetonius Claud., xxv; Dio Cass., lx. 6; Tacitus, Ann., xii. 52; Lewin, F. S.

² Wieseler, p. 120.

³ Caesar, B. G., iii. 29; Flor., i. 12; Dio, v. 2.

⁴ Schleusner, Neander.

Macedonia, Paul was *pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *||* was Christ.

6. And 'when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, ^she shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, ^bYour blood *be* upon your own heads; ¹I *am* clean: ^kfrom henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

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. ¹And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, ¹Cor. 1. 14. believed on the Lord with all his house; and many

'Christ.' The marginal translation, *the Christ*, is more accurate.

6. 'And blasphemed.' The clear enunciation of Christian truth left no middle course open to the Jews; they either accepted and worshipped, or rejected and blasphemed, the Saviour.

'He shook his raiment.' This was symbolical of the rejection of the unbelieving Jews by God. It is to be regarded as the warning of an inspired prophet, not merely as an expression of St. Paul's own feelings of indignation.

'Your blood.' The responsibility of your destruction rests upon yourselves. See 2 Sam. i. 16; 1 Kings ii. 33; Ezek. xxxiii. 4. The origin of the expression may be traced to the custom of laying hands on the head of a victim, and of imprecating on it the evils which were apprehended by the person who offered the sacrifice.¹

7. 'And he departed thence.' This may mean either that he left the house of Aquila, or, that, instead of attending the synagogue, he held meetings of the Christian converts in the adjoining house of Justus, a Gentile proselyte. During some portion of the

time, St. Paul appears to have translated in the house of Gaius. Rom. xvi. 23.

8. 'Crispus, the chief ruler.' Each synagogue of the Jews was governed by several elders, under the presidency of one, who was called chief of the synagogue. Crispus was one of the few persons whom St. Paul baptized himself, (see the marginal reference,) this sacrament being generally administered by deacons or presbyters.

'Many of the Corinthians.' The converts in this city, as we learn from the epistles, were for the most part persons belonging to the middle and lower classes. 'Not many wise men after the flesh,' i. e. students in the schools of heathen philosophy, 'not many mighty, not many noble, are called.' 1 Cor. i. 16. The opulent merchants and persons of rank in that city were excessively licentious, and accustomed to a highly artificial style of oratory, and to subtle philosophical discussions. Both causes stood in the way of a general conversion by the plain and practical preaching of the Gospel; but the expression 'not many' seems to imply,

¹ Elsner; Rosenmuller; Lev. xvi. 31.; Herodot., ii. 39; Outram de Sacrif.

of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

^{= ch. 23. 11.} 9. Then ^{spake} the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

^{= Jer. 1. 18, 19.} 10. "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

^{Matt. 28. 20.} 11. And he [†] continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

^{† Gr. *est* *there*.} 12. ¶ And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia,

that some persons distinguished for rank and talents joined the Church: some of its members were certainly opulent.

9. '*The Lord.*' The Lord Jesus appeared, as it would seem, to St. Paul by a vision, that is, not in a dream, but in a spiritual trance, or state of ecstasy.

'*Be not afraid.*' It seems not improbable, that St. Paul may have intended to leave Corinth, when he found himself strongly opposed by the Jews.

10. '*I have much people.*' This expression evidently includes both those who already believed, and those who were hereafter to be converted by St. Paul's preaching. This is the *first* instance of the word being applied to any but Jews. Compare John x. 16. 'Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold.' The Gnostics abused this text to support their predestinarian tenets.¹

11. '*And he continued there.*' Corinth became one of the principal centres of Christianity in consequence of the long residence of St. Paul. Its situation and extensive commerce well adapted it for missionary purposes. It appears certain that St. Paul visited

many cities, and established churches in Achaia during this period. See 2 Thess. i. 4, and 2 Cor. i. 1.

'*A year and six months.*' This must be reckoned from the time when St. Paul removed to the house of Justus, to the end of his residence at Corinth.²

12. '*Gallio.*' A brother of the distinguished Roman philosopher, M. A. Seneca, the tutor of Nero. His original name was Marcus Annæus Novatus, which he changed for that of his father by adoption, Lucius T. Pollio, a celebrated rhetorician. Gallio was a man of considerable talent, and remarkable for sweetness of disposition and graceful manners.³ The pleasing tradition, that he was converted by St. Paul (who is also said to have corresponded through him with his brother Seneca), is not founded on sufficient authority.⁴

'*The deputy of Achaia.*' The title deputy, or proconsul, is a singular proof of St. Luke's accuracy. Achaia, which at that time included the whole of Greece south of Macedonia and Epirus, was made an imperial province under Tiberius,⁵ and therefore was governed, in this reign, not by

¹ Didymus ap. Cramer, p. 304.

² Anger; Wieseler, p. 45.

³ Seneca, Quæst. Nat., iv. Præf.; Statius, Sylva, ii. 7.

⁴ Gelpke, de Famil. Sen. et Pauli, 1813, ap. Winer.

⁵ Tac. Ann., i. 76.

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 ^{ch. 23. 29.} of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would ^{& 25. 11. 19.} that I should bear 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 ¹Sosthenes, the chief ¹Cor. 1. 1.

a proconsul, but by a procurator. Claudius, however, restored it to the Senate¹, and Gallio was, therefore, governor at this time with the title of proconsul. Had the passage been lost which records this transaction, St. Luke would have been accused of a misstatement. Undesigned coincidences of this kind are the most convincing proofs of the authenticity of any ancient book.

13. '*Saying, This fellow,*' &c. The Jews appear to have availed themselves at once of the appointment of the proconsul to try a plea, to which they had probably been aware that his predecessor would not attend. The Roman law tolerated Judaism, and their object was to prove that Christianity was not, and ought not to be, included under that denomination. This verse merely states the general purport of the accusation: the Jews argued, doubtless, that the doctrines of St. Paul led to innovations, which were contrary to the Roman, as well as to the Jewish law.

14. '*And when Paul,*' &c. Gallio listened to the Jews, but finding that the accusation had no reference to civil offences, but to questions of re-

ligion between the Jews and Christians, whom the Romans regarded merely as a sect of the Jews, he refused to take cognisance of the matter, and therefore did not permit St. Paul to make his defence. This was in accordance with the general maxims of Roman statesmen.

'*Wrong, or wicked lewdness.*' An offence either against property, or the laws of public morality. The latter words may also refer to a charge of imposture or sorcery, which at that time excited much attention, and was prohibited by many imperial proclamations. Gallio may have expected that some specific charge of this kind would be brought against St. Paul by the Jews.

15. '*Words and names, and of your law.*' A question that touched the doctrines of the Jews would not interest a Roman magistrate, who was little concerned about the internal affairs of a religion that was not adopted, though tolerated, by the state. The expression 'names' seems to imply that the Jews accused St. Paul of preaching Jesus.

17. '*All the Greeks.*' The word 'Greeks' is omitted in the best MSS.,

¹ Suet. Claud., p. 25.

ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

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 ^ashorn *his* head in ^rCenchrea: for he had a vow.

^a Num. 6.
18.
^{ch.} 21. 24.
^r Rom. 16.
1.

19. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

but there can be no doubt that the statement is correct. The Greeks, who were not proselytes, hated the Jews, and considered this contemptuous dismissal to be a proof that the proconsul shared their feelings.

'*Cared for none of those things,*' i. e. he was quite indifferent about the ill-treatment of St. Paul's persecutors, whose fanaticism was probably odious to him. The Roman provincial governors frequently overlooked disturbances which did not indicate any political feeling against the empire.¹

'*Sosthenes.*' This was probably the successor of Crispus, as there appears to have been only one synagogue at Corinth. Sosthenes appears also to have become a convert to Christianity a short time after this transaction. See the marginal reference.

18. '*A good while.*' In the original, 'many days.' The riot of the Jews occurred therefore some months before his departure.

'*Into Syria.*' See note v. 22.

'*Having shorn his head.*' It was customary among the Hebrews, when they were saved from any great danger, to bind themselves by a vow to offer sacrifice in the temple within thirty days, and in the meantime to

shave their heads, and abstain from wine.² St. Paul continued to observe those national rites and ceremonies, which were not contrary to the Christian doctrine; but he did this as a Hebrew, not as a minister, or member of the Church. He willingly submitted to any forms or acts of self-denial, when there was reason to believe that such conduct would mitigate the prejudices of the Jews.³ Some commentators hold that the words apply to Aquila and not to St. Paul, but the explanation just given is the more natural, and supported by higher authority.

'*Cenchrea.*' The sea-port of Corinth in the Gulf of Egina, about ten miles from the city. There was a Christian Church in this place, of which Phœbe (Rom. xvi. 1) was a deaconess; Lucius was appointed by St. Paul as the first bishop, according to an old tradition.⁴

19. '*Ephesus.*' The capital of Ionia, one of the richest and most beautiful cities in the ancient world. It was especially famous for the worship of Artemis, or Diana, whose temple then was regarded as one of the seven wonders of the world.

'*And left them there.*' Aquila and

¹ Pricæus ap. Kuinoel.

² Joseph, B. I. ii. 15, 1.

³ Calvin; Anon; and Didymus ap.

Cramer, p. 307; Alford.

⁴ Constit. Apost., vii. 46.

20. When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not ;

21. But bade them farewell, saying, 'I must by all' ch. 19. 21. & 20. 16. 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 Cæsarea, and gone 1 Cor. 4. 19. Heb. 6. 3. James 4. 15. up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

Priscilla appear to have possessed, or to have purchased a house in Ephesus, and to have been mainly instrumental in extending the church, which was founded at this time by St. Paul.

20. '*When they desired him.*' The Jews, therefore, at Ephesus, appear to have listened to St. Paul's preaching with more interest than usual. His strict observance of the law, shown by the vow which he had undertaken, as well as by his intention to attend the festival of Pentecost at Jerusalem, may have had some effect upon them, but many were doubtless among those who waited for the hope of Israel, and, therefore welcomed the herald of Christ.

21. '*The feast that cometh.*' It has been questioned which of the three great festivals is meant, but it was probably the feast of Pentecost. St. Paul could hardly have gone by sea before Easter, the navigation being then very dangerous and uncertain.¹ It was not his custom to undertake a long journey for the purpose of attending the feast of tabernacles. Nor would an attendance at that festival have allowed sufficient time for the journey which he undertook before he reached Ephesus towards the end of the year. It is possible that St. Paul may have carried with him some contributions from the churches of Achaia for the poor of Jerusalem.

'*If God will.*' From the note of Chrysostom on this passage, it appears that most of the early fathers literally observed the precept of St. James (see marginal reference), and guarded all their promises by expressing the condition, 'by the will of God.'

22. '*And gone up.*' That is, to Jerusalem. St. Luke seldom relates circumstances which may be naturally inferred. On that occasion St. Paul may be supposed to have given a full account of the establishment of the Gospel in Europe to the apostles, who appear to have invariably celebrated the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem. Many critics, however, suppose that the occurrences of which St. Paul speaks in the second chapter of the Galatians took place at this visit. In that case, Titus must have joined him on his journey, as well as Barnabas.² But I have little doubt that these circumstances are to be referred to the journey of which an account has already been given in the 15th chapter.

'*He went down to Antioch.*' This was the last visit of the apostle to this city, where so many important events had occurred in his own history, and in that of the Church of Christ. If, as I have assumed, the events alluded to (Galatians ii.) took place on the previous visit, one may be assured that the fusion of Greeks and Hebrews in the Church of Antioch was now

¹ Wieseler, p. 49.

² Wieseler, p. 181—294.

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.

* Gal. 1. 2.
& 4. 14.
* ch. 14. 22.
& 15. 32, 41.
* 1 Cor. 1.
12. & 3. 5, 6.
& 4. 6.
Tit. 3. 13.

25. This man was instructed in the way of the

completed, and that the constitution of the Church was definitively settled by St. Paul before his departure.

23. '*He departed and went over,*' &c. With these words St. Luke commences his account of the third great missionary journey of the apostle. As usual, he began by revisiting, and completely organising, the churches, which had been already established by his instrumentality. This journey must have occupied some months. He left Jerusalem in May, and arrived at Ephesus before the winter, in September or October.

24. '*Apollos, born at Alexandria.*' This brief notice of Apollos alludes to several important and interesting facts. He was a native of the famous city, founded by Alexander in Egypt, which was one of the largest and most opulent in the world, where every branch of literature had long flourished under the patronage of the Ptolemies. Vast numbers of Jews were settled there, and the famous version of the Old Testament into Greek was made in that city, and, as was said, at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus by seventy interpreters, whence it is called the Septuagint.¹ The Jews of Alexandria made considerable progress in several branches of learning and philosophy, but that advantage was more than counterbalanced by the introduction of lax, or, as they would now be called, ra-

tionalising notions, shown especially by a mode of interpreting Holy Scripture which derogated from its authority and perverted its meaning. The works of Philo Judæus, who lived there during our Saviour's time, are remarkable for the combination of an Oriental system of philosophy with an imperfect and corrupt form of Judaism.² Still the speculations of the best writers of the Alexandrian school were capable of being turned to a good use by those whose minds were purified and enlightened by divine grace. Apollos appears from this verse to have been a man of commanding talents, and to have possessed a thorough knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, with especial reference to the types and prophecies which prepared him to recognise the Messiah in the person of Jesus.

25. '*This man was instructed,*' &c. Apollos may have been taught by John the Baptist, or more probably by one of his disciples. The disciples of John were very numerous in some parts of Asia, and formed a distinct community; part of them were absorbed into the Christian Church, while part lapsed gradually into wild heretical notions, which were perpetuated in Asia by their followers under the denomination of Sabæans, or brothers of St. John.³ It appears that Apollos had heard of the life, doctrines, and miracles of our Lord,

¹ Prideaux, Connection, ii. 27—49.

² Ritter, G. Ph., iv.; and Dorner, i.

³ Hensen, p. 214: D'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale, p. 724.

Lord ; and being ^afervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, ^aknowing ^{11.} ^{ch. 19. 3.} 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,

and was convinced that He was the Messiah ; but it is doubtful whether he had heard of the Resurrection, and certain that he knew nothing of the transactions which followed that event.

'Fervent in spirit.' Apollos was under the influence of the Spirit, and his heart glowed with fervent zeal for the honour of the Lord Jesus, though he knew Him but imperfectly, and had not yet received that fulness of spiritual gifts which is vouchsafed to man in Him.¹

'Knowing only the baptism of John.' Although it is not expressly stated by these words that Apollos had received this baptism, yet it may be probably inferred from them. He may have known that the disciples of our Lord baptized previous to the Resurrection, but was not aware of the new and peculiar characteristics of baptism of the Holy Ghost.²

'He began to speak boldly, i.e. about this time Apollos came forward and expressed, freely and unreservedly, the indignation which he felt, because the Jews would not acknowledge the fulfilment of prophecy in the person of Jesus.

'Aquila and Priscilla.' Priscilla appears to have been endowed largely with those spiritual gifts which are bestowed on eminent believers for the good of the Church. Without taking

any public part in the ministrations of the Church, which would have been contrary to apostolic discipline (see 1 Cor. xiv. 34), she was able to speak convincingly to the heart on all suitable occasions, and it may be on account of that gift that she is even named before Aquila in more than one passage of Holy Writ.

'Took him unto them.' They received him into their society, and Aquila may also have admitted him by baptism into the Christian Church.

'The way of God.' Full instruction in all points of Christian doctrine was given after baptism, which required, as preliminary conditions, a confession of faith in Jesus, and renunciation of sins.

27. *'When he was disposed.'* The principal object of his journey to Corinth, the capital of Achaia, was probably to dispute further with those Jews who had rejected the preaching of St. Paul. Aquila and Priscilla may have supposed that they would be less prejudiced against the ministrations of Apollos. His eloquence and skill in the interpretation of Holy Scripture produced so much effect upon the people in that city, that, as we learn from the last verse in this chapter, and from St. Paul's epistles, the Church was increased, and some converts were even inclined to disparage the work of the apostle in comparison with his ; see

¹ Olshausen. See also Ammonius ap. Cramer, p. 314.

² Meyer.

the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, ^bhelped them much which had believed through grace:

^b 1 Cor. 2.
6.

28. For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, ^cshewing by the scriptures that Jesus *was* Christ.

^c ch. 9. 22.
& 17. 3.
& ver. 5.
† Or, *is the Christ.*

1 Cor. iii. 4—7. But Apollos retained his love and esteem, and appears to have been as free from presumption as St. Paul was from envy.

'Helped them much.' He gave them great help and assistance in their controversies with the unconverted Jews.

'Through grace.' These words may refer to Apollos or to the believers. It is more probable that we are to understand that Apollos was enabled, by the grace of the Lord Jesus, to help the Church effectually. It is true that faith is of grace, but the object of St. Luke in this passage is rather to point out the cause of his success.

28. *'Convinced.'* Or thoroughly confuted the Jews, who held that the

sufferings and humiliation of Jesus were incompatible with the character of the Messiah.

'Publicly.' In places of public resort, both in the synagogue which he attended probably for some time after his arrival at Corinth, and in other places where religious questions appear to have been openly discussed. Since his arguments were drawn from the Old Testament, his hearers must have been Hebrews or proselytes.

'By the Scriptures.' By his exposition of the types and prophecies, he proved to the conviction of every candid inquirer that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah whom the Jews expected.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. St. Paul passes from a city famous for mental cultivation to one notorious, even among the heathen, for licentiousness. If there he made but few converts, here success must have seemed, humanly speaking, to have been impossible. But He who controlleth the will and affection of man gathereth unto Himself a Church, and established a kingdom of light and purity in the midst of darkness and uncleanness. The minister of Christ must never despond because of the apparent hopelessness of his efforts, nor, on the other hand, mistake the speculative curiosity of worldlings for a preparedness to receive the things of Christ.

2, 3. God is rich in consolations to his afflicted servants. It was doubtless a calamity for Aquila to be expelled from the city where he had made his home; but that exile brought him to St. Paul, and gave him and his wife an occasion of taking part in the noblest work ever entrusted to a creature. It will be remarked that Aquila did not find that commercial occupations, though pursued with diligence in various cities of Europe and Asia, were incompatible with close study of the Word of God, with regular devotional exercises, or with an active participation in the work of the Gospel. Nay, those very occupations

were the immediate cause of that close intimacy with St. Paul, which was so long a source of mutual consolation to the apostle and himself.

4—8. The earnest and faithful preaching of the Gospel may for a time appear to be unsuccessful, or may elicit vehement opposition, but it must ultimately effect that work which is designed by its Author, and will not return unto Him void. In the meantime a terrible responsibility rests upon the hearers. If they be not cleansed of their sins by the blood of the Atonement, they must bear the penalty. Their blood will be upon their own heads.

9, 10. These two verses admit us into the secret pavilion of the Spirit, where the Lord Jesus communes with His elect servants. He speaks in tenderness to the infirmity, and in consolation to the despondency, of his afflicted minister; but we are permitted to observe that a loving care for His people is the immediate cause of His interposition. He seeth 'of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied,' and pours out His spirit upon His ministers that they may make Him known unto men, for whom 'He poured out His soul unto death.'

11. In eighteen months the churches of Achaia were planted and established, and after a lapse of eighteen centuries the teaching of the Word of God is equally effectual for the conversion of mankind. But that efficacy is exactly proportioned to the degree of spiritual communion which is maintained between the Lord in Heaven and His instruments on earth. How earnest and unceasing should be the prayers of the Church in behalf of those who are called to labour in the vineyard, and to invite the maimed, the halt, and the blind to partake of the heavenly banquet.

12, 13. How vigilant and active, how fertile in resources and ingenious in accusations, are the enemies of the Church. The apostle is charged with violating law because he preached the foundation and only true principle of all law, viz., the love of man originating in, and subordinate to, the love of God. The most odious feature in the conduct of the Jews was one which has been often reflected by the calumniators of the Church. They appealed to a law against Christians, which they knew and felt to be cruel and unjust when directed against themselves.

14—17. The contemptuous indifference of the Roman magistrate may not excite so much indignation as the violence and bigotry of the Hebrews; but it was in truth an indication of a state of heart and conscience not less alienated from God. Hatred of religion, or blind sectarian zeal, proves that the soul is in a diseased and disorganised condition; but apathy is the precursor or symptom of spiritual death.

18. The law of Christian charity enjoins compliance with old observances which are not contrary to the revealed will of God. The strong brethren will take care not to offend the consciences of the weak. But such compliance must be strictly limited to things in themselves indifferent; and acts, which in one age of the Church may be harmless or edifying, under other circumstances may lead to superstition, and cause real offence to those whom Christ died to save.

19—21. The actions and the words of St. Paul at Ephesus exemplify the absolute dependence which all believers should feel upon their heavenly Father. He did not remain there, notwithstanding the request of his countrymen, seconded as we may be assured, by the inclination of his own heart, but proceeded, as he had been directed, to Jerusalem; and though he promised to return

without delay, he guarded his promise with that condition which, expressed or understood, should be kept constantly in mind in speaking of the future : ‘ for that we ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.’

22, 23. How brief and simple are the incidental notices which enable the thoughtful reader to appreciate the labours and exertions of St. Paul ! The apostle on this journey enjoyed a present reward, and reaped in part the harvest of former labours, for he was enabled in those wide regions, so lately the abode of darkness, to convey fresh supplies of grace and strength to the children of light.

24—28. Each true minister of Christ has his peculiar vocation, and reflects with more or less of brilliancy some portion of the splendour that surrounds the throne of Christ. In Apollos we admire gifts that in all ages have been made instrumental to the extension and edification of the Church ; the capacity to receive and comprehend the teaching of Holy Writ, combined with that spiritual eloquence by which its precepts are brought home to the conscience, and its consolations applied to the heart and affections of mankind ; and those gifts, which were vouchsafed for the benefit of others, were outward manifestations of the work of the Spirit in his own heart : they were the expressions of a fervent zeal, alike anxious for the salvation of man, and for the glory of God ; and they were sheltered by one of the most genuine and least questionable of all Christian graces, true humility, which taught him to welcome instruction, and to submit his actions to the guidance of those who had conversed with the apostle of Jesus. Thus the grace of God dwelt with him, and gave power and persuasion to the Word, so that he mightily convinced the opponents of his Lord, and brought many souls to the knowledge of the Saviour.

CHAPTER XIX.

After laying a broad foundation for the Church in Europe, St. Paul returns to complete the first work which he had undertaken in his office of apostle of the Gentiles. He remains nearly three years at Ephesus, which might then be regarded as the metropolis of Asia Minor. In this city the superstitions of the Gentile world exercised the most powerful influence over the human mind; and the apostle here contended with idolatry in its strongest hold. The interest which the European Greeks continued to feel in their national religion, was comparatively weak and lukewarm, a matter of taste and habit rather than of conviction; but in these provinces the worship of nature, personified in the Ephesian Diana, was still celebrated with wild enthusiasm, and the pagantry of gorgeous festivals, in the most magnificent temple of the ancient world. It was, moreover, connected with the arts of divination and magic, which have always possessed a strange fascination for the natural heart, and was upheld for interested motives by a large and influential body of men, whose existence depended upon frequenters of the shrine of the goddess. The tumult recorded in this chapter was a precursor of many furious persecutions, originating in similar causes, which filled the amphitheatres of Asia with the blood of Christian martyrs, and ceased not until the fourth century, when the triumph of the Cross was externally achieved on the accession of Constantine.

A.D. 54.

1. AND it came to pass, that, while *Apollus was at ^{* Cor. 1. 12 & 3. 5, 6.} 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

1. '*While Apollus was at Corinth.*' Apollus remained there a considerable time, but joined St. Paul at Ephesus, before he wrote the first Epistle to the Corinthians, A.D. 57. See 1 Cor. xvi. 12.

'*The upper coasts,*' or regions. The interior of Asia Minor is mountainous and elevated compared with the region about Ephesus.¹ The route of St. Paul lay through Cappadocia², where we read of disciples (1 Pet. i. 1; Acts ii.) to Galatia, and thence through Phrygia to Ephesus, where he arrived about May.

'*Certain disciples.*' These persons were probably in the same state of comparative ignorance of the truth as Apollus, when he first met with Aquila and Priscilla. They are called disciples, because they had been instructed in some elementary truths, and recognised Jesus as the Christ. They appear to have formed a distinct society when St. Paul found them. The disciples of John were especially numerous in Egypt and Asia Minor.

2. '*Have ye received the Holy Ghost?*' or, Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed? i. e. at the

¹ Kuinoel, Olsh., &c.

² Wieseler, p. 52.

Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him,

^b ch. 8. 16. ^bWe have not so much as heard whether there be any
 See 1 Sam. Holy Ghost.
 8. 7.

3. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye
^c ch. 18. 25. baptized? And they said ^cUnto John's baptism.

^d Matt. 3. 4. Then said Paul, ^dJohn verily baptized with the
 11. baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that
 John 1. 15. they should believe on him which should come after
 27, 30. ch. 1. 5. & him, that is, on Christ Jesus.
 11. 16. & 13. 24, 25.

^e ch. 8. 16. 5. When they heard *this*, they were baptized ^e in
 the name of the Lord Jesus.

time of your baptism. This refers specially to the spiritual gifts which attested the inward presence of the Spirit of God. It is true that they could not have believed at all without the operation of the Holy Ghost, but His indwelling presence, in a peculiar sense, is the privilege of Christians who believe and are baptized.

'We have not,' &c. Their answer may be understood to mean that they had not heard of any peculiar manifestations of the Holy Ghost. If, however, they had been converted from heathenism, or had been partially instructed by the disciples of St. John, they possibly might not have known of the personal existence of the Holy Spirit.¹ The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, though implicitly taught in the Old Testament, was not so revealed as to be an article of faith.

3. '*Unto what.*' That is, unto what confession of faith. Christian baptism implies a previous recognition of the great doctrine of the Holy Trinity, including the personality of the Holy Spirit.

'*Then.*' Since, as you say, you have not known of the Holy Ghost. It is evident that they called themselves Christians; otherwise St. Paul would not have expected them to

have received the gifts, or to have known of the power, of the Holy Spirit.

'*Unto John's baptism.*' Unto that system of doctrine and religion which John taught, and sealed with the rite of baptism.

4. '*John verily baptized.*' St. Paul points out to them that the baptism of John was only a preparatory ordinance. It brought converts into a state of training and preparation for the Church, but not into the Church itself. It sealed them as waiters for Christ, but could not make them members of Christ. St. John himself had always strongly insisted upon the essential distinction between his baptism and that which would be instituted by the Messiah.²

'*That is, on Christ Jesus.*' These words are added by St. Paul to prove to them that the very profession of believing John involved the duty of believing in the Christ whom he announced, and that Jesus was that Christ. St. Paul, doubtless, then proved to them, from the fulfilment of types and prophecies in Jesus, and from the acknowledgment of John himself, that He was the true Messiah whom John announced.

5. '*They were baptized.*' The anabaptists have drawn the inference

¹ Olshausen. See Tertullian de Baptismo, c. 10.

² See Huxtable's Essay on the Ministry of John the Baptist.

6. And when Paul had ^f laid *his* hands upon them ^{ch. 6. 6.} the Holy Ghost came on them; and ^{8. 17.} they spake with ^{ch. 2. 4. & 10. 16.} tongues, and prophesied.

7. And all the men were about twelve.

8. ^h And he went into the synagogue, and spake ^{ch. 17. 2. & 18. 4.} boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things ^{ch. 1. 3. & 28. 23.} 'concerning the kingdom of ^{2 Tim. 1. 15.} God.

9. But ^k when divers were hardened, and believed ^{2 Pet. 2. 2. Jude 10.}

from this verse that baptism can be repeated without sacrilege. But that notion rests upon ignorance of the true character of Christian baptism, which, as hath been shown, is quite distinct from that of John. The Scriptures teach expressly that there is but one true baptism into Christ, and the form cannot be repeated without denying that communication of the Holy Spirit in baptism, which followed, and was a permanent result of, the ascension of our Lord.

'*In the name,*' or into the name. By their baptism they recognised Jesus to be the true Messiah. The form of administration was of course that appointed by our Saviour, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' See note on chap. xi. 41.

6. '*Had laid his hands.*' See note, chap. viii. 16. The miraculous gifts which followed the imposition of hands, were intended for the benefit of the Church; they were evidences of a new truth, and made the receivers efficient agents in its dissemination. But the inward operation which these gifts attested was for their personal benefit, and is permanently attached to the rite of confirmation.¹

'*They spake with tongues.*' This

gift seems not to have been permanent. They spoke words and sentences in unknown languages, in a state of ecstasy or trance, under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost. See notes on Acts ii. 4.; x. 46.

'*And prophesied.*' Prophecy was a higher spiritual gift than that of tongues, including inspired declarations of God's will, revelation of mysteries, and predictions of future events.

8. '*He went into the synagogue.*' He commenced, as usual, by preaching the Gospel to the Jews.

'*Spake boldly, disputing and persuading.*' He spake unreservedly, without fear of persecution, and by his arguments convinced and won many hearers. Persuading means more than teaching.²

'*Three months.*' Until the end of the year. It was during this time that the Epistle to the Galatians is supposed to have been written.³ It was certainly written after his second visit to Galatia, and almost immediately. See Galatians i. 6. From that epistle we may form an idea of the substance and method of his discussions with the Jews at Ephesus, and of the current of his thoughts during this period.

9. '*Were hardened.*' They became

¹ Hinds on the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity, p. 175.

² Meyer.

³ Wieseler, pp. 280. 286.

¹ See ch. 9. not, but spake evil ¹ of that way before the multitude,
² he departed from them, and separated the disciples,
 & 22. 4. & disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.
^{24. 14.}
^{ver. 23.}

^m See ch. 10. And ^m this continued by the space of two years ;
 20. 31. so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word
 of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

ⁿ Mark 16. 11. And ⁿ God wrought special miracles by the
 20. hands of Paul :
 ch. 14. 3.

callous, and obstinately refused to listen to his arguments. The Word of God, when it does not penetrate the heart, is the occasion of hardening it by the rebellious struggles which it provokes.

'*Of that way.*' Christianity is frequently called the way—an expression which indicates a peculiar course of life and conversation. That way is defined by God's law, and enlightened by His Spirit.

'*We departed from them.*' He ceased to attend the Jewish synagogue, and directed those who received the Gospel to form a distinct society. Thus the church of Ephesus, like the body of which it formed a part, was taken out of the synagogue, and established among the Gentiles.

'*Disputing daily.*' These meetings of the disciples took place not only for disputing, or, as the word should be rendered, discussing and expounding the Holy Scriptures, but, as we may be assured, for common prayer and communion.

'*The school of one Tyrannus.*' This appears to have been a large room, or hall, either belonging to this Tyrannus, or named from him, in which persons were accustomed to attend lectures and discussions on philosophical subjects.' It is not probable that Tyrannus was a Jew, as

some late commentators have supposed.*

10. '*Two years.*' The meetings of the disciples appear to have been held daily in the school during that period. It is conjectured that St. Paul and his companions visited many cities in Asia Minor, and founded churches during these two years. It is even supposed, and not without strong reasons, that St. Paul visited Macedonia, Corinth, and Crete at this time.[†] See the chronological table. The first Epistle to Timothy was then written in Macedonia. Titus was left in Crete, and the epistle to him seems to have been written shortly afterwards at Ephesus.

'*All they which dwell in Asia.*' That is, the province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital. See note, chap. xvi. 6. This expression proves that the 'school' was open to, and frequented by the visitors to Ephesus, and that the miracles and preaching of the apostle had caused great excitement in that city and the whole province. Jews and Greeks were attracted in great numbers to Ephesus, the former by its commerce, the latter also by the splendid ceremonies of the temple of Diana. The term 'Greeks' includes proselytes of the gate, and other Gentiles.

11. '*Special miracles,*' i. e. extraor-

¹ Rosenmüller, Kuinoel, Ewald, Baungarten.

² Meyer.

³ Mosheim, Olshausen, Schrader, and Wieseler, p. 240. 295.

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. ch. 5. 15. See 2 Kings 4. 29.

13. ¶ Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, ^p 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. p Matt. 12. 27. q See Mark 9. 38. Luke 9. 49.

dinary miracles, specially adapted to counteract the prevalent superstitions of the Ephesians, such as were not generally wrought by the Apostles.

'By the hands.' By his agency or instrumentality.

12. 'So that.' This expression clearly proves that the healing influences, which were conveyed by certain instruments or means through St. Paul, came from God. It must not, therefore, be supposed ¹ that the persons, whose faith was thus rewarded, felt or acted superstitiously. They had sufficient evidence to justify their faith, which resembled that of the woman ² who touched the hem of our Saviour's robe. The handkerchiefs and aprons, or linen girdles³, were signs and pledges of the healing power bestowed by God upon his Apostles.

13. 'Vagabond Jews, exorcists.' Jews who went about from place to place, wherever they were likely to find dupes of their fraudulent practices, bringing thereby great reproach upon their nation, and also upon the Christians, who were looked upon as a Jewish sect by the heathens.⁴ These persons pretended to have the power of expelling evil spirits, and healing diseases, by the use of certain words and magic rites, which, as they

asserted, were handed down by tradition from Solomon.⁵ The Jews were deeply infected by this superstition, and some of their rabbis taught that our Lord performed His miracles by the power of the holy name which was engraved on the seal of Solomon.⁶ It is evident from this passage that these hypocrites had observed many miracles performed in the name of the Lord Jesus. Their guilt consisted in a sacrilegious use of a name, which they felt to be divine, for the sake of gain. It was this covetousness that constituted the difference between their case and that of those who were suffered, though not commanded, by our Lord to cast out devils in His name. Matt. xii. 27.

'We adjure you.' That is, we bind you by an imprecation—charge you in the name. Many instances of such exorcisms are given in the writings of Irenæus, Justin Martyr, and other early fathers.

'Whom Paul preacheth.' The exorcists added these words in order to distinguish Him from other persons bearing the same name. It is probable that the name of Joshua, of which Jesus was another common form, was frequently used in such incantations. See Lightfoot on St. Matt. vi. 17.

¹ With Olshausen and Neander. See a good note in Hensen, p. 219.

² Trench on the Miracles, p. 189.

³ Wolf. Cur. Phil., p. 1289. Meyer.

⁴ See Origen, c. Celsum lib. 1, and v. p. 234. 236.

⁵ Hensen.

⁶ Basnage, Hist. des Juifs.

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 ^r fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18. And many that believed came, and ^s confessed, and shewed their deeds.

14. '*Seven sons.*' This number was held to be sacred, and may have suggested, and given effect to, their pretensions.

'*Chief of the priests.*' He had probably been the chief of one of the twenty-four courses. The exorcists were frequently persons whose education and position should have taught them the futility and evil of such practices.

15. '*And the evil spirit answered.*' A clear proof of the personality of the evil spirit. We often observe, however, in such cases, a confused state of the sufferers' consciousness, who speak as though they were identified with the evil spirit within them.¹

'*Jesus I know.*' The remarkable fact that evil spirits recognise, and, evidently under compulsion, confess the power of Jesus, is attested in many passages of the Gospels. Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 24, v. 9; Luke viii. 28.

'*Who are ye?*' That is, whence did you receive authority to use that name? This proves that the name is not represented as acting, like a

magical form, by an inherent efficacy. Its operation depended conditionally on the faith of the persons who used it, and effectually on the will of Him who bears it.

16. '*Leaped on them.*' The great muscular power developed by madmen in accessions of frenzy is often alleged in illustration of this and similar passages. See Matt. viii. 28.

17. '*Fear fell on them all.*' A religious awe, such as prepares the soul for saving impressions.

'*The name was magnified.*' The failure of the attempt to abuse that name caused it to be more celebrated and effectual in the conversion of souls. It branded impostors, and showed the reality and divine origin of Paul's miraculous power.

18. '*Many that believed.*' Many, that is, who became believers² at that time, came forward and confessed how much they had been addicted to such superstitions and impostures; or the words may imply that persons who had been previously converted, confessed that they had continued secretly to practise unlawful arts.

¹ Trench on the Miracles, p. 160.

² Meyer.

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 pre-¹ ch. 6. 7. & 12. 24. vailed.

21. ¶² After these things were ended, Paul³ pur-⁴ n Rom. 15. 25. posed in the spirit, when he had passed through Mace-⁵ Gal. 2. 1. donia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After⁶ z ch. 20. 22. I have been there,⁷ I must also see Rome.⁸ ⁹ ch. 18. 21. & 23. 11. Rom. 15. 24 —28.

19. '*Curious arts.*' The Ephesians were especially addicted to curious, that is, magical arts.¹ These persons had made their livelihood by incantations, philtres, astrological calculations, soothsayings, &c. The words which they employed were mysterious symbols engraved on the statue of Diana, called Ephesian letters, which were supposed to have power over spirits.²

'*Their books.*' These were probably treatises on magic and astrology, more especially on the symbols mentioned in the last note.

'*And burned their books.*' This was a very common practice among the ancients, and especially when the books contained impious and blasphemous dogmas. It appears to have been regarded as necessary by the early Christians,³ and was then a tolerably effectual means of stopping the evil, since manuscripts were scarce and often unique.

'*Pieces of silver.*' These were probably drachmas, the common silver coin of the country. The drachma was worth about 9d. The value of these books, so utterly worthless in themselves, proves the great prevalence of superstition, and the vast

influence of impostors in that province.

20. '*Grew—and prevailed.*' The former word marks the extension, the second the energy of the Gospel. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 9., which was written shortly afterwards.

21. '*After these things were ended.*' This expression seems to denote the termination of the whole period of two years.

'*Purposed in the spirit.*' Resolved in his spirit, or rather in pursuance of an intimation from the Spirit. The expression is strong, and may refer to a change of purpose. St. Paul had intended to go from Ephesus to Corinth; but on hearing of dissensions in the Corinthian Church, he altered his plans, and resolved first to pass through Macedonia, in order to give the Corinthians time for repentance. See 2 Cor. xi. 15; 1 Cor. i. 11, and xvi. 5.

'*I must also see Rome.*' The necessity arose from his consciousness of a divine intimation. St. Paul was anxious to visit Rome, the metropolis of the world, both because he was the Apostle of the Gentiles, and because he was especially interested in the church already established in that

¹ Hesych. Etym. Magn.

² See Kuinoel, Hemsen, c. and H.

xi. p. 13; and Potter on Clem. Alex. Str. i., p. 306, and v. p. 568.

³ See notes on Irenæus, i. 9.

- * ch. 13. 5. 22. So he sent into Macedonia two of ^a them that
 * Rom. 16. ministered unto him, Timotheus and ^a Erastus; but
 23.
 2 Tim. 4. 20. he himself stayed in Asia for a season.
 * 2 Cor. 1. 8. 23. And ^b the same time there arose no small stir
 * See ch. 9. 2. about ^c that way.

24. For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silver-smith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought
^d ch. 16. 16, ^d no small gain unto the craftsmen;
 19.

city. This verse contains the first indication of St. Paul's intention in undertaking the last of his travels, to which he alludes, Rom. xv. 23—28. It will be seen that his purpose was ultimately effected, though in a manner not yet revealed to him, and differing from his anticipations.

22. '*He sent into Macedonia.*' His object was apparently to prepare the churches for the collection which he intended to make on that journey for the poor of Jerusalem. See 1 Cor. xvi. 1—6.

'*Erastus.*' If, as appears probable, this is the same person who is mentioned Rom. xvi. 23, and 2 Tim. iv. 20, he was a citizen of Corinth, holding a high office there as steward or treasurer. It may have been on this account that he was selected to arrange the contributions.

The first Epistle to the Corinthians was written about Easter, after the departure of Timotheus, who was directed to return to St. Paul after visiting the churches through which the apostle intended to pass. See 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 11. From that passage we learn how much St. Paul was gratified by the success of the word at Ephesus.

'*For a season.*' Until Pentecost. See the passage from 1 Cor. just quoted. Apollos, Aquila, and Pris-

cilla, were then with St. Paul at Ephesus.

23. '*And the same time.*' Towards the end of the season, or a short time before Pentecost, in May. See note on v. 31.

'*That way.*' Christianity. See note, verse 9. The expression is peculiar to St. Paul and St. Luke.

24. '*Demetrius, a silversmith.*' He appears to have had a manufactory, in which small silver models of the temple, with miniature statues of Diana, were prepared. Persons visiting the shrine generally purchased such models, and placed them in their houses on their return. The temple at Ephesus was exceedingly rich and beautiful, and esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world. Its dimensions were 425 feet by 225. It was surrounded by columns 60 feet high. It has quite disappeared, and its site cannot be traced, although some large columns in the Turkish mosque are supposed to have belonged to it.¹

'*Diana,*' or Artemis, was worshipped at Ephesus, as the goddess of nature. In Greek mythology she was represented as a huntress, and identified with the morn. The statue at Ephesus was symbolical. The goddess was represented with many breasts, a turreted head-dress, and

¹ See Chandler and Hartley; Müller, *Archæologie*, p. 57. Plin. H. N. xvi. 40, and xxxvi. 14.

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.

* Ps. 115. 4.
Isa. 44. 10
—20.
Jer. 10. 3.

legs bound together. This figure is found on many coins.¹

25. '*The workmen.*' That is, the artisans as distinguished from the craftsmen or artists.

'*By this craft we have our wealth.*' Demetrius appeals at once to their interests. This class of persons took an active part in exciting the popular feeling against the Christians on many occasions.

26. '*Much people.*' It is interesting to trace the progress of Christianity by the attacks and admissions of its enemies.

'*They be no gods which,*' &c. Modern writers are apt to suppose that idolaters worshipped statues merely as symbols, or representations of their gods. The fact is, that the great mass of people held the images themselves to be real gods—things endued with divine power—as it were, bodies of their gods. Hence the artists were called god-makers.² Even the educated classes, who retained any belief in the religion of their country, supposed that the images were specially inhabited by the gods.

It seems remarkable that no attack was made upon St. Paul by the priests of the temple. They were probably aware that the apostle had not infringed any law, and they appear moreover to have been indifferent on the subject.

27. '*But also.*' The effect of St. Paul's preaching upon the national form of religion, which was afterwards put forward as the chief ground of accusation, is here introduced as a secondary consideration.

'*The great goddess Diana.*' This was the regular form employed in speaking of the idol.

'*Magnificence.*' Majesty, as shown in a splendid ritual, and by the attendance of multitudes of worshippers.

'*The world.*' Demetrius does not exaggerate the celebrity of the Ephesian idol. Worshippers came from all parts of the known world to her shrine. His fears too were justified by the event. Pliny states that the temples were deserted, the victims unsold, and all solemnities *long since* interrupted. Lib. X. Ep. 97.

¹ See Conybeare and Howson, and Cruizer, Symbol ii. 176.

² Pollux Onom. i. 13. See especially

Plutarch de Isid. et Osir., p. 379 c., and Livy, xxxviii. 43; Spanheim Call. H. Pall., p. 52, quoted by Wetstein.

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 :
‘ Rom. 16. 23.
 1 Cor. 1. 14.
 5 ch. 20. 4. &
 27. 2.
 Col. 4. 10.
 Philem. 24. and having caught ‘ Gaius and ‘ Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

30. And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

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 theatre.

28. ‘ *Full of wrath.*’ Selfish interest and superstition acting in combination have always caused the fiercest persecutions. It should be remarked that the motive which influenced them most powerfully was that of which they were least conscious.

‘ *Gaius.*’ St. Paul mentions Gaius twice in his epistles. From Rom. xvi. 23 we learn that St. Paul was received at the house of Gaius at Corinth, and that the Church met there. He may have been a native of Macedonia, settled at Corinth.

‘ *Aristarchus*’ accompanied St. Paul to Rome and was imprisoned with him. Philemon 24; Col. iv. 10.

‘ *The theatre.*’ The theatres of the ancients were buildings of immense size, in the open air, where public assemblies were regularly held on great occasions.¹ The remains of the theatre at Ephesus, the largest of all that are known, have been described by recent travellers. It is said to be a wreck of immense grandeur, situate on a steep declivity, the seats having

been formed in successive tiers on the slope of a lofty hill, and the whole building being open to the sky; upwards of 30,000 persons could have conveniently seated themselves. Across the market-place, at no great distance, they would have a view of the temple.²

31. ‘ *The chiefs of Asia.*’ These were magistrates, called Asiarchs, elected by the cities in Asia. They paid the expenses of the public games, at which they presided, and had also charge of the theatre. As they were especially connected with the annual solemnities in honour of the Ephesian Diana, they would probably be collected at Ephesus when those solemnities were going on; that is in the month of Artemisius, or May.³ They were persons of great wealth and influence, and knew that they would be held responsible for any disturbance.⁴ The excitement would of course have been much increased by the appearance of St. Paul. That they were his friends proves that the effects of the Gospel were not confined to the lower or even

¹ See numerous authorities ap. Wetstein.

² Hartley’s *Researches, and Fellows’ Asia Minor*, p. 274.

³ Greswell’s *Diss.* iv. 154.

⁴ Hemsen, p. 230. Spanheim de *Præst. Num.*, t. ii. 416. Eckhel *Doct. Num.*, P. l. iv. 210. Lewin *Fasti Sacri*, p. 309.

32. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly were confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they had come together.

33. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, ^{b 1 Tim. 1. 20.} the Jews putting him forward. And ^{2 Tim. 4. 14.} Alexander ^{1 ch. 12. 17.} beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence 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.

35. And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, *Ye* men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians

middle classes. It does not, however, appear probable that they were baptized Christians. It is a remarkable coincidence that, when Polycarp was martyred at Smyrna, Philip the Asiarch refused to supply a lion to slay him; he too was a friend, though not a disciple, of the Christian Bishop.

32. '*The more part knew not.*' The high situation of the theatre on Mount Prion accounts for the ease with which an immense multitude was assembled. From every part of Ephesus, the inhabitants would see people rushing to the theatre, and would of course hasten to know why they assembled.¹

33. '*Alexander.*' St. Paul mentions one Alexander, a coppersmith of Ephesus (2 Tim. iv. 14), but that person was an enemy of the Gospel, being very probably connected by his trade with Demetrius. This Alexander was evidently a Christian²—he attempted to make his defence; whereas, had he been an unconverted Jew, he would have joined in accusing St. Paul.

'*Putting him forward,*' or pushing

him forward, evidently in order to expose him to the fury of the people.

34. '*Knew.*' They perceived by his appearance that he was a Hebrew. The Gentiles hated the Jews, and confounded the Christians with them.

'*Two hours.*' The continued uproar is not at all surprising, considering the pains that had been taken to excite the people. It has been remarked that the reverberation of their voices from the steep rock which forms one side of the theatre, would add very much to their excitement.³

35. '*The town clerk,*' or the secretary of the council. He was the chief native magistrate, who kept all the public documents and prepared all the public decrees.⁴ The Syriac version calls him prince or chief of the city.

'*A worshipper.*' The expression literally means an adorer of the temple, and very graphically describes the care bestowed by those idolaters upon every thing connected with their national religion. The epithet is found on coins of Ephesus

¹ Hartley, *Researches*.

² Olshausen, Meyer, Wieseler, p. 55.

³ Hartley, *I. c.*

⁴ Hensen, p. 232, n. 36.; Eckhel *Doct. Num.* iv. 257.

† Gr. *the temple keeper.*

is † a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?

36. Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

‡ Or, *the court days are kept.*

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.

§ Or, *ordinary.*

39. But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a ‡ lawful assembly.

struck about this time.¹ It was a title of honour, which appears to have been often granted by the Emperors to cities remarkable for devotion to their gods.

'Of the image that fell down from Jupiter.' In many ancient temples² there were images which, as the people believed, fell down from heaven. In some places they were very probably ærolites, but the statue at Ephesus was of wood, either ebony, or, according to Mucianus³, vine wood.

36. *'Cannot be spoken against.'* A skilful address to their prejudices, which this magistrate did not share.

37. *'Robbers of churches.'* Persons who robbed temples were punished by death and cast out unburied.

'Nor yet blasphemers.' It is evident from this and many other passages that the apostles displaced and subverted idolatry by preaching the truth, and not by ' railing accusations.' Their zeal was tempered, not by any selfish consideration, but by love. A direct attack on the

objects of popular idolatry would not only have subjected them to the highest legal penalties, but have made the propagation of the Gospel impossible without such interposition of divine power as seems to be incompatible with the revealed purposes of God.

38. *'The law is open;'* or rather, as the margin has, the court days are kept. The courts were open on stated days in the marketplace, which adjoined the temple.

'There are deputies.' Proconsuls. This expression does not imply there were more proconsuls than one at Ephesus, but that these causes might be tried by such a magistracy.⁴

39. *'If ye enquire,'* &c. If any general question, independent of the private interests of Demetrius and the craftsmen, should still remain to be determined.

'A lawful assembly.' An assembly regularly convoked and presided over by the magistrates. This was an irregular meeting at which no question could be legally determined.

¹ Greswell, Diss. iv. 154.

² Wetstein, Homsen, Kuinoel, &c.

³ Plin. H. N., xvi. 79.

⁴ Meyer; Bernhard's Synt., p. 92.

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.

41. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

40. '*For we are in danger.*' The magistrate finally appeals to their fears. They were well aware that the Roman authorities watched their meetings with much suspicion, and suppressed the least indication of seditions or disturbances with severity. Thousands were often slain on such occasions. The Roman law made it capital to promote any riotous meeting.

41. '*He dismissed the assembly.*' It has been doubted whether St.

Paul alludes to this tumult. (1 Corinth. xv. 32—34.) He had to contend with wild and ferocious enemies, and was frequently in great danger. Since we learn from Rom. xvi. 3, 4, that Aquila and Priscilla were also endangered, and left Ephesus about this time, and as his expressions seem to imply personal sufferings, it is more probable that some irregular disturbances had already broken out, of which St. Luke does not give an account.¹

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—6. This transaction with the disciples of John should teach the great preciousness of our privileges as Christians. God has been revealed to us not merely as the Creator and Sovereign of the universe, but as the converter and sanctifier of our souls. He hath disclosed His attributes of mercy and love in the Person of His Son, and brought them home to our hearts by the operation and personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost. May we not neglect that knowledge which He conveys by His word, nor forfeit those blessings which He secures and bestows through His ordinances. May the power of the Holy Ghost be effectual in us, and our attendance on the means of grace be followed by that inward change of principles and affections, of which the new tongues then spoken by the disciples, and their prophetic utterances, were at once symbols and pledges to the Church.

8—10. The efforts which St. Paul made to convert his countrymen, his brethren according to the flesh, exemplify the duties of Christians towards those who are not yet persuaded of the things concerning the kingdom of God; the effect of those efforts should be a warning to those who experience any feelings of indifference or impatience when the Word is preached. That Word either breaks and penetrates the heart, or hardens it. No man hearing it, remains long indifferent; he either separates himself from unbelievers, or speaks evil of the way of salvation.

11, 12. God can and often does convey great blessings, spiritual and

¹ Neander, Pf., p. 352 n. 2.

temporal, by means apparently weak and unsuitable. This is to teach us not to attach undue value to any means, and not to let our thoughts rest on them, but to direct our hearts to Him from whom alone cometh every good and perfect gift.

13—17. The Holy name must not be used superstitiously. It is the will of God that alone gives efficacy to any rite. It is folly to trust in any form of which He has not sanctioned the use, and for which He has not prepared the Spirit. It is a heinous crime to employ the forms of religion and His holy name for any selfish and covetous considerations. The crime of sorcery may not be committed since the external operations of the evil spirit have ceased; but the guilt may be, and is not unfrequently, contracted by impostors and hypocrites. And their guilt is greater than that of the sons of Sceva in proportion to the clearness of light vouchsafed to the Church.

18, 19. It rarely happens that any old sin can be forsaken without some painful sacrifice. Sabbath breakers may be seriously injured in worldly interests by closing their shops, fraudulent dealers by discontinuing their practices and making restitution; but without such sacrifices they cannot enter into the strait gate—we cannot bring any sinful habit into the kingdom of heaven. It should also be remarked that no man has a right to sell to others that which he has found detrimental to his own soul. If the possessors of those books had sold them, they would have been responsible for any evils which might have resulted. We must cast away the unclean thing.

21, 22. Absolute dependence on God does not do away with the necessity of prudent and well-matured plans. St. Paul arranged all his journeys beforehand, and sent his attendants to prepare all things for his reception, even while he knew that the purposes of God would inevitably be carried into effect. That conviction, held in a right Christian spirit, sustains hope and animates exertion, since all things must work together for the good of His elect.

23—28. When Christian truth is introduced into a profligate community, it must come into conflict with many existing interests, and persecution will be the natural result. The practical application of this fact should teach us to examine ourselves whether we encourage any disposition or habits irreconcilable with a thoroughly consistent spirit of religion; if we do, a conflict must come; and unless we are prepared to renounce them, we shall very probably be enrolled among the enemies of the faith. But it is still more likely that we shall deceive ourselves into the notion that we are opposing, not true religion, but a partial, or bigoted, or mistaken view of its obligations; and perhaps adopt some specious system to justify at once our retention of the evil habit and our persecution of the unwelcome truth.

29—34. God frequently preserves His servants in times of danger by means quite unforeseen and contrary to all expectation. While the turbulent mob was roused by the interested malignity of the idol-makers, and the Apostle was scarcely restrained from adventuring his life by the affectionate anxiety of the disciples, God raised up friends and advisers for him among the heathen, and overruled the passions and interests of his enemies, so that the idolatrous magistrates became his apologists and defenders. The providential government of the world abounds, doubtless, in such interpo-

sitions, although the weakness of our faith or love may prevent us from recognising His protecting hand.

35—40. This discourse admirably illustrates the character of the natural man. He has a sense of moral, and especially of legal justice, but that sense is not strong enough to induce him to defend, or to desist from injuring persons wrongfully accused, unless his passions are soothed by flattery and subdued by fear. The art of the heathen orator consisted mainly in skilful management of those affections; but shame to the Christian if he cannot be won to active exertions in well-doing by the principle of love.

CHAPTER XX.

The sacred historian now conducts us toward the close of the public and active ministry of the apostle of the Gentiles. His work has hitherto been to propagate the Gospel by personal exertions, by preaching and working 'signs and wonders,' and by demonstration of the 'Spirit and power' in regions, which lay in darkness and in the shadow of death. Henceforth it is appointed to him to follow in another path the tracks of Him, whose example has been his guide and support from the period of his conversion. He is to teach by suffering, to advance through ways beset with trials and temptations, until he reaches the mark of the prize of his high calling, and receives the crown of martyrdom. In this chapter we hear the last charge which he is known to have delivered to the ministers of the Church. In no discourse do we find more proofs of that eloquence which won the admiration even of the Platonist Longinus. But its chief attraction for Christians should be that it breathes the same spirit which pervades the last addresses of our Lord recorded by the beloved disciple.

1. AND after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto

* 1 Cor. 16. *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and * departed
5.
1 Tim. 1. 3. for to go into Macedonia.

2. And when he had gone over those parts, and

1. '*And after the uproar was ceased.*' It does not state, nor is it probable, that St. Paul left Ephesus earlier on account of the uproar. It was previously his intention to 'tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.' See 1 Cor. xvi. 8.

'*Embraced them.*' Took an affectionate farewell. This was an usual expression for leave-taking among the Greeks.

2. '*And when he had gone over those parts.*' From St. Paul's Epistles we learn several additional particulars of this journey. The apostle remained some time at Troas, where he preached the Gospel with great success, but left earlier than he intended, because Titus did not meet him as he expected. 2 Cor. ii. 12, 15. Timothy

joined him, either there or in Macedonia (2 Cor. i. 1); and Titus met him, probably at Philippi, bringing him an account of the effect of his first Epistle to the Corinthians. On that occasion St. Paul wrote the second Epistle to the same Church, in which we find many proofs of the great zeal and liberality of the Churches in Macedonia and Achaia. See 2 Cor. viii. 9. Saint Paul passed the summer and autumn in Macedonia, and visited all the provinces 'round about unto Illyricum.' Rom. xv. 19. He attributes the success of his preaching to the 'mighty signs and wonders, by which he made the Gentiles obedient by the power of the Spirit of God.'

'*With much exhortation.*' Compare

had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece.

3. And *there* abode three months. And ^b 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, ^c Aristarchus and Secundus; and ^d Gaius of Derbe, and ^e Timotheus; and of Asia, ^f Tychicus and ^g Trophimus.

^b ch. 9. 23.
& 28. 12. &
25. 3.
^c 2 Cor. 11.
26.
^d ch. 18. 29.
& 27. 2.
^e Col. 4. 10.
^f ch. 19. 29.
^g ch. 16. 1.
Ephes. 6.
21.
Col. 4. 7.
^h 2 Tim. 4. 12.
Tit. 3. 12.
ⁱ ch. 21. 29.
2 Tim. 4. 20.

St. Paul's expressions, Rom. xv. 15—19.

'*Came into Greece.*' He arrived, towards the end of the year, at Corinth, the capital of Achaia, which included all the countries of Greece south of Macedonia.

3. '*Three months.*' During that time St. Paul resided chiefly at the house of Gaius, where the Church was assembled. Rom. xvi. 23. The organisation of the Churches in Achaia, and the settlement of the various questions that had arisen, must have occupied considerable time. The Epistle to the Romans was undoubtedly written at this time, and sent to Rome by Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea. Rom. xvi. 1.

'*When the Jews laid wait for him.*' The Jews generally settled in great numbers at seaports for the sake of commerce, and their occupation would give them peculiar influence over the captains and owners of merchant vessels, in which St. Paul must have sailed. They might, therefore, form the project of seizing him, or murdering him, at Cenchrea, with great probability of success.

'*Into Syria*'—on the way to Jerusalem.

'*Through Macedonia.*' St. Paul

must have travelled rapidly to Philippi, as he left Corinth in March. It is supposed¹ that St. Paul returned through Macedonia, in order to receive the collections of the Churches which had not reached Corinth before his departure, which took place probably a month earlier than he had previously intended. The sea was not considered navigable before the 23th of March.

4. '*Into Asia.*' Or unto the borders of Asia; that is, to the last place whence people crossed over into Asia, viz. Philippi.²

'*Sopater.*' Probably the same as Sosipater, a kinsman of St. Paul. See Rom. xvi. 21. The name of Sopater's father, Pyrrhus, is found in the best MSS.

'*Gaius of Derbe.*' It is questionable whether this Gaius is to be distinguished from Gaius of Corinth: nor is it certain whether the words 'of Derbe' should not be referred also to Timotheus.³

'*Tychicus.*' Eph. vi. 21, 22. Tychicus, 'a beloved brother, and faithful minister of the Lord,' accompanied St. Paul to Rome, whence he was sent with the Epistle to the Ephesians.

'*Trophimus,*' an Ephesian, much beloved by the apostle. See 2 Tim.

¹ Hemsen, p. 468.

² Wieseler, p. 293, note.

³ Earnesti, Valckn, Olshausen, Wieseler.

^a Exod. 12.

14, 15. & 23.

15.

¹ ch. 16. 8.² Cor. 2. 12.² Tim. 4.

13.

^a 1 Cor. 16.

2.

Rev. 1. 10.

¹ ch. 2. 42,

46.

¹ Cor. 10.

16. & 11. 20,

&c.

5. These going before tarried for us at Troas.

6. And we sailed away from Philippi after ^b the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them ¹ to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

7. And upon ^k the first day of the week, when the disciples came together ¹ to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

iv. 20. Both Tychicus and Trophimus were Gentiles, natives of the proconsular province of Asia.

5. '*These going before.*' They went, probably, to prepare the Churches for St. Paul's visit, which, of course, was not expected at that time.

'*For us.*' St. Luke, who had remained at Philippi (xvi. 10), now rejoined St. Paul, and was not again separated from him until the end of his life. To the long ministry of St. Luke at Philippi (from A.D. 51 to A.D. 58), we may attribute partly the peculiar affection for St. Paul, which that Church proved always by word and deed, and the faithfulness which the apostle commends so highly. See Phil. i. 3—7, 29, 30; iv. 1, 10, 14—16.

6. '*After the days of unleavened bread.*' The passover, which the primitive Christians observed ¹ in commemoration of the death and resurrection of their Lord, of which the paschal lamb and deliverance from Egypt were types. The 15th of Nisan, on which the passover was slain, took place this year on the 28th of March. St. Paul appears to have left Philippi on Tuesday the 4th of April.² It is worth observing as an instance of St. Luke's accuracy, that the circumstance of a passover ending on a Monday, so that Paul could start on a Tuesday,

did not occur for many years either before or after A.D. 58.

'*In five days.*' This was a much longer time than was usually required. See Acts xvi. 10, 11. The weather was probably rough with the equinoctial gales.

'*Seven days.*' During that time St. Paul doubtless completed the organisation of the Church, which he had established on his former visit. See note, ver. 2. Chrysostom accounts for St. Paul's stay in this inconsiderable city by the number of believers.

7. '*Upon the first day of the week.*' Sunday was already observed universally by the Church as the Lord's day. The collections for the relief of the poor, and other religious purposes, were then made at the offertory.

'*To break bread,*' i.e. to receive the Eucharist. The disciples who resided at Troas of course met daily. On the Lord's day it is probable that disciples from the neighbouring places were also assembled ³ (as on this solemn occasion) at the city, where the sacrament of Holy Communion was administered by the chief presbyter, and afterwards by the bishop of the district. In course of time, ministers were appointed for villages and country districts.

'*Preached unto them.*' The expres-

¹ See note xii. 4.

² Wieseler, p. 115. Lewin, F.S

³ Justin Martyr, Apol. ii. 228; Mosheim de reb. Ch. p. 116.

8. And there were many lights ⁱⁿ the upper ^{ch. 1. 13.} chamber, where they were gathered together.

9. And there sat in a 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.

10. And Paul went down, and ^{he} fell on him, and ^{1 Kings 17. 21.} embracing *him* said, ^{2 Kings 4. 34.} 'Trouble not yourselves ; for ^{o Matt. 9. 24.} his life is in him.

11. When he therefore was come up again, and had

sion used in the original does not mean that he preached a continuous discourse, but that he conversed with them on religious subjects.

'Until midnight.' The communion service appears to have been celebrated some time after the love-feast, or common banquet of the members of the Church. On this occasion it may have been delayed until midnight, in order that the apostle might administer it to the disciples, and partake of it together with them, immediately before his departure. It will be remembered that he was taking a last farewell of the Churches in this region, which he knew that he should never visit again. See verse 25.

8. 'There were many lights.' This was usual on solemn occasions. It may be mentioned to show that the meeting was not secret or clandestine, as the adversaries of Christians were wont to assert.

9. 'In a window.' The windows were mere openings in the wall, to admit light. They had no glass, but were generally protected by lattices, which might be opened or removed.¹

'Being fallen into a deep sleep.' St. Luke uses a strong expression, which

he repeats, to describe the overpowering effect of sleep.

'From the third loft,' or story. Large houses were built with several stories, and were generally square, inclosing an open court, upon which the windows opened.²

'Was taken up dead.' The expression, in the original, leaves no doubt that he was really dead : it means 'a corpse.'

10. 'And fell on him.' Compare 1 Kings xvii. 21.

'His life is in him.' These words are mysterious. The soul, the principle of life, may not have departed, although the energy of life had been suspended, and could not be restored without a miracle.³ It is certain that St. Luke would not have recorded this event, had he not known it to be miraculous. Chrysostom directs attention to the expression used by the apostle. 'He does not say he will be restored to life, or I will raise him ; but observe how unpretending and consolatory are his words—His life is yet in him.' Compare our Lord's words in reference to the daughter of Jairus.

11. 'And had broken bread,' or the⁴

¹ Jerome on Ezek. xli. 16.

² Winer, i. 466.

³ Trench on the Miracles, p. 186.

⁴ Tischendorf and Meyer.

broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

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 afoot.

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.

bread, i.e. the bread of the Eucharist. The celebration of the Lord's Supper appears to have been interrupted by the fall of Eutychus.

'*Even until break of day.*' 'In watchings often.'

12. '*Were not a little comforted.*' They were rejoiced at the safety of Eutychus, and confirmed in faith by the miracle.

13. '*We.*' St. Luke and the other companions of St. Paul.

'*Assos.*' A seaport of Mysia, opposite to Lesbos, about thirty-six miles from Troas. It is now a poor village called Beiram.¹

'*To go afoot.*' The reason is not stated. St. Paul may have suffered by the late rough voyage, or he may have wished to visit some place on the way. Chrysostom supposes that his object was to prepare his companions by degrees for a final separation.

14. '*Mitylene.*' A beautiful city on the east coast of Lesbos, which derives its modern name from this, its ancient capital. The ruins are described by modern travellers.² Cas-

tro, which is at present the capital of the island, is built on the site of the ancient city.

15. '*Chios.*' Now called Scio, between Lesbos and Samos, a large and beautiful island.³

'*Samos.*' An island on the coast of Lydia, famous for the temple of Juno and the birthplace of Pythagoras.

'*Trogyllium.*' A town and promontory of Ionia, opposite Samos. It terminates the height of Mycale.⁴

'*Miletus.*' The ancient capital of Ionia, about twenty-eight miles south of Ephesus. It is described by a writer of the last century as 'a very mean place, but still called Palat, or the Palaces. The principal relic of its former magnificence is a ruined theatre, which is visible afar off, and was a most capacious edifice. The whole site of the town, to a great extent, is spread with rubbish, and overrun with thickets. The vestiges of the heathen city are pieces of wall, broken arches, and a few scattered pedestals, inscriptions, &c. There are some fragments of Christian churches,

¹ Winer.

² Sonnini and Tournefort, and lately Newton.

³ Chandler.

⁴ Strabo, xiv. 636.

⁵ Biscoe, p. 242.

16. For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for ^{he} ^{p ch. 18. 21.} ^{& 19. 21. &} ^{21. 4. 12.} ^{q ch. 24. 17.} ^{r ch. 2. 1.} ^{1 Cor. 16. 8.} he hastened, if it were possible for him, ^a to be at Jerusalem ^r the day of Pentecost.

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, ^a from the first day that I came into ^{ch. 18. 19.} ^{& 19. 1. 10.} Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

and a number of forsaken mosques.¹ According to later authorities, there are now no remains of the city, and the site is said to be covered by a lake, formed by the Meander, at the foot of Mount Latmos.² St. Paul may have reached Miletus, from Trogyllium, about mid-day.

16. 'To sail by.' To pass without visiting Ephesus. It was now Thursday, the 20th of April, and St. Paul intended to reach Jerusalem before the 15th of May. He could not therefore have calculated upon having sufficient time to visit a place where so many important affairs would have detained him.³ It is evident that the vessel was entirely at St. Paul's disposal, and had been hired specially for this journey.

17. 'And called the elders of the church.' It appears that these elders were either the presbyters of the several congregations in Ephesus, where the numerous converts could scarcely be assembled in one house, or that they were the bishops of the churches established during St. Paul's ministry in the province of Asia. Irenæus⁴ says expressly, 'The bishops and presbyters of Ephesus, and the other neighbouring cities, were

convoked on this occasion at Ephesus.' That father was closely connected with Asia Minor, and not at all likely to be mistaken or misinformed. The offices of bishop and presbyter may not have been entirely separated so long as the apostles retained the government of the Church; but at the earliest dawn of ecclesiastical history we find the episcopal authority universally established: and in the provinces of Asia Minor, we learn from St. John⁵ that each of the seven great churches was governed and represented by its own bishop or angel.

'He said unto them.' This address of St. Paul must be regarded as the type of the admonitions and exhortations addressed by the apostles to the ministers of churches. It has been remarked that St. Luke records such discourses of the apostle as give a correct impression of his mode of speaking to different classes under varying circumstances. This is a grave and authoritative, yet most affectionate charge to his subordinate ministers, on leaving his flock.

'Ye know.' The word *ye* is emphatic. He appeals to their personal knowledge. They had heard of his

¹ Chandler, Asia Minor.

² Winer.

³ Wieseler, p. 118.

⁴ III. c. 14. § 2. See Neander, p. 374.

⁵ Revelations i.

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 :
- ¹ ver. 3. ² ver. 27. 20. And how ³ I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,
- ⁴ ch. 1. 5. 21. ⁵ Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, ⁶ repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ⁷ Mark 1. 15. Luke 24. 43. ch. 2. 38. ⁸ ch. 19. 21. 22. And now, behold, ⁹ I go bound in the spirit

general character, but they had witnessed his conduct in Asia.

19. '*With all humility.*' The exercise of such high power and authority as devolved upon an apostle was tempered by deep personal humility. St. Paul magnified his office, but not himself.

'*Many tears.*' Caused chiefly, if not entirely, by his affectionate anxiety for the salvation of his unbelieving countrymen: as the apostle declares in the Epistle to the Romans, which was written a few months before this time, 'I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart,' on account of the brethren.

'*And temptations,*' or trials, persecutions. St. Paul does not allude to his dangers from the Gentiles; they had not terrified nor hurt him: the persecutions of his countrymen affected him to the heart. It should be remarked, that St. Luke, on the contrary, has recorded the former more fully. The historian dwells on the facts which affect the general condition of the Church, the apostle upon those which touch the spiritual state of his countrymen.

20. '*I kept back nothing.*' St. Paul had preached unreservedly those doctrines which specially excited the

indignation of the Jews. He was not ashamed of the Cross of Christ, which was to them 'a stumbling-block.'

'*Publicly.*' In the school of Tyrannus, and doubtless in other places of public resort.

'*From house to house.*' This may mean in private houses. It seems more probable, however, that St. Paul speaks of the houses where the Christian assemblies¹ met at Ephesus.

21. '*To the Greeks.*' To the Gentiles who, whether of Greek origin or not, spake that language.

'*Repentance toward God.*' The first object of the apostle was to make all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, sensible of their alienation from God, and so to turn their hearts to Him in penitent sorrow. The Jews were alienated by sin, especially pride and self-righteousness; the Gentiles by idolatry and licentiousness.

22. '*Bound in the Spirit.*' Acting under the constraining influence of the Holy Ghost. The word *in* expresses this more truly and fully than *by*.² He was not moved by a merely external influence, but moved and acted in the Spirit. The expression is peculiar to St. Paul.

'*Not knowing.*' The results, but not the circumstances, were revealed.

¹ Hinds, History of the R. & P. of Christianity, p. 241.

² Meyer.

unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there.

23. Save that ^athe Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions ^{||} abide me. ^a ch. 21. 4, 11.
¹ Thess. 3. 2.

24. But ^b none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, ^c so that I might finish my course with joy, ^d and the ministry, ^e which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. ¹ Or, wait for me.
^b ch. 21. 13.
^c Rom. 8. 35.
² Cor. 4. 16.
² Tim. 4. 7.
^d ch. 1. 17.
^e 2 Cor. 4. 1.
¹ Gal. 1. 1.
Tit. 1. 3.

25. And now, behold, ^f I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. ^f ver. 38.
Rom. 15. 23.

23. '*The Holy Ghost witnesseth.*' This may allude either to internal communications and visions revealed to the apostle, or to the utterances of prophets. The expression, 'in every city,' seems rather to imply the latter.

'*Abide me.*' It is not said whether at Jerusalem or elsewhere. St. Paul's faith was tried by a general apprehension of calamity. These warnings were not intended to deter him, but, as we may conjecture, to make his calm, cheerful submission to the Divine will, publicly known to the Church. His example was followed by many martyrs, among whom Polycarp and Ignatius were among the first and noblest.

24. '*Move me.*' Are taken into account by me. They did not influence his determination.

'*My life.*' The expression used by St. Paul is very striking. He attaches no value to life, compared with duty, but is prepared to give it up with readiness, so that he may complete his course.¹

'*With joy.*' With spiritual joy arising from the consciousness of God's love.

'*And the ministry.*' This stands in apposition to 'the course.' The course is the ministry, the official work, viz., that of preaching the Gospel. The word in the sense of an appointed work is peculiar to St. Paul. He uses it, chap. xiii., 25, and same metaphor, 1 Cor. xi. 24—27, and Phil. iii. 14.

'*The gospel of the grace of God.*' The glad tidings of the gracious purposes and influences of God manifested in Christ. Compare xiv. 3.

25. '*Among whom I have gone.*' The expression seems to imply that St. Paul had visited them in different places, which would accord with the view stated above. See note on ver. 17.

'*Shall see my face no more.*' This solemn declaration is a strong, if not conclusive argument against the supposition that he revisited this very district after his imprisonment at Rome.

26. '*Wherefore I take you to record.*' That is, since this is my last solemn charge, I testify before my departure.

'*I am pure.*' Clear of responsibility for the destruction of any man.

¹ Meyer.

grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30. Also ^p of your own selves shall men arise, ^p 1 Tim. 1. speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after ^{20.} 1 John 2. 19. them.

31. Therefore watch, and remember, that ^a by the ^{19.} 1 John 10. space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and ^r to the word of his grace, which is able ^s to build ^{13. 9.} Heb. 13. 9. 19. 31.

Church, not as true converts, but bringing with them passions and prejudices which will injure the people. By these persons we are probably ¹ to understand the Gnostics who introduced some of the most pernicious notions of Eastern mysticism among the Christians, together with antinomian and immoral habits. Their influence was peculiarly felt in Asia Minor.

30. '*Also of your own selves.*' As some heresies were introduced from without, others, having their root in the natural heart, sprung up within. That heretics, and not ambitious or covetous governors, are meant is clear from the expression '*speaking perverse things.*' Such were Hymeneus and Alexander, who had already made shipwreck of faith. 1 Tim. i. 20. The tendencies of such heresies were towards what would now be called Socinianism ² on the one hand, and to a spurious spiritualism on the other. See 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. Hymeneus and Philetus, whose doctrine is compared to a cancer, appear to have held nearly the same opinion touching the resurrection as the Swedenborgians.

The faith of the Ephesian Church, thus warned by the apostle, and afterwards governed by Timotheus and St. John, remained steadfast, notwithstanding these assaults; and Ignatius praises their constancy in his epistle, written early in the next century. '*Among you,*' he saith, '*no heresy gains a settlement.*' ³

'*By the space of three years.*' St. Paul passed two years and three months at least in the city of Ephesus, and altogether nearly three years elapsed between his arrival and departure. This expression gives additional probability to the supposition that he passed some months in visiting the churches in the surrounding district, and was now addressing their pastors.

'*Night and day.*' That this was no mere figure of speech is plain from ver. 7 and 11, of this chapter.

32. '*To God and to the Word of his grace.*' By the word of His grace most of the commentators understand the Gospel, which is the instrumental cause or means of salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. But we might have expected, and I am disposed to find here a reference to

¹ Neander, p. 409.

² Dorner, i. 175-6; Burton, Lect. I. c. v.

³ Ad Eph. 6; Humphry.

¹ ch. 26. 18. you up, and to give you ¹ an inheritance among all
 Ephes. 1. them which are sanctified.

^{18.}
 Col. 1. 12. ² 3. 24. 33. "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or
 Heb. 9. 15. apparel.
¹ Pet. 1. 4.
¹ Sam. 12. 3.

¹ Cor. 9. 12. 34. Yea, ye yourselves know, ² that these hands
² Cor. 7. 2. have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that
^{11.} 9. ^{12.} 17. have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that
¹ Cor. 4. 12. were with me.
¹ Thess. 2. 3.

35. I have shewed you all things, ³ how that so
² Thess. 3. labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to re-
^{8.} member the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It
⁷ Rom. 15. is more blessed to give than to receive.
¹ Cor. 9. 12.
² Cor. 11. 9,
 12. & 13. 13. Ephes. 4. 28. 1 Thess. 4. 11. & 5. 14. 2 Thess. 3. 8.

Him who is the Word ¹ rather than to the written Word. The Word of His grace may be rendered His gracious Word. The relative 'which' may, however, be referred to God.²

'To build you.' The Christian Church is a temple, which God edifies or builds up by His Word.

'An inheritance.' A portion in the kingdom of Messiah.³

'Sanctified.' Truly and inwardly sanctified by the Spirit of God. Sanctified sometimes refers to the initiatory consecration of Christians in baptism; sometimes, as in this passage, to the internal cleansing and renewal of God's people in their state of salvation.

33. '*I have coveted no man's silver,*' &c. St. Paul mentions this as a warning against covetousness. It is to us, moreover, an important link in the great chain of evidence, that one possessed of so much influence among the early Christians was wholly unbiassed by selfish or worldly considerations.⁴

34. '*These hands have ministered.*' Thus St. Paul maintained himself at Ephesus, as at Corinth and in Macedonia, by the produce of his manual

labour. It is a remarkable proof to what an extent that labour must have been carried, that he should have earned enough to support his companions also.

35. '*I have shewed you all things.*' Or, in all ways, not only by precept, but by example.

'So labouring ye ought,' &c. The object of this labour was, therefore, principally, or exclusively, to support and sustain the faith of the weak, i.e. persons not strong in religious faith, and to take away all occasion of cavil or of suspicion. When we remember how many exorcists, astrologers, professors of magic and of all kinds of spurious religions, lived on the credulity of the common people, and excited the contempt of well-informed persons in that age and country, we may understand how important it was that the preachers of the Gospel should be known to be perfectly disinterested. The right of ministers to a sustenance may be waived until Christian principles are fully recognised. It is the *privilege* of a church, settled and grounded in the faith, to maintain an order of men, set apart to study and preach the Gos-

¹ So Gomer, Witsius, and Aurelius.

² Luther, Wolf, Calvin, Bengel, &c.

³ Tholuck, Bergpredigt, p. 87.

⁴ Lyttelton on the Conversion of St. Paul.

36. ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he ^akneeled ^ach. 7. 60.
down, and prayed with them all. & 21. 5.

37. And they all wept sore, and ^afell on Paul's ^aGen. 45.
neck, and kissed him, 14. & 46. 29.

38. Sorrowing most of all for the words ^bwhich he ^bver. 25.
spake, that they should see his face no more. And
they accompanied him unto the ship.

pel, and to attend, without interruption, to the work of the ministry. St. Paul does not mean that the ministers of the Church should labour to support the infirm and suffering poor; this would be beside his argument.¹

'*The word of the Lord Jesus.*' This word is not recorded by the Evangelists, but as the elders are bid to remember it, it must have been well known in the Church. The application must not be restricted to temporal things. It is true in a certain sense of spiritual gifts; and in labouring with his own hands, not only to support his companions, but to remove any impediment to the free diffusion of that salvation which he was commissioned to preach, St. Paul at once illustrated and exemplified the precept of our Lord.

36. '*He kneeled down.*' This truly scriptural attitude of prayer, hallowed by Our Lord's own practice, was adopted by the primitive Church, excepting on the Lord's day, and during the season from Easter to Whitsuntide, when they prayed standing, to denote their gratitude for peculiar manifestations of divine love.²

37. '*And kissed him.*' The word in the original means kissed him with passionate affection.

38. '*See his face.*' The word translated 'see' has a peculiar solemnity in the original. It expresses reverential contemplation, we might almost say, as of a superior being. St. Luke writes this account, in the deepest spirit of Christian love towards his friend and teacher.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1, 2. This is a chapter of leave-takings, varied in each city by some touching peculiarities. The Churches in Macedonia had received the Gospel with readiness, and arrived speedily to a certain maturity of growth. Affectionate and consolatory addresses, blended with admonitions and warnings, seem to have characterised the last words of the apostle to those to whom at a later period he writes in these terms:—'My brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.' Phil. iv. 1. May our prayers be offered for those bishops and pastors of our own church, who are now treading in his steps in the remote dependencies of England! May

¹ Calvin, Beza, Grotius, Bengel, Neander, and Meyer.

² Olshausen, Humphry.

they, like him, reap an abundant harvest, and like him be rewarded by the faith and love of their people!

3—5. The poor, hardworking tent-maker advances as a prince, escorted by a troop of courtiers, such as no earthly sovereign could command. They were bound to him by the strongest of all chains—by love stronger than death. Indebted to him for the knowledge of salvation, they will not forsake him in the hour of trial. They go with him to share his sufferings, being well assured that whatever might be the temporal result, the path which he trod would conduct them by the shortest way towards the city of the Great King.

6—8. The many lights in that upper chamber, where St. Paul and the Church of Troas partook together for the last time of the body and blood of the Great Sacrifice, may be regarded as types of the spiritual Presence of Christ. And although the fall of Eutychus may be recorded with a view to the admonition of careless hearers of the Word, yet we may reverently conjecture that it was permitted to give the disciples on that solemn occasion a lively pledge and foretaste of the resurrection, that great fact upon which the apostle and believers rested all their hopes.

13—17. The apostle wound his way towards the city, where his Lord had suffered, and where, as he well knew, cruel persecutions awaited him, through scenes of surpassing beauty and full of historic reminiscences. But his mental eye was fixed upon other objects. He saw the Cross triumphing over the licentiousness of Lesbos, and inspiring nobler harmonies than those of the harp of Chios. He saw a spiritual temple before which the sculptured fabrics of the Samian Juno and Rhodian Apollo shrank into insignificance. That vision was fulfilled; and though sin and misery have again laid waste those regions, the fire, which was then lighted may yet be rekindled. May the same Spirit, who then gave power to His ministers, cause again this glorious voice to be heard along the coasts where St. Paul preached, and St. John beheld the visions of the Revelation!

18. May God give us the hearing ear and the understanding heart, that we may receive the lessons inculcated in the last pastoral address of him, who may be regarded in a peculiar sense as our own apostle. May its solemn accents resound within the innermost chambers of our conscience, that whatever may be our station in the Church purchased by the blood of the Incarnate Godhead, we may be conscious of our privileges and our responsibilities! He hath shown us how the example of our Lord may be followed by a believer—by humility and unwearied zeal; by patience under trials, and fortitude in suffering; by uncompromising boldness and tender love of souls. How simple and intelligible was the preaching of him who above all men was remarkable for a vigorous and capacious intellect. He felt that all wisdom was concentrated in those two simple words, *repent and believe*. Who can fail to be struck by the quiet steadfastness of his purpose? He doubted not that the warning intimations were from the Spirit; he questioned neither the affection nor the discretion of his sorrowing friends; but he felt that his course was plain before him, and whatever might be its perils or difficulties they were not intended to turn him aside from the single object of his existence, which was to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.

26, 27. God's whole counsel must be declared, or the teacher is chargeable with the blood of those whom he hath not directed to the cleansing fountain.

God's whole counsel must be received, accepted, and obeyed by the hearer, or his unatoned transgressions will remain upon his soul, and banish him for ever from the presence of a forgiving God.

28. What words can describe the dignity—what tongue express the awfulness of an office of which the Holy Ghost is the origin, and which has for its charge 'the sheep of Christ which He bought with His death, and for whom He shed His blood?'—*Ordination Service*.

29, 30. The enemies of the Church from without are little to be feared compared with those who spring up within. External persecution often quickens and purifies her faith, but inward heresies and corruptions indicate unsoundness in the members, and tend to destroy the harmony of the body which should be perfectly one in Christ. In such cases, a holy zeal and godly discipline best become the watchful guardians of the flock.

32. The word of grace hath been given to us. Unto us the Son, who is the Mighty God, is born. The temple in which each true believer is a living stone stands firm for ever, based on the rock of ages. May we be built into those hallowed walls, that when the Lord of the temple comes He may set His seal upon us, and give us an abiding place in the light of His glory! Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

33. The hands that are raised most frequently in prayer are most diligent in earthly duties. He who will not depend upon the assistance of others is foremost in ministering to the necessities of his friends; and the heart that rests with most undoubting faith on the merits of the Redeemer, treasures up most carefully each saying of the Lord that speaks of the charities and duties of common life.

36—38. There is nothing of the coldness or pride of the Stoic in true Christians. The heart touched by divine grace is more tenderly affected by those natural feelings which our blessed Lord not only approved, but shared.

CHAPTER XXI.

The crisis of the apostle's history is at length arrived. After a brief delay among Christian friends at Tyre and Cæsarea, he reaches Jerusalem, where party feelings then raged with unusual violence. Rumours preceded him which affected even the minds of believers; and St. Paul, acting upon the advice of St. James and the Church, deemed it necessary to show that the principles which guided him in his intercourse with the Gentiles were not incompatible with observance of the national form of worship. But his wise and affectionate condescension to the scruples of his friends afforded a pretext and opportunity to the violence of his enemies, and he was surprised, assaulted, and almost murdered in the precincts of the temple. The remaining chapters of this book describe the trials and persecutions of the apostle, his long imprisonment and sufferings, and illustrate the fortitude, dignity, and commanding energy of his character, sustained and animated by faith in his Redeemer.

1. 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 :

2. And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard and set forth.

3. Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it

1. '*After we were gotten.*' The expression here used by St. Luke indicates the great pain which St. Paul and his companions felt in parting: they are said to have been torn away from the Ephesian elders.

'*We came with a straight course.*' Literally, ran straight. To 'run,' in ancient as in modern language, evidently meant to sail before the wind.¹

'*Coos,*' or Cos, a small island on the coast of Caria, now called Stanco. It was celebrated for its wines, perfumes, and fine silken robes.²

'*Rhodes.*' One of the largest and most important islands in the Levant. Its famous colossus, or statue of the sun, which stood across the harbour,

was at that time prostrate, having been overthrown by an earthquake.³ We may well imagine with what feelings St. Paul and his companions looked on the ruins of the gigantic idol.

'*Patara.*' A considerable seaport of Lycia, to the east of the river Xanthus, famous for a temple and oracle of Apollo. Its noble ruins are described by late travellers.⁴

2. '*Phanicia.*' This country was at that time annexed to the province of Syria.⁵

3. '*Had discovered.*' Had come within sight of Cyprus. St. Luke, as usual, uses the proper nautical term, a very graphic one, equivalent to the

¹ Smith on the Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul, p. 6.

² Winer, i. 673.

³ Strabo, xiv.

⁴ Fellows' Asia Minor and Lycia.

⁵ Strabo, xvi. 749.

on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

4. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: *who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

* ver. 12.
ch. 20. 23.

5. And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us

seaman's expression, 'the rising land.' It implies both a rapid approach to the land, and that it was seen at a distance by daylight.¹

'We left it on the left hand.' The weather must have been very fine, or the pilot would have kept between Cyprus and the mainland. See note on chap. xxvii. 4.

'Tyre.' At that time a free city; and still retaining somewhat of its old commercial importance. St. Paul appears to have arrived there sooner than had been expected, owing to the favourable weather during the voyage from Ephesus. The voyage from Patara to Tyre probably occupied about five days.²

'Was to unlade,' &c. This was the destination of the merchant-vessel, which probably brought a cargo of grain from the Black Sea, or wine from the Archipelago.

4. 'Finding disciples,' or the disciples. The expression implies that there was a small Christian community at Tyre. It is most probable that the Gospel had been introduced by the Christians who were driven from Jerusalem by the persecution that followed the death of St. Stephen. See Acts xi. 19. And we may presume that all the Tyrians had heard, and many had witnessed, the great miracles which Our Lord wrought in the country about Tyre and Sidon during His life on earth. Matt. xv. 21; Mark vii. 24.³

'We tarried there seven days.' The complete establishment of a Christian Church in such a seaport as Tyre, was of great importance. It is also probable that the journey could not be continued until the cargo of the ship had been disposed of.

'Through the Spirit.' These disciples were doubtless informed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that bonds and afflictions awaited St. Paul at Jerusalem, and they had a commission to warn him. Since, however, St. Paul, acting under the guidance of the Spirit (see chap. xx. 22), persisted in his resolution, we must conclude that the inference which they drew, that he ought not to go thither, was suggested by their affectionate interest in his welfare, and formed no part of the revelation made to them.

5. 'When we had accomplished,' &c. This expression is rather peculiar, and seems to refer to the completion of necessary preparations for the journey.⁴

'Brought us on our way.' The whole body of Christians escorted St. Paul to the ship, to show their gratitude and affection. This was in accordance with the general custom of the Church.

'We kneeled down on the shore.' At the place of embarkation. A late traveller describes a spot close by the sea where they might enjoy the cool sea breeze and the dashing of the surge upon the rocky shore.⁵ There may have been a proseuche there, as

¹ Smith, pp. 6 7, and MS. note.

² Chrysostom; Anger; and Wieseler, p. 101.

³ Hensen, p. 489.

⁴ Meyer and Heinrichs.

⁵ Robinson.

on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and ^bwe kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

6. And when we had taken our leave one of another, ^cJohn 1. 11. we took ship; and they returned ^ehome again.

7. And when we had finished *our* course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8. And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and we entered into the house of Philip ^dthe evangelist, ^ewhich was one of the seven; and abode with him.

^a Ephes. 4.
11.
² Tim. 4. 5.
^c ch. 6. 5. &
8. 26, 40.

was usual in maritime cities; but there is no reason to suppose that it was attended by the Christians.¹ No inference can be fairly deduced from this passage in favour of extemporaneous prayers as part of the public service of the Church. No writer has ever questioned their propriety on such extraordinary occasions, and they were offered or guided in this case by an inspired apostle.

7. '*Finished our course.*' The last part of the journey, which was performed by sea. They may have reached Ptolemais before mid-day.²

'*Ptolemais,*' or Accho, or Ace. An important seaport, to the north of a large bay, surrounded by mountains, of which Mount Carmel, at a distance of about twelve miles to the south, is the most considerable. It was in the tribe of Asher, but was never subdued by the Israelites: and the inhabitants were heathen until a late period. A Jewish colony, however, settled there after the exile. The name Ptolemais was given in honour of Ptolemy Lathurus. At the time of St. Paul's visit, the city was prosperous, and had lately obtained the rights of a Roman colony. The

Gospel had probably been introduced at the same time as at Tyre. The city is still called Acco by the Arabians, and St. Jean d'Acre by Europeans, under which name it is well known in mediæval and modern history. At present it contains about 18,000 inhabitants.³

8. '*We that were of Paul's company.*' The persons who attended St. Paul from Acco to Jerusalem were St. Luke, Trophimus (see chap. xxi. 29), and the Aristarchus (see chap. xxvii. 2). Timotheus appears to have returned with the elders to Ephesus, where he governed the Church with episcopal authority as delegate of St. Paul. It is uncertain whether any other persons accompanied St. Paul beyond Troas.

'*Cæsarea.*' This Church seems to have prospered under the ministry of Philip, who had now been a settled or occasional resident here about eighteen years. The influence of Cornelius must also have contributed very much to the increase of the disciples.

'*Philip the Evangelist.*' Philip had preached and baptized as a deacon, but, when settled at Cæsarea, he held the higher office of an evangelist, or

¹ Hammond.

² Wieseler, p. 191.

³ Pocock, Winer, Reland.

9. And the same man had four daughters, virgins,^{f f Joel 2. 28. ch. 2. 17.} which did prophesy.

10. And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named ^gAgabus. ^{g ch. 11. 28.}

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, ^hSo shall the Jews at ^{h ver. 33. ch. 20. 23.} Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.

12. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

missionary preacher¹, in which capacity he seems to have visited the cities and towns in that district, under the authority of the apostles residing at Jerusalem.

'One of the seven.' See Acts vi. 5.

9. 'Virgins, which did prophesy.' This does not mean that they prophesied publicly in the Church, which was contrary to apostolic discipline (see 1 Cor. xiv. 35), but that they had the gift of prophesying, which was doubtless exercised under the superintendence of their father. If, as is probable, Philip married after settling at Cæsarea, they must have been very young. Two of them married some time afterwards, as we learn from very early fathers.

10. 'Many days.' St. Paul left Troas on the 17th of April, and arrived at Cæsarea on the 23rd day. It is proved that he left Cæsarea on Monday the 15th of May. He must have remained five days.² 'Many days' is used, of course, comparatively. It shows the importance which St. Paul attached to the Church at Cæsarea, that he should have remained

there so long on his way to Jerusalem.

'From Judæa.' Cæsarea belonged to Phœnicia, not to Palestine, notwithstanding its geographical situation.³

'Agabus.' There is no sufficient reason to doubt that this is the same Agabus who is named above, chap. xi. 28. According to the tradition of the Greek Church,⁴ this prophet was an active and efficient agent in the propagation of the Gospel.

11. 'He took,' &c. It was not unusual for the old prophets to represent the events which they were inspired to foretell, by symbolical actions. See Isaiah xx; Jeremiah xiii. 4; Ezekiel iv. and xii.⁵

'Thus saith the Holy Ghost.' This form would suffice to prove the identity of the Holy Ghost in nature or essence with the Lord Jehovah who spake by the prophets.

'Into the hands of the Gentiles.' Of the Romans, who then administered the government by Judæa.

12. 'Besought him.' These two verses explain the expression used above (v. 4.)

¹ Eusebius, H. E. iii. 37; who, however, confounds him with the apostle Philip.

² See the very accurate calculations of Anger and Wieseler, p. 100, 103,

adopted by Lewin, F.S.

³ Joseph Ant. xv. 9, 5.

⁴ Menol. Græcor. iii. 50.

⁵ Chrysostom.

ch. 20. 34. 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.

14. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, 'The will of the Lord be done.

^a Matt. 6. 10. & 26. 42. ^b Luke 11. 2. & 22. 42. 15. And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

16. There went with us also *certain* of the disciples of Casarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

ch. 15. 4. 17. 'And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

13. '*What mean ye.*' &c. An affectionate exhortation. — why use unavailing entreaties and demonstrations of grief, which may crush my heart but cannot change my resolution? The effect of St. Paul's sufferings upon the Christians, and especially upon those of Casarea, who witnessed his imprisonment, must have been greatly enhanced by their knowledge, that although he foresaw them clearly, and was urged by wise and pious men to avoid them, he yet encountered them willingly for the name of the Lord Jesus. 'The terms of this prediction were likely to portend death, for in that he was to be bound by the Jews, and delivered up to the Gentiles, the fate of his Lord and Master could not but recur to him, and seem likely to be now his own: nor was it perhaps a slight stimulus and support that he seemed, in thus pressing on to Jerusalem, in spite of his own forebodings, and of the remonstrances of others, to be imitating Him.'

'(Of the Lord.)' Of the Lord Jesus,

with special reference to v. 13.² They were fully assured that the Lord, for whose name Paul was ready to suffer death, would make all things work together for the good of his elect servant.

15. '*Took up our carriages.*' This word formerly meant necessities for a journey, or baggage, not vehicles. See 1 Sam. xvii. 22.

16. '*Mnason, an old disciple.*' If he was one of the converts at Pentecost, he would have been a disciple twenty-eight years. He was, however, more probably one of the early followers of Our Lord.³ It will not be forgotten that he was a countryman of Barnabas and his sister, at whose house the Church was wont to assemble. Chap. xii. 12. I think it not improbable that Mnason was connected with this family. The words rendered in the text 'brought with them,' more probably mean brought us to Mnason, who evidently resided at Jerusalem.

17. '*When we were come to Jerusalem.*' It will conduce to the better understanding of the following transac-

¹ Hinds. p. 249.

² Meyer.

³ Tittmann. Syn. p. 184; and Meyer.

18. And the *day* following Paul went in with us ^{m ch. 15. 15.} unto ^{Gal. 1. 19.} James; and all the elders were present. ^{& 2. 9.}

19. And when he had saluted them, ^{n ch. 15. 4,} he declared ^{12.} particularly what things God had wrought among the ^{Rom. 15. 18,} Gentiles ^{19.} by his ministry. ^{o ch. 1. 17.} ^{& 20. 24.}

tion, if we consider the state of Jerusalem at that time. Since the death of Herod Agrippa, A.D. 44, Judæa had been again governed by Roman procurators, the son of that prince being too young to succeed him. These men were cruel and oppressive rulers, and several insurrections had been suppressed with great loss of life. Cumanus, who was banished for misgovernment, A.D. 54, left the province in a state of great confusion and misery, which the conduct of Felix, a freedman and relation of Narcissus, the profligate favourite of Claudius and Nero, had greatly increased. The country was full of robbers and impostors. The people at Jerusalem had been much excited by repeated insults offered to their religious feelings, and the violence of party spirit was greater than at any former period. Felix is even said to have instigated assassins to murder the high priest, Jonathan,¹ and troops of murderers, called sicarii, were to be hired almost with impunity. The temple itself was polluted by frequent murders at the great festivals. 'Such abominations,' says Josephus, 'were calculated to excite God's holy indignation, and were the cause that He turned from Jerusalem, deserted the polluted temple as unworthy of his presence, and brought in the Romans, as our enemies, to purify the city with fire, and to lead us with our wives and children into captivity, in order to bring us to repentance by suffering.'²

'The brethren received us gladly.'

The Christians at Jerusalem, on hear- of St. Paul's arrival at Cæsarea, had probably assembled in great numbers at the house of Mnason, to receive him, or they may have met him on the road. They were probably aware that he brought large contributions for their numerous poor, and had doubtless heard general accounts of his success in preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles.

18. '*Unto James.*' This was a formal visit to James the Apostle, who presided as bishop over the Church at Jerusalem. See note, chap. xii. 17. It is doubtful whether any other apostles were present at that time. They were probably engaged in preaching the Gospel in various regions of Asia. St. Peter appears to have visited Antioch, and afterwards to have remained some time at Babylon, where his first general epistle was written.

'*All the elders.*' The presbyters of the various congregations in Jerusalem and the surrounding district.

19. '*He declared particularly.*' He gave a full and minute account of all his proceedings, not because he was responsible to the Church of Jerusalem, or derived his authority from St. James, but because he knew the deep interest they felt in the propagation of the Gospel, and because it was his duty to remove any doubts or suspicions which might be entertained by the scrupulous adherents to the law. For this, it was sufficient to

¹ Joseph. Ant. xx. 8, 4.

² Joseph. Ant. xx. 1—8; Hemsen, p. 494—501.

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 ^Pzealous of the law :

^P ch. 22, 3.
Rom. 10, 2.
Gal. 1, 14.

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.

prove that he had adhered to the regulations settled at the first apostolic council.

20. '*They glorified the Lord.*' Expressed their thanksgiving for the great work which had been done among the Gentiles.

'*How many thousands.*' Or myriads. This is a very clear proof that the proportion of Christian converts to the entire nation was far more considerable than is commonly supposed. There has always been a disposition on the part of sceptical writers to underrate the number of converts, and to explain away the strongest and clearest statements which prove the rapid diffusion of Christianity. We may well suppose that nearly every man had now taken up his ultimate position, and was either an adherent or persecutor of the Church of Christ.¹

'*They are all zealous of the law.*' The Hebrew Christians were permitted to adhere to the law, and so long as they observed it as a national institution, not depending upon it for justification, they were not to be blamed. But that zeal had a tendency to degenerate into bigotry, and the bitterest opponents of St. Paul were Judaizing

teachers. It was not until the ceremonial service ceased with the destruction of the temple, that the Christians of Palestine generally felt that they were altogether free from the obligation of the ritual law. See introduction to chap. xv.

21. '*They have been informed.*' The word here employed in the original is 'catechised'—they had been carefully and systematically indoctrinated by the party hostile to St. Paul.

'*That thou teachest,*' &c. It was false to assert that St. Paul taught the Jews to forsake the law ; but it is not improbable that many of his converts had expressed a conviction that circumcision, which, as they learned from him, was unavailing for justification, would speedily be dispensed with by all Christians.

'*After the customs.*' The legal and traditional observances.

22. '*What is it therefore?*' This does not mean, what is the truth as to this matter? (for St. James and the elders present knew St. Paul to be blameless;) but what ought to be done under the circumstances?²

'*The multitude must needs,*' &c. It was inevitable that these persons

¹ See Euseb. H. E. iii. 5, 35. Origen. Cels. iii. 28.

² Meyer.

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.

should assemble in great numbers to watch the conduct of St. Paul. The words in the original do not imply that there would be a tumultuous assembly, or a formal meeting of the whole Church.¹

23. '*Four men which have a vow.*' These were Christians, and the vow was evidently that of a Nazarite. See Numbers vi.

24. '*Purify thyself with them.*' Observe the same form of ceremonial purification. They were to separate themselves from wine and strong drink, and all fermented liquors, to avoid the contact of a dead body, to let no razor come upon their head, and at the end of the time to offer certain sacrifices prescribed by the law. It does not however follow that St. Paul was to undertake all these obligations himself, although he joined in the rites and offerings which terminated the vow. The object was to show that he observed the law, and that object would be attained at once by his presenting himself with those men, and providing for their offerings.² The least time for the vow of a Nazarite appears to have been thirty days.

'*Be at charges with them, that,*' &c. Pay the expense of the sacrifices, viz. a ram, two lambs, a bushel of unleavened bread, and a libation of wine for each Nazarite. See Numbers vi.

13—20.³ It was a common act of piety to defray these expenses for poor Nazarites.

'*That they may shave their heads.*' As an indication that the period of their vow was accomplished. It was not unusual to take the vow of a Nazarite for a period terminating with one of the three great festivals.⁴

'*Walkest orderly.*' In conformity with the institutions of the Hebrews. It appears very singular, to say the least, that any Christian writer should have questioned the propriety of this advice given by St. James in conjunction with all the presbytery, and followed by the clear-sighted and spiritually-minded apostle of the Gentiles. St. Paul did observe the law himself strictly and cheerfully, with an affectionate and wise regard for the scruples of his countrymen, although he knew and taught that it could not give life. If it was right to observe it for such a motive, which no one doubts, it was also quite right according to the simplest principles of morals, that he should do some public act to show that he observed it. He would otherwise have failed in attaining the very object for which he submitted to its obligations. Had there been a shadow of evil in the action, or had it been likely to mislead weak believers, we may be well assured that St. James would neither have

¹ Meyer.

² Wieseler, p. 106, 107.

³ Compare Joseph. Ant. xix. 6, 1.

⁴ Wieseler.

^r ch. 15. 20, 29. 25. As touching the Gentiles which believe, ^rwe 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 ^rch. 24. 18. purifying himself with them ^rentered into the temple, ^r Numb. 6. 13. ^rto signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

27. And when the seven days were almost ended,

suggested, nor St. Paul have acquiesced in it. The whole subject is admirably discussed by St. Augustin; Ep. 82, 93, and Chrysostom T. iii. p. 443, ed. B.

25. '*As for the Gentiles,*' &c. See notes on Acts xv. 20. St. James, who doubtless spoke in the name of the Church of Jerusalem, states this to show that his advice to St. Paul did not imply that he attached any value to those forms as contributing to justification, since in that case the Gentiles would also have been commanded to observe them.

26. '*Purifying himself with them,*' Performing the same lustrations and other ceremonial rites.

'*Entered into the temple,*' &c. St. Paul did not then commence the course of living prescribed by the law to Nazarites (which, as it has been shown would have lasted not seven, but at least thirty days), but he went to signify its accomplishment—to announce to the priests that the vows of these Nazarites had been completed, and that they were now ready to offer the usual sacrifices.

27. '*The seven days,*' This expression seems to refer, not to the purification of the Nazarites, but to

the seven days ending with the feast of Pentecost.¹ This took place on the same day on which St. Paul entered the temple. The Nazarites completed their offerings before nine o'clock, at which hour the day of Pentecost was fully come, and the festival commenced. See note, Acts ii. 1. This explanation differs from that adopted by most commentators, and rests on these grounds:—1st. The period of twelve days, which elapsed between St. Paul's departure from Cæsarea and his trial before Felix, cannot be reconciled with the supposition that he remained seven days after his interview with Felix. 2nd. There is no reason to believe that the purification lasted seven days. 3rd. It is certain that seven days were kept holy before Pentecost, and therefore most probable that they would be called, as in the text, the seven days, without further explanation.

'*Of Asia,*' Of the province of Asia Minor (see note, ii. 9), some probably from Ephesus, who were of course most likely to recognise Trophimus (v. 29).

'*In the temple,*' Far from being soothed by the evident reverence of

¹ Wieseler, p. 111. This is adopted by Conybeare and Howson ii. p. 249.

"the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in " ch. 24. 18.
the temple, stirred up all the people, and "laid hands " ch. 26. 21.
on him,

28. Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the
man, "that teacheth all *men* every where against the " ch. 24. 5, 6.
people, and the law, and this place: and further
brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath pol-
luted this holy place.

29. (For they had seen before with him in the city
"Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that " ch. 20. 4.
Paul had brought into the temple).

30. And "all the city was moved, and the people " ch. 26. 21.

the apostle for the national religion, these unconverted Jews were excited to fury by his presence in the holy place. The object of St. Paul had been to appease his believing countrymen, in which he was probably successful; but he thus exposed himself to the fury of his enemies.¹

28. '*This is the man.*' Compare this with the charges made against St. Stephen (vi. 13, 14). In St. Paul's case there were two additional charges which would most effectually excite the wrath of the people: first, that he preached every where among the hated Gentiles, or, as they presumed, against his own people; and, secondly, that he brought Greeks, uncircumcised Gentiles, into the temple.

'*The temple.*' That is, the second court of the temple, which was surrounded by an enclosure three cubits high, with marble pillars, on which there were inscriptions, in Greek and Latin, forbidding Gentiles to enter on pain of death.² The outer court, or inclosure, which did not, properly speaking, form part of the temple, was called the court of the Gentiles,

and was, of course, accessible to foreigners.

'*Hath polluted.*' St. Paul would have been liable to instant death, by 'stripes without measure,' even without judicial proceeding, had he brought Trophimus into the court of the Israelites.³

29. '*Whom they supposed.*' This accusation rested therefore upon mere inference. They had seen Trophimus in the city, and state as a fact that Paul had brought Greeks into the temple. Such misstatements are not uncommon, when the passions are inflamed, and prejudices excited, by violent party feelings; but those who make them cannot be acquitted of the guilt of wilful and malignant falsehood.

30. '*All the city.*' The arrival of St. Paul must have been generally known, both because of his celebrity, and of the special purpose of his visit to Jerusalem, which was to bring large contributions for the poor. The news of his arrest in the temple would spread rapidly through the city, where all were intent on his proceedings.

¹ Calvin.

² Hensen; Joseph. Ant. xv. 11, 5; B. J. v. 5, 2.

³ Lightfoot.

ran together : and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple : and forthwith the doors were shut.

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.

^b ch. 23. 27.
& 24. 7.

32. ^bWho 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.

^c ver. 11.
ch. 20. 23.

33. Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and ^ccommanded *him* to be bound with two

'Drew him out of the temple.' That they might murder him without defiling the holy place. A strange, but not unusual combination of religious feeling with furious bigotry.

'The doors were shut.' The gate of the second court, perhaps in order to prevent St. Paul from taking refuge at the altar.¹ That would have caused some delay, and secured a regular trial, at which the accusers well knew that their charge could not be substantiated.

31. *'To kill him.'* This occurred in the outer court.

'The chief captain of the band.' Claudius Lysias. This officer commanded the Roman garrison in the fortress of Antonia. It had four towers, of which the one on the south-west corner was seventy cubits high, commanding a view of the whole temple. It was close to the portico of the outer court, with which it was connected by two flights of marble steps.² Some soldiers were usually stationed during the great festivals at the entrance of the temple, and when on this occasion they observed that the tumult was too great for them to suppress, they doubtless sent intelligence to the commander, who

always kept a troop in readiness to suppress the riots, which frequently arose at this season.

32. *'When they saw,'* &c. The Jews were well aware with what severity any attempt at resistance would be punished. Thousands had been slain on such occasions³ by the infuriated soldiers, and under the direction of the Roman authorities.

'Beating.' The punishment for the offence imputed to Paul, when a person was taken in the act, was *'stripes without measure.'* See note, v. 28.

33. *'Commanded him to be bound.'* This was to show the Jews that his object was not to rescue him if he were guilty, but to prevent a riot in the temple.

'With two chains.' The right arm and right leg were fastened by chains to two soldiers.

'He demanded,' &c. He asked the persons, who were beating St. Paul, who he was, probably expecting to hear that he was some notorious malefactor, who might be executed without a formal trial.

'What he had done.' The tribune of course concluded that he must have been taken in the act, or convicted on

¹ Bengel.

² Josephus, B. J. v. 5, 1.

³ Joseph. Ant. xx. 5, 3.

chains: and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

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.

36. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, ^d 'Away with him.'

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. ^e 'Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?' ^{* See ch. 5. 26.}

sure evidence. The question involves a sharp condemnation of the conduct of the Jews.

34. '*Into the castle,*' or the barracks of the soldiers quartered in the castle of Antonia. See note, v. 31. This had been built by the Asmonean family, but was called Antonia by Herod in honour of his early patron, Mark Antony.

35. '*Upon the stairs.*' See note, v. 31. Paley¹ remarks the accuracy of St. Luke's account, as compared with the description given by Josephus.

36. '*Away with him.*' The same cry as when our Saviour was accused. See Luke xxiii. 18, and compare Acts xxii. 22.

37. '*Canst thou speak Greek?*' Claudius Lysias, who was himself a Greek, was surprised to hear Paul speak that language. The educated classes spoke Greek very generally, even in Palestine, but it was an indi-

cation of a higher station than he had probably assigned to St. Paul.

38. '*Art thou not,*' &c. That Egyptian for whom Claudius Lysias took St. Paul (as we may suppose, simply because the facts were recent,²) was a fanatic, or impostor, who attempted to overthrow the Roman government of Judæa in the time of Nero, and led the followers, whom he had collected in the wilderness, to the mount of Olives, where he promised them that they would see the walls of Jerusalem thrown down by a miracle. This band, which, according to Josephus, at one time amounted to 30,000, was dispersed by Felix, but the leader escaped into the wilderness.³ Neither Josephus nor St. Luke mentions his name, which seems, from the question of Lysias, not to have been known.

'*Four thousand.*' This must be referred to the beginning of the

¹ Evidences c. vi.

² Calvin.

³ Joseph. Ant. xx. 8, 6; and B. J. ii. 13, 5.

¹ ch. 9. 11.
& 22. 3.

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.

² ch. 12. 17. 40. And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and ³beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

Egyptian's career. He led out 4,000 into the wilderness, where they may have increased to 30,000.

'*That were murderers.*' The word here used means a specific class of assassins, sicarii, who wore a short crooked sword, called a sica, and were employed as bravoes, often with the connivance, and sometimes at the instigation of Felix, and the leading men of Jerusalem.

39. '*Of no mean city.*' See note, chap. ix. Tarsus is called by Josephus the metropolis and most

renowned city of Cilicia. It was especially famous for its university. See introduction to chap. ix.

40. '*Beckoned with the hand.*' His usual gesture is described. The same word is used xii. 17.

'*A great silence.*' Many would be interested in his behalf, all would be curious to hear his defence.

'*In the Hebrew tongue.*' The dialect spoken by the Hebrews, at that time, was Syro-Chaldaic, which St. Paul used, of course, in addressing his countrymen.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—3. The apostle passes rapidly by cities¹ where the sun, personified in Apollo, was worshipped with peculiar splendour as the source of light, life, and knowledge, towards that land where the Sun of Righteousness had arisen with healing on His wings. He passed them, not expecting to revisit them himself, but with a deep conviction that ere long the beams of that glorious dawn would disperse the fantastic dreams which testified alike to the cravings and the ignorance of mankind; and that the time was now at hand when the 'sun would no longer be their light by day, neither for brightness should the moon give light unto them, for the Lord would be unto them an everlasting light, and their God their glory.'

4—6. Tyre was once the Queen of Nations, and her merchants were the princes of the earth; but she was now acquiring the nobler title of a daughter of the Great King, and rejoiced in the presence of one whom his Master had appointed among the spiritual princes who were to reign in all lands. In visiting that spot, from which all traces of earthly glory have departed, the Christian

¹ Rhodes and Patara.

will gaze with peculiar emotion upon the shore where the Tyrian believers poured out their soul in prayer on bended knees with the apostle of the Gentiles. We must not forget that England has the singular privilege of combining the opulence of Tyre in her palmiest state with the faith which she learned in the day of her humiliation. May such thoughts be ever present in the minds of our princely merchants; may they be mindful of their responsibilities; may they do their utmost to make those channels of commercial intercourse, by which the riches of the nations stream into their treasuries, available for the diffusion of evangelising influences to the remotest quarters of the earth.

7—11. Each place which the apostles then visited had a little colony of brethren, with whom the Christian traveller found the affectionate welcome of a family and home. If we rejoice in the vast increase of the Church, how deep should be our regret and humiliation that the links, which once bound all believers in one chain of brotherhood, have been all but shattered, and that the transmission of that electric current of love and sympathy is so often checked or interrupted.

Cæsarea at that time was the home of spiritual manifestations. It had witnessed the call of the first baptized Gentile—it was to be the residence of the apostle during his first long imprisonment. There the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled in the virgin daughters of Philip, who exemplified the union of light and purity in the Church; and the harmony of the two dispensations was illustrated by the symbolical prediction of the prophet Agabus.

12—14. These three verses show the true principle which should regulate the intercourse of Christians. Deep and genuine affection makes believers more sensitive to afflictions that beset their brethren than to their own tribulations; while he who feels himself called upon to endure hardship, or to encounter danger for the name of the Lord Jesus, will gratefully acknowledge the demonstrations of sympathy, without swerving from his well-considered purpose. The heart may be stirred to its very depths, but the will remains steadfast and unmovable, knowing that no labour is vain in the Lord. How striking in this case was the loving struggle between the apostle and his friends; how beautiful their unanimous adoption of Our Lord's own expression of resignation to the will of God!

15—17. St. Paul entered Jerusalem with somewhat of the state which had shadowed forth the future glory of Messiah on His last entrance into that mystic city. Like Him he also entered upon a series of afflictions, which hung over his last years like heavy clouds around the departing sun. But the gladness of the disciples, like the Hosannahs of the little children, was justified by the event; the light affliction, which was but for a moment, worked for the apostle a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

18, 19. The peace of the Church depends upon its order. Without sacrificing that independence which belonged to him as an apostle of the Lord, St. Paul was careful to act in harmonious co-operation with other rulers of the Church. Missionaries should be especially mindful of their obligations to the Church which directs and sanctions their work. They should be careful to give accurate and complete accounts of what things God effects by their ministry, for the edification of those who remain at home; while these should never fail in lively demonstrations of gratitude to the Lord who maketh His servants burning and shining lights among the benighted heathens.



20—26. It is not easy to steer clear of the opposite extremes of formal and irreverence—to keep from undue compliance on the one hand, and on the other from haughty and uncharitable disregard of time-honoured observance. We should ponder thoughtfully upon the example of those who spoke and acted under the guidance of the Spirit of wisdom and love. It seems clear that some forms which are unnecessary for the advanced Christian may be expedient for a season for the sake of the brethren. At the same time, to prevent misunderstanding, the reasons for such observance should be stated unreservedly, while peculiar stress should be laid upon those doctrines which alone explain the justification and complete the sanctification of believers.

27—30. The hour of trial is come; in the sanctuary of God the apostles and the Lord is assailed, but not surprised, by the malignant enemies of the Saviour. The sanctity of the place serves but to add intensity to their frantic rage—observance of the national rites does but aggravate their fury. But the most hateful point in their conduct, that which most effectually barred the way towards conversion, was the spirit of falsehood, which distorted their perceptions, and hardened their feelings. Another seal was then affixed to their sentence pronounced upon the nation—and an additional weight attached to the chain which has bowed down the neck of that impenitent race through centuries of degradation.

CHAPTER XXII.

St. Paul's defence of himself before the Jews in the temple contains some interesting information concerning his early life, together with an account, not only of his conversion, but of the vision in which his future destination was specially revealed to him by the Lord Jesus. It is further remarkable as having given occasion to a manifestation of peculiar malignity on the part of his enemies. From their conduct, as here described, we learn that the final rejection of the Gospel by the majority of the nation was owing, not so much to its apparent incompatibility with the ceremonial law, as to the envious and bitter feelings which were excited in their hearts by the declaration, that the Messiah directed His apostle to preach to the Gentiles.

1. MEN, ^abrethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence ^a ch. 7. 2. *which I make* now unto you.

2. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence : and he saith),

3. ^bI am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in ^b ch. 21. 39.
^c Cor. 11.
^d Phil. 3. 5.

1. '*Men, brethren, and fathers.*' From this form of address it is evident that some of the rulers, or members of the Sanhedrim, were present at the riot.¹ The chiefs of the priesthood were engaged at that hour in the ceremonial rites which occupied the greater part of every day during the season of Pentecost.

'*The Hebrew tongue,*' which they not only loved, but revered,² as a sacred language, notwithstanding the great change which it had undergone since the exile. The use of this tongue reminded them that St. Paul was not a Hellenistic Jew, though born at Tarsus, but a Hebrew in language, habits, and doubtless in affections.

3. '*A Jew,*' &c. See introduction to chap. ix.

'*Brought up.*' This refers to the

early training, which began ordinarily at eleven, and never later than thirteen, for a teacher of the law. Chrysostom remarks, that the Jews must have regarded it as a great proof of his original reverence for the law, that he should have left so important and distant a city as Tarsus, in order to be educated according to the strictest sect at Jerusalem.

'*At the feet of Gamaliel.*' See Acts v. 34. This expression refers to the custom in the synagogues and schools of the lawyers, where they discussed religious questions, the elders sitting on chairs, the middle-aged on benches, and the young disciples either sitting on mats, or standing at the feet of their teachers.³ This attitude denoted close and persevering attention, and deep reverence for the instructor.⁴

¹ Meyer.

² Chrysostom.

³ Schoetgen, Hor. Hebr. in loc.; and Vitringa de Syn. p. 165. ⁴ Chrysostom.

Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city
 *at the feet of ^dGamaliel, and taught *according to
 the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and ^ewas
 zealous toward God, ^fas ye all are this day.

*Dent. 33. 3.
 2 Kings 4.
 38.
 Luke 10. 39.
^d ch. 5. 34.
^e ch. 26. 5.
^f ch. 21. 20.
 Gal. 1. 14.
^g Rom. 10. 2.
^h ch. 8. 3. &
 26. 9, 10, 11.
 Phil. 3. 6.
 1 Tim. 1. 13.
 1 Luke 22.
 66.
 ch. 4. 5.
ⁱ ch. 9. 2. &
 26. 10, 12.

4. ^hAnd I persecuted this way unto the death,
 binding and delivering into prisons both men and
 women.

5. As also the high priest doth bear me witness,
 and ⁱall the estate of the elders; ^jfrom whom also I
 received letters unto the brethren, and went to Da-
 mascus, to bring them which were there bound unto
 Jerusalem, for to be punished.

6. And ^kit came to pass, that, as I made my jour-
 ney, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon,

'To the perfect manner.' The ut-
 most strictness, not only according to
 the written law, but to the traditions
 of the Pharisees.

'Zealous towards God,'—that is, on
 behalf of the law of God. This zeal
 had been shown on the one hand, by
 scrupulous observance of the law
 (which he continued to the end of
 his life, as in itself innocent), and on
 the other hand, by persecuting those
 who, as he then thought, were sub-
 verting its principles.

4. *'This way.'* See note, Acts ix. 2,
 and compare viii. 1, 3.

'Unto the death.' As in the case
 of Stephen, and, as appears from
 chap. xxvi. 10, of other Christian
 martyrs during the same persecu-
 tion.

5. *'The High Priest.'* It appears
 that Theophilus, who gave him the
 commission, although no longer High
 Priest, was still living, and was, of
 course, present in the temple. See
 note, chap. ix. 2.

'Doth bear me witness.' Cannot

refuse to bear witness. St. Paul
 evidently appeals to him personally.

'The estate of the elders.' The
 word used in the original means the
 presbytery, i.e. the Sanhedrim.

'Unto the brethren.' St. Paul
 speaks as a Hebrew, of his brethren
 after the flesh.¹

Chrysostom has some striking re-
 marks on the cogency of the argu-
 ment which St. Paul suggests in this
 statement. The Jews must have
 been strangely prejudiced not to see
 that the facts, which they knew to
 be true, were quite unaccountable on
 any hypothesis save that of a mira-
 culous interposition. In this life St.
 Paul cast away all that man desires
 and prizes, for the sake of Him
 whom he had been foremost in pro-
 secuting.

6. *'It came to pass,'* &c. Com-
 pare ix. 3—8, and xxvi. 13.

'About noon.' An important cir-
 cumstance in considering the miracu-
 lous character of this transaction.

¹ Meyer.

suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8. And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9. And ^mthey that were with me saw indeed the ⁿlight, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice ^oof him that spake to me. ^p Dan. 10. 7.

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.

12. And ^qone Ananias, a devout man according to ^rthe law, ^shaving a good report of all the ^tJews which ^udwelt *there*, ^v ch. 9. 17.
^w ch. 10. 22.
^x 1 Tim. 3.7.

13. Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. ^y ch. 3. 13.
^z 5. 30.

14. And he said, ^aThe God of our fathers ^bhath ^c ch. 9. 15.
^d 26. 16.

9. '*They heard not the voice.*' They heard a sound, but no distinct words. See note, chap. ix. 7.

11. '*For the glory of that light.*' Because that intense splendour blinded me. See note, ix. 8.

12. '*A devout man,*' &c. St. Paul points out that Ananias, the servant of Jesus, was neither an opposer of the law, nor a person lightly esteemed by the Jews, two circumstances of great importance with reference to his actual position before the Jews. St. Paul does not say that Ananias was a Christian, but that was unnecessary; this whole narrative shows it distinctly, and the Jews

could not misunderstand him. It is singular that any stress should have laid upon the circumstance.¹ The name Ananias signifies the grace of God.

13. '*Brother Saul.*' A compressed statement of the facts related, chap. ix. 10—17.

14. '*Hath chosen thee.*' St. Paul states two important points which were likely to affect the Jews—that he had been called by the God of their fathers—that he had seen and heard Him, whom they crucified as a malefactor, but whom God declared to be the Just One, by exalting Him to heaven, where He appeared to Paul.

¹ Alford.

chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and

¹ 1 Cor. 9. 1. ^a see 'that Just One, and ^a shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

^a 1 Cor. 11. 23. 15. ^a For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

^a ch. 23. 11. 16. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, ^a and wash away thy sins, ^a calling on the name of the Lord.

^a ch. 2. 38. ^a ch. 9. 14. 17. And ^b it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

^a ver. 14. 18. And ^c saw him saying unto me, ^d Make haste,

15. '*Unto all men.*' St. Paul was then prepared himself, and now prepares the Jews, for this further revelation, that he was especially called to be 'a witness' unto the Gentiles.

16. '*Be baptized, and wash away thy sins.*' Baptism, by bringing the convert into the kingdom of Christ, procures forgiveness of sins, which are typically washed away by the water, and effectually by the regenerating Spirit. The Nicene Creed exactly expresses the meaning of the text, 'I believe in one baptism for the remission of sins.' Hooker¹ writes thus concerning this sacrament: 'Baptism is a sacrament which God hath instituted in his Church, to the end that they which receive the same might thereby be incorporated into Christ, and so through His most precious merit obtain, as well that saving grace of imputation which taketh away all former guiltiness, as also that infused divine virtue of the Holy Ghost, which giveth to the powers of the soul their first disposition towards newness of life.'

'*Calling on the name of the Lord.*' That is, after invoking the name of

Jesus, and recognising him as the true Messiah. The invocation of the Lord Jesus was also a recognition of His Godhead. As Chrysostom remarks, 'By these words he shows that Christ is God, for it is not lawful to invoke any besides God.' That profession was the preliminary condition of baptism, in addition to renunciation of sin.

17. '*When I was come again.*' Three years after the conversion of St. Paul. (Ch. ix. 26.)

'*I was in a trance.*' It is to this trance, or ecstasy, that St. Paul is supposed by some commentators² to allude, 2 Cor. xii. 1, 3. There may not be sufficient grounds for that assumption (see note on chap. xii. 25), but the vast importance of the vision is obvious. It was then that St. Paul learned fully what was to be the destination of his future life. Christ then revealed to him that he was to be apostle of the Gentiles.

'*Get thee quickly.*' St. Paul only remained fifteen days with Peter in Jerusalem. Gal. i. 18.

18. '*And saw him.*' The Lord Jesus.

'*They will not receive,*' &c. This

¹ E. P. V. lx. 3.

Wieseler, p. 164 ff.

and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem : for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19. And I said, Lord, ^athey know that I imprisoned and ^bbeat in every synagogue them that believed on thee :

20. ^cAnd when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and ^dconsenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

21. And he said unto me, Depart : ^efor I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22. And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, ^fAway with

does not mean the Christians, for although they naturally 'were all afraid of him' at first, yet after Barnabas had brought him to the apostles they received him, and he remained as a minister among them, though but for a short time. See chap. ix. 26—28. The Jews, on the contrary, refused to hear his testimony, and 'went about to slay him.'

19. '*Lord, they know.*' St. Paul speaks, if we may so say, almost as though he were remonstrating with the Lord. 'Surely the fact of my having been so zealous in persecuting this way, even consenting to the death of Stephen, will arrest attention, and make them receive my testimony.' He states this, at present, to the Jews, to prove how anxiously he had wished to remain and preach the Gospel to them; and that it was not his will, but the Lord's command, which had directed him to the Gentiles.¹

20. '*Thy martyr.*' Literally 'witness,' but the word was used in the apostolic age in the sense now attached to it, and such was probably St. Paul's meaning. He, above all

men, felt how inseparable were the two meanings.

21. '*Depart: for I will send,*' &c. This promise was fulfilled by the commission given by the Holy Ghost to Paul and Barnabas. See note, xiii. 2.

22. '*Unto this word.*' It appeared to the Jews a blasphemy to assert that the Messiah could intend to receive the Gentiles into His kingdom. Their envious and bigoted hearts could bear any announcement better than that. They had a common saying, 'The Gentiles have no life.'² It is important to observe the feelings which enabled the Jews to resist the clearest evidence and the most urgent calls. Envy of the Gentiles influenced them even more strongly than their prejudiced adherence to the traditions of their fathers.

'*It is not fit,*' &c. They mean, that he should not have been taken out of their hands. They consider that his life was forfeited as being, in their opinion, a traitor to the law. 'Israelites who deny the law and the prophets' (as they, in their blind

¹ Calovius, Meyer.

² Chetubb, ap. Meyer.



¹ ch. 23. 24. such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that ¹he should live.

23. And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

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.

25. And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said ² ch. 16. 37. unto the centurion that stood by, ³Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncon-
demned?

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.

prejudices, believed that St. Paul had done), 'are legally condemned to death.'¹

23. '*Cast off their clothes, and threw dust in the air.*' Not uncommon even now in the East; but it is not improbable that the people did it as an expression of rage, that they were prepared to stone him.² Compare 2 Sam. xvi. 13.

24. '*Be examined by scourging.*' Claudius Lysias, who had not understood the discourse of St. Paul, would naturally conclude that he had given great provocation, and spoken blasphemously; he therefore resolved to examine him further, and to extort confession of his guilt by torture. Scourging was the most common form of such torture. It was, however, in any case illegal to inflict it before the prisoner had been examined; but in the case of pro-

vincials of mean position the forms of law were little regarded by Romans.

25. '*And as they bound,*' &c. Persons who were to be scourged were first stretched out, and bound to a pole, or pillar.³

'*The centurion.*' The execution of punishments was usually superintended by the centurions.⁴

'*Is it lawful.*' See notes on chap. xvi. 37. It was contrary to law; and Lysias would have incurred the highest penalty had he disregarded the appeal.⁵

28. '*With a great sum.*' Lysias does not believe St. Paul's statement at once. He knew that his being a citizen of Tarsus did not make him a Roman citizen, and therefore concluded that he could only have obtained the right by purchase, which appeared unlikely, since St. Paul was

¹ Maimonides in Rotsa, 4.

² Meyer.

³ Scalig. Ep. 2. p. 362.

⁴ Hirt. B. Afric.; see Matt. xxvii. 54.

⁵ Biscoe, p. 324; Grotius on v. 38; and Wieseler, p. 376, n. 4.

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. || Or, tortured him.

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.

evidently not a rich man. We learn from profane writers, that very large sums were paid for the freedom of the city of Rome.¹

'*I was free born.*' See introduction to chap. ix.

29. '*Was afraid.*' Because it was a crime to treat a Roman citizen as a criminal before his cause had been formally investigated.²

30. '*He loosed him.*' It seems singular that Lysias should not have loosed his chains at once, on hearing that he was a Roman citizen; and it has been conjectured that he feared the imminent danger of displeasing the Jews and Felix more than the remoter consequences.³ It was, however, lawful to secure a prisoner by

military custody, either by one or two chains, according to his station, and the nature of the offence with which he might be charged. St. Paul, during this night, was doubtless chained to two soldiers.⁴

'*He commanded,*' &c. He summoned a formal meeting of the Sanhedrim to inquire fully into the affair, since he could not put St. Paul to the torture.

'*Brought Paul down.*' From the tower of Antonia to the council-hall, which was in the upper city near the western cloister of the temple. The meetings were sometimes held at the house of the High Priest, but only on extraordinary occasions.⁵

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1, 2. Genuine courtesy, under all circumstances, is best taught by that charity which is the maturest fruit of the Spirit. Who but an advanced Christian, one who had been thoroughly transformed in the spirit of his mind, would have so immediately recovered his equanimity, and have remembered that they, who but a few minutes previously were beating and attempting to murder him, were nevertheless brethren and fathers, whose errors could

¹ Dio. lx. See Biscoe, p. 328.

² Meyer.

⁴ Wieseler, pp. 376, 377.

⁵ Cicero, Verr. v. 66.

³ Winer ii. 552.

not extinguish in him the feelings of affection and respect? He uses all proper means to soothe their passions, both for his own justification as a Christian minister, and for their sakes, that they may be converted and saved. 'It is an instance of humility silently to bear calumnies which are raised against us, when they relate to ourselves only; but it is a duty of prudence and charity modestly to vindicate ourselves, when the honour of God and the Church is concerned.'—*Bp. Wilson*.

4, 5. Quesnel observes that 'St. Paul makes his past sins subserve the glory of God and the salvation of his brethren, an example that should be followed by every penitent sinner.' The apostle alludes to his former cruelty, which, though forgiven, weighed at all times painfully upon his heart, as at least a clear proof that, if his present conduct was offensive to his countrymen, it had been adopted in opposition to prejudices not less deeply rooted or vehement than those by which they were still influenced. It is true that this argument did not convince them, or mitigate their fury, but it has not been ineffectual. Modern champions of the faith have used it with telling skill in controversies with unbelievers, and many thoughtful inquirers have admitted its cogency, and been induced to accept the doctrines of Christianity by the example and reasoning of St. Paul.

6—16. The contrast between the impressions made upon Saul and his companions, by the manifestation of the Divine glory, exemplifies a phenomenon of no uncommon occurrence in the spiritual world. The by-standers observed the splendour that accompanied the putting forth of the Divine power, and heard a mysterious and voiceless sound; while he to whom the vision was addressed, beheld in the midst of that light the glorified Person of Christ, and heard the utterances of that voice which, though mighty as the sound of many waters, speaks in distinct, articulate accents to the inner ear of man. The sight and sound leave the former unchanged; they are neither subdued nor confused, neither enlightened nor blinded, while the whole being of him, in whom the spiritual work is begun, is thrown into a state of amazement. He is perplexed and confounded,—for a season unable to discern the course which he is to pursue, and dependent upon the aid of others for support and guidance. Trace them farther, and you will observe that, while the natural man reverts at once to the cares and pleasures of the world, the spiritual man is directed to one who, as a channel of heavenly grace, tranquillizes the disturbed conscience, enlightens the confused mind, explains the mysterious intimations, and applies that forgiveness which the Redeemer purchased with His blood, and conveys by the ministrations of the Church to every penitent believer. The form may vary, the means may be different, but the result is substantially the same to all true converts.

17—21. The spiritual growth of St. Paul was rapid. In three years he was become a full grown man in the Lord, admitted to familiar intercourse with Him. In these few solemn words we learn somewhat of the nature of that communion which sustained his spirit under all the trials and vicissitudes of his strangely varied career. The Lord was ever with him, preventing, restraining, and directing him. Relying on His goodness, he does not hesitate to open the secret desires of his heart, and ventures even to plead earnestly for permission to undertake a special work. But assured also of His wisdom and love, he submits without a murmur to the intimation that

he is henceforth to labour in distant and unknown regions. Perfect confidence in the love, and absolute submission to the will of God, are the unfailing characteristics of His true children.

22, 23. Nothing excites the evil passions of man so much as the simple statement of a truth opposed to his prejudices, especially when there is, as there must be generally, an indistinct or suppressed consciousness that the statement is the truth. In fact, every truth finds an echo in man's consciousness: if he listens it becomes a conviction,—if he strives to suppress it, it mingles mysteriously with the vibrations of conscience, and excites an inward tumult, which often finds expression in discordant outbursts of fury. The rage of controversialists is often an indication of an internal struggle against an unwelcome conviction.

24. During how many ages the bleeding heart of humanity remained the sport of a brutal tyranny. How full have the dark places of the earth been of cruel habitations! The whisper of a malignant accuser, the slightest suspicion ruffling the mind of a satellite of earthly power, have brought thousands under the scourge and the rack. The name and spirit of Jesus have saved England from such guilt and misery; but while we gratefully enjoy the exemption, we should remember that the propagation of the Gospel is the only means by which we can make the suffering heathen, whom we have so many means of influencing, partakers of this, as of every real blessing.

24—29. One plea was then sufficient to arrest the arm of power; the name of a Roman citizen alone shielded the weakest claimant from insult and cruelty. But Christ has extended a more perfect immunity, not only to all who bear His glorious name, and are already enrolled among the citizens of the heavenly Zion, but to every being of that race, for whom He hath purchased the full rights and privileges of that city with His own blood. The Christian has learnt to reverence that title in every living man, and if any live in ignorance or forgetfulness of its dignity, esteems it his first duty to awaken their conscience, that they may enter the gates, 'which shall not be shut at all by day,'¹ and partake in the blessedness of those who are 'written in the Lamb's book of life.'

¹ Revelations xxi. 25.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A Chapter full of life and action. The last two days which St. Paul passed at Jerusalem are thronged with events. His trial before the Sanhedrim, where the rage of his persecutors is baffled by their internal schism; the appearance of the Lord Jesus, revealing his future destiny; the conspiracy savagely concerted, and providentially frustrated; the departure by night, and journey to Caesarea, where the apostle is finally delivered into the hands of the Gentiles: these facts are described in a simple, but most graphic narrative, which is no less interesting than instructive to the Christian reader.

* ch. 24. 16.
1 Cor. 4. 4.
2 Cor. 1. 12.
& 4. 2.
2 Tim. 1. 3.
Heb. 13. 18.

1. AND Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, * I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

1. '*Earnestly beholding.*' St. Paul's earnest look on the Sanhedrim indicates excited feelings. It was the first time he had met this council since he had received from it a commission to persecute the Christians, whom he now represented. Many of the persons who directed its proceedings were changed, but he may have known most of them well enough to judge what proportion of those present were Pharisees or Sadducees. The expression of their countenances and their general demeanour would of course be deeply interesting to him on this critical occasion; and whether he was then left to his natural resources, or specially aided by the Spirit, the use which he made of his observation put a stop to any systematic persecution on their part. The council, aptly representing the passions and schisms of the people, broke up in confusion, and the apostle was sent

to the Roman governor and afterwards to Rome.

In this introduction to the defence which St. Paul was about to make when interrupted by Ananias, we have to remark,—1st. That he calls the Sanhedrim men and brethren, not fathers and brethren, as he was wont. This seems to imply that the majority at least were young men.—2. That he claims the character of a consistent man, who has always acted conscientiously, as he would probably have shown by reference to his early life, and even to that bitter persecution of the Christians, had he not been interrupted. St. Paul always distinguishes sins done in ignorance from those done against light, and he had believed that he was serving God. Acts xxii. 3, xxvi. 9. Phil. iii. 6. 1 Tim. i. 13. But it must be remembered, that although he alleges this as a valid excuse when accused by his fellow men, he condemns

2. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him ^bto smite him on the mouth.

3. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou* whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and ^ccommandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

^b 1 Kings 22. 24.
Jer. 20. 2.
John 18. 22.
^c Lev. 19. 35.
Deut. 25. 1, 2.
John 7. 51.

himself unreservedly in reference to God.

2. '*The High Priest Ananias.*'

This Ananias, the son of Nebedæus,¹ had been high priest when Quadratus, the predecessor of Felix, was procurator of Judæa. He was appointed to that office originally by Herod, king of Chalcis, A.D. 48, but in consequence of disturbances between the Jews and the Samaritans, which were traced to his instigation, he was sent, together with Cumanus and others, to Rome, by Quadratus, to appear before Claudius Cæsar, who condemned the others, but pardoned him at the intercession of Herod. On his return he found Jonathan in possession of his office, upon whose murder by the emissaries of Felix, he was probably² restored to his former rank, which he seems to have held until the appointment of Ismael, shortly before the removal of Felix. He may, however, have merely acted as high priest³ during the interval between the death of Jonathan and the appointment of Ismael. Josephus⁴ says that he was an ambitious, avaricious, and cruel man.

'*To smite him.*' Smiting on the mouth with a stick, or iron-heeled slipper, is still a common and very painful punishment in the East. See John xviii. 22. It was, however,

quite illegal before condemnation, excepting in the case of insolent or refractory prisoners. Ananias seems to have been offended by the terms and tone of St. Paul's address.

3. '*Then said Paul.*' On comparing St. Paul's conduct with that of our Saviour on a precisely similar occasion, we must admit that it betokens a temperament somewhat irascible, and restrained with difficulty under extreme provocation. Nothing could be more unjustifiable than the proceeding of Ananias; but the expression used by St. Paul, as addressed to one who, whether he was High Priest or not, represented the magistracy of Judæa, was indecorous,⁵ and very different from the calm and temperate expostulation of Him who alone was without even the tendency to sin.

'*Whited wall.*' An expression similar to whited sepulchre. Walls were often made of clay, or dried mud and whitewashed—an apt emblem of an unsound and vile character, glossed over by a plausible demeanour.

'*God shall smite thee.*' These words may not express an imprecation, for they were prophetic.⁶ Ananias was murdered by the orders of Menahem, the chief of the assassins, in the beginning of the Jewish war.⁷

'*Contrary to the law.*' The law

¹ Josephus xx. 5—20.

² Winer i. p. 57; and Wieseler, p. 77, note.

³ Kuinoel and other commentators.

⁴ Ant. xx. viii.

⁵ This is the opinion of Jerome,

Augustin, and many of the best commentators.

⁶ Augustin de Serm. Dom. in Monte i. 58; and Meyer.

⁷ Joseph, B. J. ii. 17. 9.

4. And they that stood by said, **Revilest thou God's high priest?**

ch. 24. 17. 5. Then said Paul, **'I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, 'Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.'**

* Exod. 22. 28.
Eccles. 10. 20.
2 Pet. 2. 10. Jude 8. 6. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in

enjoined that every accused person should have full and fair opportunity of self-defence. Deut. xix. 15, 18. Prov. xvii. 15.

4. *'Revilest thou God's High Priest?'* This expression is strongly in favour of the supposition that Ananias was restored to his office at that time.

5. *'I wist not.'* St. Paul's answer may be understood literally to mean that he was not aware Ananias held the office,¹ which is possible, but scarcely probable. The expression, which is rendered *'I wist not,'* very often means I did not remember, or consider,² and most of the modern commentators, as I think rightly, hold that St. Paul hereby acknowledges that he had spoken hastily and retracts the expression. The quotation from Exod. xxii. 28. justifies this interpretation. The conduct of St. Paul is quite in accordance with his susceptible, but noble and candid disposition. The supposition that St. Paul spoke ironically,³ implying that he could not suppose that one who acted so unjustly was the High Priest, is scarcely consistent with the quotation from Holy Scripture which follows.⁴

6. *'When Paul perceived.'* Or remarked. St. Paul was well acquainted with the state of parties at Jerusa-

lem. They appear at that time to have been equally balanced. Ananias, and most of the rich and noble, were Sadducees, who from the beginning had been foremost in persecuting the Christians (see James ii. 6); but the Pharisees were more numerous, and had greater influence over the common people. The differences between these parties were contested with so much vehemence, that the Pharisees, with the exception of the most bigoted, seem to have been once more inclined to sympathize with the Christians rather than with their opponents. The character of St. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, was so highly respected by them, that Josephus,⁵ himself a Pharisee, regarded his murder as one of those great crimes that provoked the divine vengeance, and brought on the destruction of Jerusalem.

'I am a Pharisee.' The same writer⁶ who presumes to censure St. Paul for conciliating his countrymen by a public act of legal observance, considers that on this occasion his conduct was disingenuous, and, though he spake the literal truth, that he intended to convey a false impression. Such a judgment savours of a spirit which it is to be hoped will never be prevalent in England. St. Paul not

¹ Chrysostom, Corn. a Lap., Calov., Deyling, Witsius, Michaelis, and many commentators.

² Wetstein, Kuinoel, Olshausen, Neander, Wordsworth, Sanderson, &c.

³ Calvin, Meyer, and others.

⁴ Compare Winer ii. 552. n. 2.

⁵ Ant. xx. 9. 1. See also Hegesippus ap. Eus. H. E. ii. 23.

⁶ Davidson ii 93.

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.

¹ ch. 26. 5.
² Phil. 3. 5.
³ ch. 24. 15,
21. & 26. 6.
& 28. 20.

7. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8. ¹For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

¹ Matt. 22. 28.
Mark 12. 18.
Luke 20. 27.

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 ¹if a spirit, or an angel hath spoken to him, ²let us not fight against God.

¹ ch. 25. 26.
& 26. 31.
² ch. 22. 7,
17, 18.
³ ch. 5. 39.

only spoke the truth, but used the words in the exact sense in which they were received, and would be understood, both by the Pharisees and Sadducees; and it was both his right and duty to break up the unnatural alliance that was formed against him, and, even for the sake of the Pharisees, to induce them to separate themselves from the cruel and unbelieving Sadducees.

'*The hope and resurrection.*' That is, the hope of the resurrection, by a well-known figure of speech.¹ St. Paul was called in question or tried for preaching Christianity, which was based upon the fact of the resurrection, as we observe in all the discourses of the Apostles. This doctrine was the one which constituted the chief distinction between the Sadducees and Pharisees.

7. '*A dissension.*' The original means rather a violent dispute.

'*The multitude.*' The council and the by-standers were divided, separated into opposite parties or factions.

8. '*For the Sadducees say.*' The Sadducees were materialists, and their denial of the resurrection, of angels, and of the separate existence of the soul, included a disbelief in a future state of retribution.¹ The word 'spirit' here does not mean the Spirit of God, but the disembodied spirit of man after death.

9. '*Let us not fight against God.*' These last words are not found in the best MSS. The declaration is more forcible if they are omitted: as though the speakers half consciously indicated the only rational alternative, viz., their own conversion. It is interesting to observe that so many of Paul's earlier friends and acquaintance were disposed to follow the example of Gamaliel,² chap. v. 31-39. They appear even to have approximated more nearly to the recognition of the whole truth.³ We may hope that many of them embraced the cause which they refused to assail. The words 'if a spirit or angel hath spoken to him' evidently refer to St. Paul's declaration, xxii. 17, 18.

¹ Kuinoel and Olshausen.

² Joseph, Ant. xviii. 1, 3.

³ The reading in our text is ad-

mitted to indicate a strong disposition towards Christianity, and I have no doubt of its genuineness. See Kuinoel.

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* into the castle.

^a ch. 18. 9.
& 27. 23, 24.

11. And ^mthe 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.

^a ver. 21.30.

^{||} Or, with an oath of ex-
ecration.

12. And when it was day, ⁿcertain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves ^{||}under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

10. '*The chief captain commanded,*' &c. He appears to have made a signal to the soldiers, who could easily observe the proceedings in the outer court of the temple from the tower of Antonia. Both parties (see note chap. xxii. 31.) seem to have caught hold of St. Paul, the Pharisees wishing to protect him, the Sadducees to prevent him from escaping in the tumult.

11. '*The Lord.*' The Lord Jesus.

'*Stood by*' him. The word in the original is used of Theophanies, that is, manifestations and appearances of the Deity, but not of dreams.¹ The Lord himself appeared to sustain the apostle, who knew only as yet, that bonds and persecutions awaited him at Jerusalem (see Acts xx. 23.), and might apprehend that his earthly course would be terminated before the work, which he contemplated, was accomplished. He now learned that his most ardent desire would be gratified, and the metropolis of the world would hear him bear witness to Jesus.

12. The division among the Jews,

as is usual in such cases, inflamed the passions of the unbelieving party to the highest extremity of fury.

'*Bound themselves.*' That is, devoted themselves to destruction:—the word in the original is '*anathematized.*' The form of this oath was not uncommon among the Jews, who were not only addicted to profane swearing, but frequently bound themselves to commit great crimes by blasphemous imprecations.² They could obtain absolution, or a release from their vow, on easy terms from their Rabbis.³ It had been stated above that Judea was infested by bands of assassins at that time, but there is no reason to believe that these were professional braves.⁴ They were probably zealots who did not hesitate to commit any crime under a religious pretext. Even the philosophic Philo is quoted as justifying the assassination of apostates.

'*Till they had killed Paul.*' The form of the expression in the original implies that they felt certain their purpose would be accomplished.⁵

¹ Olshausen.

² Joseph, Vit. liii.; Selden de Synedr., p. 108.

³ Lightfoot.

⁴ Michaelis.

⁵ Meyer.

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 enquire 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.

13. '*More than forty.*' This number, which was a symbol of completeness, frequently recurs in the sacred writings.

14. '*And they came,*' &c. This communication of their design to the rulers of the Sanhedrim gives a peculiar character of atrocity to the crime—it implied that the applicants would not accept absolution, in case of failure, from any but the High Priest; and that they were assured of the ready concurrence of the Jewish magistracy in a scheme of murder.

15. '*Signify.*' A legal term is used in the original, to imply that a formal investigation should be requested by the council or Sanhedrim.

'*Bring him down*'—i.e. to the house of the High Priest,¹ where the Sanhedrim met on extraordinary occasions. This was probably at some distance from the castle of Antonia. The accurate use of these words presents an undesigned coincidence, and show how familiar the writer was with the place he describes.

'*To-morrow.*' One day's delay

would be required to convene the Sanhedrim.

'*Are ready to kill him.*' They expected that he would be sent down in charge of a small party of soldiers, from whom he might be torn away. The circumstance would afterwards be represented as a mere fortuitous tumult, appeased by the interposition of the Sanhedrim.

16. '*When Paul's sister's son.*' The sister of Paul was perhaps a resident at Jerusalem, or his nephew might have been sent thither, as St. Paul had been, to be instructed by Gamaliel. This young man probably heard of the conspiracy through some private channel. It must have been known to numbers. The worst feature of the crime, as regards the perpetrators, was the cool deliberation with which it was pre-arranged; their indifference to consequences cast a deep shade of suspicion on the majority of the nation.

'*And told Paul.*' The friends of a prisoner had access to him under such circumstances. See Acts xxiv. 23. St. Paul was, moreover, a Roman citizen,

¹ Winer ii. 552.

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 hath 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?

* ver. 12.

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 enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21. But do not thou 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.

23. And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying,

and could scarcely be regarded as lying under an accusation of crime.

17. 'Then Paul called,' &c. St. Paul well knew that the promise of the Lord (v. 11) did not exempt him from personal exertions, the success of which it secured in this instance.

18. This minute and graphic narrative was probably taken from the mouth of the young man himself by St. Luke. It is evidently dictated by an eye-witness.

19. 'Took him by the hand.' The demeanour of the tribune shows the deep interest which he felt in these proceedings. He was in a very embarrassing and responsible position: his superiors were likely, on the one

hand, to be influenced by the representations of the Jewish authorities, who had much power by means of the young Agrippa, and, on the other, to exact a severe account of proceedings which touched the life and liberty of a Roman citizen.

21. 'For a promise.' Or rather the promise, viz. that Paul should be sent to the council.

23. 'Make ready.' This large escort proves the great importance which the tribune attached to the preservation of the life of a Roman citizen, and the opinion which, in common with his countrymen, he entertained of the ferocity of the Jews.

'Soldiers.' The word means foot

Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, 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. ^{p ch. 21. 33. & 24. 7.} 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. ^a And when I would have known the cause

soldiers, the heavy armed legionaries.

'*Spearmen*.' The meaning of the original word is not quite clear. It may perhaps signify guards, chosen soldiers.¹ The old versions, however, translate it spearmen, and late commentators support this interpretation.²

'*The third hour*'—reckoning from sunset, about nine o'clock.

24. '*Beasts*.' Camels, horses, or asses are included in this term: the last were generally in use, but on this occasion it probably means pack-horses for the special use of St. Paul and his friends.

'*Felix*.' Antonius Felix, and his brother Pallas, were freedmen of Antonia, the mother of the Emperor Claudius. Pallas had great influence over Claudius, and procured the appointment of Felix to the procuratorship of Judæa, where, according to Tacitus,³ 'he exercised a regal authority with the character of a slave, showing the greatest cruelty and licentiousness.' Suetonius calls

him the husband of three princesses, two of whom were named Drusilla; one the grand-daughter of Antony and Cleopatra, the other of Herod the Great. By the former marriage Felix was allied to the imperial family.⁴

25. '*After this manner*.' To this purport. The epistle was undoubtedly written in Latin, which language was uniformly used in official correspondence with Roman magistrates.⁵

26. '*Claudius Lysias*.' The latter name indicates his Greek origin; the former was probably assumed when he purchased the rights of citizenship. See xxii. 28.

'*The most excellent*.' This is a formal title given to magistrates.⁶

27. '*Should have been*.' Was in imminent danger of being murdered.

'*An army*.' 'Rather with the troops,' i.e. the guard of soldiers in charge of the temple.

'*Having understood*.' This is evidently an intentional falsehood. The tribune wishes to convey the impres-

¹ Kuinoel, Suidas.

² Meyer. See Constant. Porphyrog. ap. Grot.

³ Hist. iv. 9. 6.

⁴ Tacit. l. c.

⁵ Valer. Max. ii. 2. Howson and Conybeare, i. 3.

⁶ Kuinoel; Wolf on Luke i. 3.

* ch. 22. 30. wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council :

* ch. 18. 15. 29. Whom I perceived to be accused * of questions
& 25. 19. of their law, * but to have nothing laid to his charge
* ch. 26. 31. worthy of death or of bonds.

ver. 20. 30. And † when it was told me how that the Jews
laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and
* ch. 24. 8. † gave commandment to his accusers also to say before
& 25. 6. 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 Cæsarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

34. And when the governor had read *the letter*, he

sion that he had interposed because he received information that St. Paul was a Roman citizen. This would probably satisfy the procurator of his zeal, and prevent an investigation, which would lead to the discovery that he had ordered a Roman citizen to be bound and scourged. It has been observed, even by sceptical critics, that this crafty lie leaves no doubt as to the authenticity of the letter.

29. '*Questions of their law.*' Questions touching the explanation of the Mosnical law, or religion, but not coming under the cognisance of the civil law, either of the Jews or Romans.

31. '*Antipatris,*' so called by Herod the Great in honour of his father Antipater, lay forty-two Roman miles from Jerusalem on the road to Cæsarea. It was previously called Cafar Saba,¹ and is identified with a village now called Kfar Saba, in the province of

Nablus.² The journey from Jerusalem to Cæsarea has been accurately described by an American missionary. It occupies two days by a circuitous route.

32. '*They left the horsemen to go with him.*' They seemed to have acted thus on their own responsibility, since the tribune had given directions that they should go to Cæsarea. It was evident that the escort of the horsemen was sufficient between Antipatris and Cæsarea, while the presence of the foot soldiers might be needed at Jerusalem in the event of a tumult. The character of Claudius Lysias is thoroughly Greek, crafty and versatile, with little either of the stern or commanding qualities of the Roman.

34. '*Of what province.*' The object of this question appears to have been to ascertain whether St. Paul was really a Roman citizen. Felix might communicate with the governor of

¹ Josephus, Ant. xiii. 23.

² Robinson iii. 259. See Conybeare and Howson, ii. p. 275.

asked of what province he was. And when he understood that *he was* of *Cilicia ;

* ch. 21. 39.

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.

* ch. 24. 1,
10. & 25. 16.

* Matt. 27.

Cilicia on the subject if he doubted the truth of St. Paul's statement. Cilicia was not under his jurisdiction.

35. '*I will hear thee.*' The word implies a full, and, of course, a judicial investigation.

'*Herod's judgment hall.*' The original word is *prætorium*, or palace.

This was a splendid building, erected by Herod the Great as a royal residence, and occupied most probably at that time by the Roman procurator. The prison was within its precincts, as was customary in most ancient countries.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. The true Christian has two points to consider, whether he obeys his conscience, and whether his conscience is directed and enlightened by God's law. A double-minded and inconsistent man forfeits the respect of his fellow-creatures, the single-hearted believer is approved by the Lord.

2—5. No feeling is so difficult to restrain and regulate as indignation, when a man is subjected to unjust treatment. We should pray earnestly for grace, that we may be enabled to follow the example of our blessed Saviour ; and should we be too strongly tempted, let us remember our own infirmities, that we may bear with those of others, and resort to God's Word for guidance and help, like His noblehearted apostle St. Paul.

6—9. Associations formed by violent passions, and based upon a compromise of principle, are often scattered by a single word of truth. It is at once the privilege and duty of the advocate of religion to appeal to any great principle which is recognised by either party of his adversaries, and to avail himself of their divisions ; and that not only for the sake of the cause which he defends, but for that of his opponents, whose hearts may be prepared, by the recognition of one truth, for the reception of others by which it is explained and completed.

10. The corruption of the Jews was so great, that the apostle of their Messiah was safer in the hands of the heathen. The abuse of spiritual privileges renders the heart callous, and impenetrable to the common feelings of humanity, and the mere worldling looks with no unreasonable contempt on the factious and hateful passions of those who profess to be the followers of the King of Peace.

11. When the outer world is darkest and most inclement, the Lord makes His bright and peaceful Spirit shine most cheerfully. When the way before the Christian seems strait and overclouded, His hand suddenly removes the veil, and opens to the spiritual eye a vista full of honourable achievements, terminated by a vision of glory.

12—16. The earnestness, energy, and carefully matured projects of the enemies of the Church, in all ages, ought not to terrify its true members, for they have an All-wise and All powerful defender; but they ought to excite their emulation. They should look on such facts as evidences to the existence of noble faculties, distorted from their proper objects, as treasure lavishly wasted by usurping possessors, which would be fully and harmoniously developed, and shine forth with genuine brilliancy, if rightly directed, and employed in the service of their legitimate sovereign.

16—22. 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.' His hand turneth the machinations of His enemies, and makes them instrumental to his children's benefit. He fosters and draws forth the natural affections, and directs them to the aid of his afflicted servants, and inclines the hearts of all men to the course of action that conduces best to the furtherance of His purposes on behalf of His elect.

23. 24. The apostle had been received by his friends with due honour on his entrance into Jerusalem, but, on his departure, he was attended with somewhat of royal state by his enemies. The malice of persecutors hath been, at various times, the direct means of extending the influence, and adding to the glory, of God's people.

26—30. The epistle of a heathen tribune has been preserved in the Book of Life, and is read with deep interest by Christians, because it bears testimony to the innocence of Christ's servant, and to the malice of his enemies. It has been preserved, with its mis-statement of facts, because it is a seal to its authenticity, and proves that the deliverance of St. Paul is to be attributed, not to the humanity of the selfish and crafty Lysias, but to the interposition of Him, who stood by the Apostle in the night.

31—35. The judgment hall of Herod is now a shapeless ruin. The busy throngs that peopled the marts and marble porches of Cesarea have disappeared; the imperial power, which extended over the world, has been shattered into a thousand fragments; but the mind of the reflecting Christian is attracted to that city of the departed by imperishable reminiscences. There the Gospel first wrought its transforming work in the heart of a Gentile soldier; and there the two apostles, by whose instrumentality the Church was developed in the Hebrew and Gentile world, gave utterance to thoughts which have been the daily food and sustenance of millions of believing hearts, preparing them, by faith and hope, for the second advent of the Lord.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The first trial of St. Paul before the representatives of Cæsar, illustrates the arts employed by the accusers of the early Christians, and the line of defence which they were to pursue. The calumnies which were then insinuated, though frustrated for a season, were afterwards the cause of cruel persecutions. The defence of St. Paul is remarkable for calm self-possession, and close, accurate reasoning, equally calculated to convince any of his countrymen whose minds were still open to argument, and to remove any suspicion of political motives which the Roman magistrate might entertain. The result was a virtual acquittal, the deliverance of St. Paul being only prevented by the cupidity of Felix, who thus unconsciously prepared the way for the extension of the Gospel.

This chapter is further remarkable for the passage which exemplifies the uncompromising and heart-searching character of St. Paul's preaching, and the effects produced by it upon the corrupt and licentious Felix.

1. AND after ^afive days ^bAnanias the high priest ^cch. 21. 27. descended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator ^dch. 23. 2, 30, 35. & 25. ^enamed Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

1. '*And after five days.*' These are to be reckoned from St. Paul's arrival at Cæsarea.¹ Felix appears to have sent an order for the accusers to attend his tribunal. The journeys to and fro, and the necessary arrangements, would occupy five days.

'*Descended.*' Cæsarea is geographically in a lower situation than Jerusalem, but travellers were said to go down from the capital in whatever direction they went.

'*With the elders.*' A deputation from the Sanhedrim. The expression implies that many of them went down.

'*Tertullus.*' A common name among the Romans.² The Jews,

being imperfectly acquainted with the forms of Roman judicature, and not speaking the Latin language, which was generally, if not exclusively, used in proceedings before Roman magistrates, were in the habit of employing orators, or professional advocates. Some of these were young men of rank from the capital, who practised gratuitously in the provinces, in order to prepare themselves for the courts at Rome; others were rhetoricians, who earned a livelihood by their profession.³ Tertullus belonged probably to the latter class.⁴

'*Informed.*' Laid a formal accusation, either in writing⁵ or by word

¹ Wieseler, p. 104.

² Cicero pr. Cælio, c. 30; Lamprid. v. Alex. Sev. c. 44. ap. Kuinoel.

³ Meyer.

⁴ Camerar. Grot.

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.

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 mouth; in this case probably the latter, since all parties were present.

2. '*When he was called forth.*' On receiving the charge, the governor ordered St. Paul to be brought from his prison.

'*Began to accuse him.*' To make the usual speech, in which counsel explained and defended the charges which had previously been laid before the magistrate. Accounts of all judicial proceedings were kept with great care, and the reporters (hypomnemotographi) were men of talent and position.¹ St. Luke may have had access to the public record at Casarea, if indeed he needed any such help.

'*Seeing that by thee.*' The opening of this speech is quite in accordance with the tone of advocates at that time, especially in the provincial courts, where the meanest flatteries were employed to win the favour of magistrates who frequently decided with little reference to the law and merits of the case. Felix was well known to be a man of profligate character, an oppressor and extortioner; but Tertullus skilfully fixes upon some points, on which he might be flattered with some plausibility. He had repressed some seditious movements, which originated in his own misconduct, and had lately

put down the assassins whom he had previously instigated and employed. He assumed the title of Pacifier of the Province.²

'*Very worthy deeds.*' Great and successful actions, such as have been referred to in the preceding note.

'*Providence.*' Foresight and prudence. Felix especially prided himself on his skilful management of affairs. The expression, however, was a very daring one, since '*providence*' was attributed only to the gods, or to the emperors, who were regarded as divine.

3. '*We accept it always.*' Recognise it with gratitude and delight.³

'*Always and in all places.*' Tertullus speaks thus to obviate the suspicion that he was merely flattering Felix in his presence.⁴ It was, however, a gross falsehood, since Felix was universally hated by the Jews, who sent an embassy to Rome to accuse him of extortion and cruelty, when he was recalled.

4. '*Notwithstanding.*' Tertullus insinuates that he is only prevented from expiating on the virtues of Felix by a fear of intruding⁵ on his time.

'*Of thy clemency.*' In accordance with thy well known character for courteousness and condescension.

¹ Meyer, and Vales. on Eus. H. E. vii. 2.

² Wetstein; Joseph. Ant. xx. 8; xxi. 38; B. J. ii. 13. 2.

³ Raphael. Obs. Polyb. p. 391.

⁴ Wetstein, Meyer.

⁵ Valckn. Schol. p. 600, ap. Kuinoel.

5. ^aFor we have found this man a pestilent fellow, ^bLuke, 23, 2. and a mover of sedition among all the Jews through- ^cch. 6. 13. & 18. 20. & 17. 6. & 21. 28. out the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Naza- ^d1 Pet. 2. 12, 15. renes:

6. ^aWho also hath gone about to profane the tem- ^bch. 21. 28. ple: whom we took, and would ^chave judged according ^dJohn 18. 31. to our law.

5. '*A pestilent fellow.*' The word in the original is 'pestilence,' used much in the same manner as 'pest,' of turbulent and profligate men, who are not only corrupt themselves, but cause the ruin of others.¹

'*A mover of sedition.*' Tertullus mentions seditious movements, which he attributes to St. Paul, in the first place, because this would constitute a legal offence, which Felix would take cognizance of, and which he was anxious to repress. The expression which he employs is artfully chosen, since he had sufficient reason to believe that Felix would not hesitate to cut off all occasion for riots by punishing an innocent person, although he might be well aware that they originated in the turbulent zeal of the Jews.

'*Throughout the world.*' In addressing a Roman magistrate, an advocate would be understood to mean the Roman Empire by this expression.² Tertullus, however, bears witness to the rapid and wide diffusion of Christianity.

'*A ringleader.*' The expression properly denotes the soldier who is stationed foremost in the line of battle;³ hence, metaphorically, the leader of a party.

'*Sect,*' in the original, is *hæresis*, whence our word *heresy* is derived. It means a party, or sect, to which a person adheres, either in politics, philosophy, or religion.

'*Nazarenes.*' The common designa-

tion of Christians among the Jews, who rejected our Lord partly on the ground that he was of Nazareth. See John i. 46. The contemptuous form of the expression proves how accurately St. Luke has reported the proceedings.

6—8. It is remarkable that these verses are omitted in the oldest MSS. It is however certain that Tertullus must have described the transaction, and the statements are just what might be expected from a sycophant. From this and other similar variations in MSS. it may perhaps be inferred that St. Luke gave out, as we should say, two editions of the Acts.

6. '*To profane the temple.*' This was an offence which a Roman magistrate was bound to recognise, and it was punishable by death.

'*And would have judged.*' From this passage it seems clear that, in such cases at least, the Jewish authorities had the power of inflicting capital punishment. 'No advocate or counsel, be his assurance ever so great, could have asserted such a thing as this to the Roman governor himself, if, at the same time, the Romans had deprived the Jews of the power of inflicting capital punishment.'⁴ It is, however, very questionable whether they possessed such power generally; but the Roman magistrates seem to have interfered with the administration of justice very seldom, except in cases of treason or sedition, when they

¹ Suidas.

² Meyer.

³ Hesychius.

⁴ Biscoe on the Acts, p. 215.

ch. 21. 33. 7. 'But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands,

ch. 23. 30. 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.

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:

always pronounced sentence themselves. Tertullus, moreover, asserts a manifest falsehood when he states that the Jews intended to judge St. Paul legally. They were about to murder him when the tribune rescued him.

7. '*With great violence.*' This does not appear in the minute account given by St. Luke, chap. xxi. 31, 32. It is evident that no violence was employed, since no resistance was made.

8. '*Commanding his accusers.*' This order was probably sent by Felix, and transmitted to the Sanhedrim by Lysias. The accusers, in the strict sense of the word, were those who charged St. Paul with bringing Trophimus into the Temple; but they were not present, see v. 19, and their place was supplied by those who ought to have been impartial judges.

'*Of whom.*' This word, in the original, is in the singular number, and must be referred either to St. Paul or Lysias. If to Paul, Tertullus may have hoped that he would be put to the torture,¹ not knowing that he was a Roman citizen; but it seems more

natural to refer it to Lysias, as Felix appears to have understood it. See v. 22.²

St. Luke gives merely the opening and general summary of the speech which was probably copious and minute in its statements, according to the custom of the orators of that time especially in the East. St. Luke and other friends of St. Paul may have been present at the trial, as it was customary for accused persons, as well as the accusers, to be accompanied, encouraged, and sometimes assisted, by their friends.³

9. '*Assented,*' or sustained these charges of sedition and sacrilege, not, of course, by facts or arguments, but by assertions. They appear to have been examined both as accusers and witnesses.

10. '*Beckoned.*' This was usually done by an inclination of the head.

'*Answered.*' St. Paul says nothing of the character of Felix, but dwells with great propriety upon the fact of his long residence as judge in the country, since he was likely to be well informed concerning the true character

¹ Grotius, Rosenmüller.

² Kuinoel: so Wordsworth.

³ Wieseler, p. 464; Lucian. Peregr. § 13.

11. Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem ^bfor to worship.

12. ¹And 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.

14. But this I confess unto thee, that after ^kthe

of the whole transaction, and to know who were the originators of those seditious movements, which it was the principal object of the Roman governor to suppress. Felix would, however, be gratified by a reference to the duration of his power, which, under such masters, and over such a people, indicated some political and administrative talents.

Felix succeeded Cumanus¹ A. D. 52, in the autumn; he had therefore been procurator six years. He had previously been governor of Galilee, according to Tacitus.²

11. '*Because.*' This word should not be referred to the time during which Felix had been governor. St. Paul states another reason³ why he defends himself 'the more cheerfully.'

'*But twelve days.*' The twelve days are calculated from St. Paul's departure from Cæsarea. He arrived at Jerusalem late on the second day; on the third he met the elders and St. James; on the fourth, which was the day of Pentecost, he was taken in the temple; on the fifth the Sanhedrim met; on the evening of the sixth St. Paul was sent to Cæsarea, where he arrived on the seventh. Five days afterwards Ananias leaves Jerusalem, and arrives on the thirteenth day.⁴ This computation is adopted by Mr.

Lewin (*Fasti Sacri*), a very high authority, and it appears preferable to any other which has been proposed.

'*To worship.*' This accounted for his presence at Jerusalem, and afforded a fair presumption that the charge of sacrilege was unfounded. One who undertook a long journey to worship in the temple was not likely to profane it.

12. '*Disputing.*' It was not illegal to discuss religious questions in the temple, but St. Paul had prudently abstained from giving any colourable pretext for the violence of the Jews. This is a complete answer to the accusation, v. 5. St. Paul had not been the cause of the tumult in the temple, nor had he been in any way concerned in any other disturbance.

14. '*But this I confess.*' St. Paul admits that he was an adherent of what Tertullus called the sect or heresy of the Nazarenes, but shows that this did not separate him from the Hebrew national faith.⁵ He served the same God, received the same scriptures, and observed the same law.

'*The God of my Fathers.*' This expression is admirably chosen. It suggests an argument the force of which would be felt both by Jews and Romans who recognised the claims of an ancestral religion.

¹ Winer: Wieseler, p. 67.

² Wieseler, p. 104.

³ Ann. xii. 54.

⁴ Chrysostom, p. 373.

⁵ Beza.

^b ver. 17.
ch. 21. 26.
¹ ch. 25. 8.
& 28. 17.

^k See Amos.
8. 14.
ch. 9. 2.

¹² Tim. 1. 3. way which they call heresy, so worship I the ¹ God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in

^m ch. 26. 22. ^m the law and in the prophets :

^m ch. 26. 23. ^m ch. 23. 6. ^m ch. 26. 6, 7, & 28. 29. ^m Dan. 12. 2. ^m John 5. 28, 29. 15. And ^m have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, ^o that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

^m ch. 23. 1. 16. And ^p herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

^m ch. 11. 29, 30. & 20. 16. ^m Rom. 15. 25. ^m 2 Cor. 8. 4. ^m Gal. 2. 10. ^m ch. 21. 26, 27. & 26. 21. 17. Now after many years ^a I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

18. ^r Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me

15. *'Which they themselves also allow.'* Many of those present were therefore Pharisees. These sectaries were perpetually shifting their ground, sometimes driven by their enmity to the Sadducees into an appearance of friendship with the Christians, but speedily relapsing into their natural bigotry. Each concussion probably caused a fresh separation, when the gentler and nobler spirits were attracted to the Church, while the harsh and narrowminded were inflamed by their secession into fiercer hatred.

'And unjust.' Josephus¹ says, that the Pharisees believed that the just only would be raised; but that appears to have been a modification of their tenets, originating, probably, in their opposition to Christianity. The Fathers used this passage with great force against those heretics who denied the resurrection of the body, and held that all texts which speak of it were to be referred to the spiritual resurrection of the converted soul, a doctrine which is entirely overthrown by the resurrection of the unjust.²

16. *'Herein.'* On this account,³ or, in accordance with this principle.

'A conscience void of offence.' That is, sincere, not wilfully or consciously violating the laws of God or man. This does not, of course, exclude sins of ignorance or infirmity.

17. *'I came to bring.'* Having shown the futility of the third charge. St. Paul adduces some additional arguments to establish his innocence as to the two more serious accusations in a legal point of view. He shows that his object in visiting Jerusalem was both religious and charitable. He brought alms to the people and offerings to the temple. Although alms were collected specially for those who were of the 'household of faith,' the Christians never restricted their charity to those of their own communion. St. Paul, doubtless, distributed alms, as his statement implies, to the poor of his nation generally. The fact, also, that many (i.e. four) years had elapsed since he visited Jerusalem, would serve to prove that he was not likely to have formed a party, or to have excited a tumult in the city.

18. *'Whereupon certain,'* &c. The fact that Jews from Asia found him and caused the disturbance is men-

¹ Ant. xviii. 2; and B. J. ii. 7. See also Knapp. ap. Kuinoel.

² Didymus, Ammonius ap. Cramer, p. 378.

³ Raphellius, Meyer.

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.' ch. 23. 30. & 25. 16.

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.' ch. 23. 6. & 28. 20.

22. And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that way*, he deferred them,

tioned to prove that he was not arrested in consequence of any local occurrence. He was engaged in the rites of purification, according to his vow,—a strong argument that he was no profaner of the temple; not surrounded by a crowd, and therefore no mover of sedition.

19. '*Who ought to have been.*' These persons had not been brought as witnesses, since the Sanhedrists were aware that upon examination it would have been ascertained that the disturbance was caused by themselves, and that it originated in transactions in no way connected with the affairs of Palestine, or with the Roman law.

20. '*If they have found any evil doing in me,*' &c. No charge had been formally made, much less proved, at the tumultuary proceeding before the Sanhedrim. The argument is very powerfully stated; the eye-witnesses are absent, and no record of a previous trial can be produced. The evidence is therefore mere hearsay, and unsupported by any ascertainable fact, excepting one (v. 21), to which the Roman governor was quite indifferent, and which could not be regarded as contrary to the Jewish law or faith;

viz. that St. Paul had preached the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

22. '*Having more perfect knowledge.*' Or, being very well informed of the position of the Christians in reference to the Jews. There was a Christian Church at Cæsarea, to which at least one centurion, and probably many of the Roman soldiers, belonged; and the wife of Felix was a Jewess, so that, although Felix may have been ignorant of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, he must have had too perfect a knowledge of its bearings upon civil and political affairs to be deceived by the allegations of the Jews.

'*This way.*' Christianity. See note third, chap. ix. 2.

'*He deferred them.*' This was a legal term equivalent to a declaration that the Jews had failed in sustaining their accusation.¹

'*I will know the uttermost.*' Or, I will give a final decision on the matter after seeing Lysias, to whom you have referred me. See v. 3. St. Luke does not state whether Lysias came, or what means Felix took to ascertain his opinion, which was, doubtless, favourable to St. Paul.

¹ Kypke, Meyer.

* ver. 7. 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 come unto him.

* ch. 27. 3.
& 28. 16.

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.

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.

23. 'He commanded a centurion to keep Paul.' St. Paul, therefore, remained in what was termed military custody as a Roman citizen, that is, bound by a long and light chain attached to his left arm, the other end of which was fastened to a soldier. It depended on the magistrate whether an accused person should be kept in prison, or committed to a soldier, or sureties, or admitted, as we should say, to bail. In the case of persons of inferior rank, the two former were the only probable alternatives. St. Paul doubtless remained within the precincts of the prison during the two years of his captivity at Caesarea.¹ Felix may have had several distinct motives for this decision. He believed Paul to be innocent, and gave him some relaxation, i.e. probably lighter chains, and greater freedom of movement.² He feared the Jews, and therefore did not release him; and he allowed his friends to wait on him, probably hoping that he might receive supplies of money from them.

24. 'Drusilla' was the daughter of Herod Agrippa (Acts xii.): she was

married to Azizus, king of Emesa, but an emissary of Felix and a pretender to magic arts, named Simon, a Jew of Cyprus, induced her to forsake her husband and to live with Felix. It is supposed that she had arrived shortly before this time; a fact which would account for the increased interest of Felix in the question, his terror at St. Paul's preaching, and his desire to please the Jews, at the sacrifice of justice, by keeping Paul in prison. Drusilla, and her son by Felix, named Agrippa, perished in an eruption of Vesuvius.³

'Concerning the faith in Christ.' This had not been a question at issue in the previous trial. Drusilla, a wicked woman, and the daughter of a persecutor, would be likely to use her influence against St. Paul.

25. 'And as he reasoned,' &c. It is important to observe, that St. Paul pressed these great practical applications of Christian doctrines at a time when they were certain to be highly offensive to one who had power over his life and liberty.

'Righteousness' here means upright-

¹ Wieseler, p. 380.

² Compare Joseph. Ant. xviii. 6, 10.

³ Winer; Joseph. Ant. xx. 7, 1, 2; Tacit. Hist. v. 9.

26. He hoped also that 'money should have been ⁷ Exod. 23. given him of Paul, that he might loose him: where-⁸ fore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

27. But after two years Porcius Festus came into ⁹ Exod. 23.2. Felix' room: and Felix, 'willing to shew the Jews a ^{ch. 12. 3. & 25. 9, 14.} pleasure, left Paul bound.

ness and justice in the discharge of relative duties.

'*Temperance*' does not refer to moderation in food, but to chastity and self-restraint. Felix was a licentious man.

'*Felix trembled.*' Literally, was exceedingly terrified. This describes a powerful but transient impression. Tacitus says of this bad man, he held that 'he could commit every crime with impunity,' a remarkable coincidence pointed out by Dean Alford.

26. '*He hoped also that money should have been given him.*' Felix knew that St. Paul was entrusted with considerable sums for distribution at Jerusalem, and judging by his own feelings, he had no doubt that the apostle would apply them to obtain his own deliverance from prison. The Roman law¹ strictly prohibited magistrates from receiving money of prisoners; but such governors as Felix did not scruple to break the law.

27. '*After two years.*' This is a very important fact in determining the

chronology of the Acts. See Introduction. It appears certain that Felix left Palestine in the summer of A.D. 60.²

'*Willing to shew the Jews a pleasure.*' He was aware that the Jews were much offended by his avarice and cruelty, but he may have depended upon the influence of Drusilla, and the popularity which he hoped to acquire by keeping St. Paul in prison, to mitigate their enmity. His accusers, however, followed him, and he was only saved from condemnation by the interest of his brother Pallas. See above.

It seems most probable that St. Luke wrote his Gospel³ under St. Paul's direction, during the two years, which otherwise would have been without fruit to the Church; nor is it improbable that part of this book was composed at the same time. The permission to wait upon St. Paul though literally extending only to his relations, probably included all his personal friends and attendants.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. The Jews felt the need of an advocate before a Roman magistrate, but were quite unconscious of their far greater need of an advocate and mediator before God. They who had rejected the intercession of Messiah chose as their representative one who truly expressed their principles and passions, a sycophant and calumniator.

¹ The Julian law. See Kuinoel and Kypke.

² Wieseler, p. 88: and Winer i. 368, 372.

³ Burton.

2—4. Flattering words are often, as it were, the glittering sheath of a assassin's dagger. Under covert of admiring the energy and wisdom of a profigate judge, the orator insinuates calumnies against an apostle. Persons in authority should be especially watchful over the movements of their hearts when accusations of others are blended with their own praises, and when a contrast is skilfully suggested between themselves and the person whom an accuser is anxious to undermine: an ear too open to praise is often the inlet to the 'deadly poison' of a tongue that is 'set on fire of hell.'¹

6, 7. Iniquity is Protean in its disguises, but above all forms seeks to assume the mien of justice. A hindrance to the commission of crime is here represented as an unwarrantable interference with the course of law. In the case of others we easily perceive the absurdity of such conduct, but are apt to forget, that whenever our passions are roused, and our lower nature gets the upper hand, though but for a season, we are in danger of becoming an example of the very sin which we condemn.

8. With reference to the whole speech of Tertullus, it should be observed, that no professional obligation can excuse or palliate the guilt of calumny. The name of this hireling advocate has been preserved to lasting infamy, for personating and giving expression to the evil passions of the Jews.

9. The allegations of persons affected by the same prejudices and agitated by the same passions are not cumulative evidence; they should always be carefully scrutinized, and most especially when they affect the interests and character of an accused person.

10, 11. Innocence is always anxious to have a clear-sighted and well-informed judge, whereas the guilty have no hope but in his ignorance and incapacity. May we never forget that all things are open to Him with whom we have to do, and be careful to keep that conscience untarnished, in which, as in a mirror, his future judgment is reflected for our warning and admonition.

12—14. The defence of St. Paul is a severe reproof to fanatics, who believe that duty to God requires them to dispute with every man, and to 'raise up the people' in every place. The apostle knew that the cause of truth is best advanced by clear, calm statements, without clamour or railing, and that the 'wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.'

14, 15. O that Christians would constantly remember how many great solemn truths all faithful spirits hold in common! How many heresies and schisms would have been checked in the beginning, had the originators employed their energies in defending and promulgating the vital principles which they professed to receive, but neither realized nor lived upon.

17—20. Nothing confounds an artful calumniator so much as simplicity and straightforwardness. Arguments, however solid and convincing, he is prepared for, and accustomed to meet with sophisms, but he is generally baffled and effectually refuted by a plain statement of facts. Truth has a mysterious power of persuasion; and he who is habitually and scrupulously accurate in his words exercises a power over men's hearts and minds which no talents or skill can command.

22, 23. There is an appearance of equity in the conduct of Felix. His character appears bright in contrast with the accusers of the apostle. But we should remember, that justice is the first duty of a magistrate, for which no show of courtesy or kindness can compensate. The postponement of judgment

¹ James iii. 6—10.

is often tantamount to the infliction of an injury, and no partial liberty can atone for the withholding of the first right of an innocent man.

24—27. Truth is the real touchstone of the heart; it elicited at once the genuine character of Felix. He may have sent for the apostle to amuse an idle hour by listening to mysterious legends, or curious speculations, and it would have been easy to impose on the credulity, and win the favour of a servile tyrant. But the apostle preached righteousness to the oppressor,—chastity to the adulterer—judgment to come to the violator of human and contemner of divine law. Felix heard and trembled. Trembling might be a symptom of an inward disease; it might be a precursor of repentance—but he trembled, and dismissed the preacher. Few will recognise in themselves the more hateful features of this bad man; but unwillingness to listen to the word of truth, and to bare the heart to the probing hand of the Physician of Souls, is a fatal sign. It will be found hereafter prominent among the offences of every unforgiven sinner.

26, 27. Like the unjust steward, Felix was wise in his generation, and sought to make himself friends of the unrighteous mammon; but, like all selfish and wicked men, he rejected the only safeguard which would have preserved him in peace here, and in eternity.

CHAPTER XXV.

After an interval of two years, passed in the prison of Cæsarea, the apostle is again called forth to meet his persecutors, and again wins new witnesses to his perfect innocence. The judgment of Felix is confirmed by the less corrupt Festus. Another prince of the Herodian family is called in to inquire into the character of a Christian apostle, and the chapter terminates with a graphic description of the preparations for the last trial of St. Paul which has been recorded by the inspired historian.

A.D. 60.

1. Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem.

* ch. 24. 1.
ver. 16.

2. *Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

3. And desired favour against him, that he would

1. '*Now when Festus was come.*' Festus arrived in the autumn, soon after the departure of Felix. He was an active and able governor, and bore a good character for equity and mildness. He died A.D. 62, in less than two years after his arrival.

'*Into the province.*' Strictly speaking, Judæa was a district dependent on the province of Syria; but it was commonly styled a province: the governor exercised an almost independent authority.¹

'*He ascended.*' He may have gone there for the feast of tabernacles; but it is probable that the Roman procurators, on arriving at their province, proceeded as soon as possible to the capital.

2. '*The high priest,*' or, as in the best MSS., the high priests. Ishmael, son of Fabi, was then high priest.² Ananias retained considerable in-

fluence and much of his authority until his death; but there is no reason to suppose that he is alluded to in this passage.³

'*The chief of the Jews.*' This seems to include the most distinguished persons, as well as the members of the Sanhedrim.

'*Informed him.*' Lodged a formal accusation against the apostle.

3. '*And desired favour.*' They first asked that he should be put to death without further trial (see v. 15); and, failing in that, requested that he should be sent to Jerusalem. Festus does not appear to have been aware of their plot to murder Paul, of which St. Luke was probably informed through St. Paul's nephew.

'*Laying wait,*' or preparing an ambush. The country was at that time full of assassins, who were hired by men of high rank to murder their adver-

¹ Krebs, Meyer.

² Joseph. Ant. xx. 8, 8.

³ Meyer.

send for him to Jerusalem, ^blaying wait in the way to ^ckill him. ^b ch. 23. 12, 15.

4. But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*.

5. Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able to go down with *me*, and accuse this man, ^eif there be any wickedness in him. ^e ch. 18. 14. ver. 18.

6. And when he had tarried among them ^{||}more ^{||}Or, as some copies read, *no more than* than ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought. ^{||} Or, as some copies read, *no more than eight or ten days*.

7. And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, ^dand laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. ^d Mark 15. 3. Luke 23. 2, 10. ch. 24. 5, 13. ^e ch. 6. 13. & 24. 12. & 28. 17.

8. While he answered for himself, ^eNeither against

saries, but it is evident that the persons by whom the accusers of Paul intended to slay him were the same who are mentioned, chap. xxiii. 12.

4. '*That Paul should be kept*,' &c. St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, could not be brought before the Sanhedrim without his own consent; but Festus appears to have refused to send for him, on the ground that it would not be convenient to delay his own departure in order to superintend the trial. The tone of his answer is decided, and rather haughty.¹

5. '*Able*.' The word in the original probably means leading men, officially empowered or authorised to accuse St. Paul in the name of the people.²

6. '*And when he had tarried*.' He probably remained during the week of the feast of tabernacles. The true reading is given in the margin, '*no more than eight or ten days*.'³

'*And the next day*.' This shows that Festus attached great importance

to the whole proceeding. On the one hand, he was responsible for the impartial treatment of a Roman citizen; on the other, he may well have feared to give occasion to great disturbances had he seemed to countenance any profanation of the Hebrew national sanctuary. Chrysostom considers that he was likely to have been influenced to the prejudice of St. Paul during his short stay at Jerusalem.

7. '*And laid many*,' &c. From St. Paul's answer (v. 8), it is clear that the charges were the same as had previously been urged before Felix.

8. '*Neither against the law*,' &c. Each of these charges was recognised by the Roman law, and involved capital punishment. The first accusation was not that St. Paul did not observe the law, but that he prevented others from living in peaceable observance of it. The second touched the pretended profanation of the temple. The third was for sedition, or, as we should say,

¹ Meyer.

² Meyer.

³ Kuinoel.

any thing 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'¹ ch. 26. 32.
& 28. 19. unto Cæsar.

12. Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.

13. And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cæsarea to salute Festus.

would never let him depart alive from Jerusalem. This was moreover a direct mode of doing what he knew to be the will of his Lord¹ (see xxiii. 11); and I doubt not that he made the appeal under the special influence of the Spirit, as Augustin says, 'not so much caring for himself as for the Church.' The wish which he had expressed,² to visit the Roman Church, and to preach the Gospel there, was thus fulfilled, though in a manner contrary to his expectations.

12. '*When he had conferred.*' The Roman magistrates were attended in court by a council, the members of which were called counsellors, assessors, or friends of the governor.³ These persons had no authority, but gave advice when called upon.

13. '*King Agrippa.*' This Agrippa was the son of that Agrippa whose death is recorded Acts xii. He was seventeen years of age at the time of his father's death, and was considered too young to be entrusted with the sovereignty of so great a kingdom. He was at that time a resident in Rome, where he was educated in the imperial palace. Claudius gave him the principality of Chalcis, and four years later the tetrarchies formerly held by Philip and Lysanias, with

the title of king, which he bore at this time. He had also the superintendence of the temple, and the power of appointing and displacing the high priest,—a power which he exercised with little discretion. At this time he was twenty-three years old. He lived through the Jewish war, during which he sided with the Romans, and died, A.D. 100, at the age of seventy, at the court of Trajan. He appears to have been an ostentatious and sensual prince, and to have been suspected⁴, not without cause, of a criminal fondness for his sister.

'*Bernice,*' or Berenice, sister of Agrippa and Drusilla, widow of her uncle Herod, king of Chalcis, was afterwards married to Polemot, king of Pontus and Cilicia. She was, at a later period, notorious for her connection with Vespasian and Titus.⁵

'*To salute Festus.*' It was customary for all the princes dependent upon the Romans to pay a visit of respect to governors on their arrival in their province. Agrippa would be anxious to do this without loss of time, on account of his sister Drusilla's connection with Felix, which the governor could not but disapprove.

¹ Chrysostom.

² Romans i. 10, 11.

³ Krinoel. See also Wieseler, p. 385; Perizon. de Prætorio.

⁴ Joseph, Ant. xx. 7, 3; Juv. Sat. vi. 156; Sueton. V. Tit. 7, 8; Tacitus, Hist. ii. 81.

⁵ Suet. Tit. 7; Winer.

14. And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying,

^b ch. 24. 27. ^k There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix :

ⁱ ver. 2, 3. 15. ^l About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

^m ver. 4, 5. 16. ^m 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 licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

ⁿ ver. 6. 17. Therefore, when they were come hither, ⁿ 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 :

^o ch. 18. 15. & 23. 29. 19. ^o But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

14. '*Declared Paul's cause.*' Festus referred the cause to Herod Agrippa, as superintendent of the temple, which Paul was accused of profaning.

15. '*Desiring to have judgment.*' The meaning of the original is rather 'requesting me to condemn him,' as is apparent from the answer which Festus made to their application, according to his statement in the next verse.

16. '*Have his accusers face to face.*' This equitable principle was fully recognised by the Roman law,¹ from which the jurisprudence of modern Europe is mainly derived. It was, however, often violated by the criminal weakness of such governors as Pontius Pilate.

17. '*Without any delay.*' Festus

may perhaps have alluded to the disgraceful delay which Felix had made for the sake of extorting money.

18. '*Of such things as I supposed.*' Festus had probably expected to hear that Paul was accused of leading some of the numerous bands of robbers and rebels by which the province was infested, or, at any rate, of some great political crime.

19. '*Superstition.*' See Acts xvii. 22. The word could not have been used by Festus in a sense which would have been offensive to Agrippa. It means simply, 'peculiar religious system,' which, of course, did not concern him as a Roman magistrate.

'*Whom Paul affirmed.*' Festus could not perceive that the life or death of Jesus Christ had any bear-

¹ Grotius, Philo. in Flacc. p. 759.

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. ¶ Or, I was doubtful how to inquire hereby.

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 Cæsar. ¶ Or, judgment.

22. Then ^PAgrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To-morrow, said he, thou shalt ^{¶ See ch. 9. 15.} hear him.

23. 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.

24. And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men

ing upon political matters; nor was it until the magistrates felt the national idolatry to be endangered by the faith in Jesus, that they systematically persecuted Christians.

20. '*Doubted.*' Was embarrassed, could not ascertain the grounds on which a decision should be formed. Festus dissembles the real motive for making this proposition, being ashamed to confess how much he was influenced by partiality towards the Jews. See v. 9.

21. '*Augustus.*' This title was first conferred by the senate upon Octavianus, the famous Augustus, and was borne together with that of Cæsar by all succeeding emperors.

22. '*I would also hear,*' or, I was also desirous, had previously a wish to hear him. Agrippa's curiosity was natural and characteristic, but there is in it no indication of a love of truth. The expression which he used is contemptuous, 'the man, or fellow.'

23. '*With great pomp.*' With a numerous and brilliant escort of sol-

diers and courtiers, and in such state as might be expected in a young and ostentatious prince. The circumstances of this trial show how much importance was attached by men of all parties and opinions to the rapidly increasing sect of Christians, and to the personal influence of St. Paul. Chrysostom remarks very forcibly on the fact, that the proceedings of the Jewish Sanhedrim are condemned by every person concerned in these transactions; the tribune, the two procurators, and the king Agrippa, the superintendent of the temple, each of whom was likely to look with prejudice upon a person in the circumstances of St. Paul, and professing such opinions.

'*With the chief captains.*' According to Josephus ¹ five cohorts, each commanded, of course, by a tribune, were stationed at Cæsarea.

24. '*All the multitude.*' From these words it is evident that the two parties at Jerusalem had combined in urging the death of Saint

¹ B. J. iii. 4. 2.

which are here present with us, ye see this man, about
ver. 2, 3, 7. whom 'all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with
ch. 22. 22. me, both at Jerusalem, and *also* here, 'crying that he
ought 'not to live any longer.

ch. 23. 9,
29. & 26. 31.
ver. 11, 12. 25. But when I found that 'he had committed
nothing worthy of death, 'and that he himself hath
appealed to 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 specially 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.

Paul, and that they had once more
been successful in exciting the com-
mon people, who appear to the last
to have fluctuated between admira-
tion and hatred of the Christians.

'*And also here.*' From the ac-
counts given by Josephus, it is evi-
dent that the Jewish population of
Cæsarea were at least as turbulent
and bigoted as their countrymen at
Jerusalem.

25. '*Nothing worthy of death.*'
Compare this attestation of Festus
with that of Pontius Pilate. Our
Saviour and St. Paul were both ac-
cused of sedition and profanation of
the temple, charges which the Ro-
man governors were directed to in-
vestigate with great care, but the
evidence entirely failed in both cases.

26. '*No certain thing.*' No clear
and tangible case; nothing which
came distinctly under the cognizance
of a Roman magistrate. The ma-
gistrates were bound, in cases of

appeal, to send a full account of all
the previous proceedings to the em-
peror, and especially a clear state-
ment of the accusation.¹

'*Unto my Lord.*' Augustus and
Tiberius² had refused to be called
'Lord,' which implied despotic power,
such as a master had over a slave.
The following emperors, however,
adopted or permitted it, and it be-
came their formal designation.³

'*Specially before thee.*' Agrippa
might be reasonably expected to un-
derstand the charges, in which Festus
could discern no ground for
criminal proceedings. Festus must
have felt much embarrassed, since
he was likely to incur the displeasure
of Nero if he sent a prisoner without
clear and precise information as to
the origin and bearings of the accu-
sations brought against him.

27. '*To signify the crimes.*' To
state distinctly the nature of the
accusations.

¹ Geib. ap. Wieseler, p. 388.

² Suet. V. August. 53.; and V. Tib.
27.

³ Kuin.; Rosenn.; Wolf. Cur.
Phil., p. 1315.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—5. The restless enmity of the Jews predominated over every other feeling. They were rid of a cruel, avaricious, and corrupt governor, but rejoiced in his departure chiefly because it seemed to open a way into the prison of Paul. They had reason to hope that their new governor would willingly do much to please them; but they asked only one favour, the death of their enemy, being quite indifferent whether it was accomplished under the semblance of law, or by open violence. How much darker, how much more satanic, are the crimes of those who sin against light, than their's who are mere children of the world, and have been nurtured in darkness! The rough Roman soldier, the proud unscrupulous Roman governor—nay, the profligate and cowardly Felix—condemn by their words and acts these children of Abraham. We should pray earnestly that the truth may penetrate our hearts and control our passions, or the very means of salvation may serve but to increase our guilt.

6—9. The less the Jews were able to prove their charges, the more violent were they in maintaining them. Bitter and fierce language generally indicates the consciousness of a weak cause. When Christians are exposed to reproach and calumny, they should endeavour to imitate the calm self-possession of the apostle, who, like his master, being reviled, reviled not again.

9—12. Christian meekness and resignation do not imply or require the abandonment of our just rights, but they do require that we should be calm, temperate, and cautious in asserting them, and not give way to useless outbursts of passion when they are wrongfully withheld. St. Paul was willing to submit to death, if legally condemned, though unconscious of crime. As the law of fallible man may be, and in many countries is, more or less opposed to the law of God, the true Christian must be prepared to bear with patience the temporal consequences of violating the former, if he is compelled to do so by the plain commandment of the latter.

13—21. The world, in its external relation to Christianity, is well represented in the conference between the Roman magistrate and the Jewish prince. They feel a mixture of perplexity and curiosity—the principles by which the Christian is actuated are strange and unintelligible to them, and they are at a loss to account for the bitterness of false zeal in his enemies; but this embarrassment is soon changed into active hostility when the truth comes into collision with the idols that the world worships. Pilate, Felix, and Festus might hesitate, but not only the monster Nero, even the just Trajan and the clement Antonines, soon employed all the arts and cruelties of persecution to extirpate the religion of Christ.

22. Curiosity to hear a famous preacher of the truth is no indication of spirituality. Agrippa listened with the same sort of interest that was displayed by other members of his family, who were all remarkable for their active intellect, susceptible temperament, and recklessness of principle. Like Antipas, he listened to the truth, but, like him, soon cast off impressions which would have troubled him in habits of self-indulgence. Agrippa lived to the age of 70, in the midst of miraculous evidences; the lives, doctrines, and sufferings of the Christians

were well known to him—the prophecies and types of Judaism were familiar to him with their application to the Messiah—he was above the prejudices of the common Pharisees, and was far from sympathising with the factious Sadducees—his intellect was vigorous, and his understanding clear; but he was a sensualist. No heart is so dead to the things of Christ as that of a libertine. ‘It is a dreadful but just judgment, that the mind should fall into error when the heart has resigned itself to sin.’—BISHOP WILSON.

Festus exemplifies a character which, though far superior in moral and social worth to that of Agrippa, is but too often equally impervious to spiritual influences: a magistrate absorbed in his external duties, looking upon religious questions solely with reference to their bearings upon political interests—indifferent as to the truth or falsehood of tenets, which may be professed by those whom he regards as enthusiasts—prone to regard all religions as useful so far as they subserve the order and stability of social institutions,—and to suspect all parties in religion of bigoted and sectarian zeal. The only safeguards against such tendencies are, a belief that God has revealed truth, and that it is our duty to ascertain what that truth is; and a feeling that nothing but Divine truth can raise any man out of the darkness and condemnation of sin.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was not enough that the innocence of St. Paul should be admitted by the Roman magistracy. His own countrymen, represented by a prince, who was equally the favourite of the people and of the priesthood, pronounce his acquittal. In spite of prejudice and passion, the descendant of Herod, the ruler of the temple, is not only convinced of the integrity of the apostle, but half won by the truth, which his guilty passions alone seem to have prevented him from embracing. The discourse of St. Paul on this occasion develops all the resources of his noble spirit. He convinces, astonishes, wins, and subdues his hearers.

1. THEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself :

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 :

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.

1. '*Agrippa said unto Paul.*' Agrippa conducts the examination at the request of Festus.

'*Stretched forth the hand.*' This was the customary gesture of ancient orators,¹ who took great pains to acquire a graceful and impressive mode of delivery. St. Paul neglected no legitimate means of commanding attention.

2. '*I think myself happy.*' St. Paul knew that Agrippa was better able to understand his position and arguments than the Roman governor, and less prejudiced against him than the members of the Sanhedrim. Agrippa was so young a man, that it might be hoped that his heart, though

tainted, was not yet thoroughly hardened by vice.

3. '*Expert.*' Thoroughly well informed.

'*Customs.*' Religious institutions and rites.

'*Questions.*' Controversies on doctrinal matters. Agrippa had been educated at Rome, but he had now passed six years in Palestine, during all which time he had been superintendent of the temple, with the power of appointing and displacing the high priest. He was also carefully instructed in the Jewish religion by the directions of his father, and had a high reputation for knowledge of the law and zeal for the customs of Judaism.

¹ Elsner. See Apul. Metam. iii. 54.

- * ch. 22. 3. & 23. 6. & 24. 15, 21. Phil. 3. 5. b ch. 23. 6. * Gen. 3. 15. & 22. 18. & 28. 4. & 49. 10. Deut. 18. 15. 2 Sam. 7. 12. Ps. 132. 11. Isa. 4. 2. & 7. 14. & 9. 6. & 40. 10. Jer. 23. 5. & 33. 14, 15, 16. Ezek. 34. 23. & 37. 24. Dan. 9. 24. Mic. 7. 20. ch. 18. 32. Rom. 15. 8. Tit. 2. 13. d James 1. 1. † Gr. *Night and day*. * Luke 2. 37. 1 Thess. 3. 10. 1 Tim. 5. 5. † Phil. 5. 11.
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 ^athe most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.
6. ^bAnd now I stand and am judged for the hope of ^cthe promise made of God unto our fathers:
7. Unto which *promise* ^dour twelve tribes, instantly serving God † ^eday and night, ^fhope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

4. '*At the first.*' That is, from the time of St. Paul's coming to Jerusalem, which was probably at the age of eleven or twelve. See introduction to chap. ix.

'*Know all the Jews.*' It is evident from the whole tenor of this discourse that St. Paul had attracted general attention at Jerusalem from a very early period. His zeal, talents, and powerful character must have been well known.

5. '*Sect of our religion.*' The word translated 'religion' only occurs in one other passage of the New Testament (James i. 27), and means, mode of religious service, with reference to the external development, rather than the inward principle. 'Sect' is not used in the sense of a separate community, but of a peculiar mode of living and thinking. Bitterly as the Pharisees and Sadducees were opposed they did not form separate churches—both attended the temple service.

6. '*The hope of the promise.*' This refers primarily, not to the resurrection, but to the coming of Messiah.² St. Paul appeals, in the 8th verse, to the resurrection of Jesus as the proof that He was that Messiah whom the

Jews expected. St. Paul would not have said that the twelve tribes were serving God in hope of the resurrection; for though true of the greater portion, it was not the case with the Sadducees and their followers; whereas all hoped for the Messiah.

7. '*Our twelve tribes.*' The people of Israel are called the twelve tribes, notwithstanding the dispersion of the ten, who were never restored. Their descendants still formed distinct communities in many parts of the world, especially in central and western Asia; and many of them continued to attend the three great festivals at Jerusalem. It was also a point of the national faith, that the whole nation would be reunited under the Messiah.

'*Instantly.*' Earnestly, with intense devotion.

'*Day and night.*' Incessantly. The word 'serving' refers to outward acts of worship. The daily sacrifices were not intermitted until the destruction of the temple; and no believing Hebrew omitted to offer prayers thrice daily. Nor were these services always performed in a hypocritical spirit: it was because they prayed for the coming of Messiah with sincerity, that so many

¹ Suicer. Thes. i. 1405.

² Olshausen, Meyer.

8. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

9. ^aI verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ^bJohn 16. 2. ^c1 Tim. 1. 13.

10. ^aWhich thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority ^bfrom the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. ^cch. 8. 3. ^dGal. 1. 13. ^ech. 9. 14. ^f21. & 22. 3.

11. ^aAnd I punished them oft in every synagogue, ^bch. 22. 10.

received Him before the destruction of the temple; for those prayers were movements of the Holy Spirit.

'I am accused of the Jews.' In this passage the word 'the' is omitted in the best manuscripts. It rather takes from the force of the expression. St. Paul says, I am accused by Jews for thus holding and preaching their own peculiar doctrine.

8. *'Why should it be thought.'* The question is more forcibly put in the original—'What? Is it thought incredible by you?' St. Paul appeals with confidence to the belief in the resurrection, which, as held probably by Agrippa, and certainly by the Pharisees, removed one great obstacle to the reception of the truth.

9. *'The name,'* i.e. the person and religion of Jesus. St. Paul used the words 'of Nazareth' to show that he well understood the prejudices, which he had once shared, and had now overcome. St. Paul refers to his former conduct, not merely to prove his sincerity, but the reality of the events which led to his conversion.

10. *'The saints.'* The name was so completely synonymous with that of Christian, that St. Paul uses it, as it were, unconsciously, in addressing unbelievers.

'Put to death.' From this we learn that St. Stephen, though the first, was not the only martyr in the first persecution. Acts vii. and viii. It shows how little dependence is to be placed on the argument from omissions in the simple and compendious narrative of the sacred writers.

'I gave my voice.' The word in the original seems to denote a judicial vote. It may be understood of Saul's voice, manner, and actions as an approving bystander; but I am inclined to think that it alludes to his vote given either in private meetings of persons who took an active part in the persecution, or, still more probably, as a member of the Sanhedrim. He could not be less than thirty years of age when he gave this vote. Even in a private meeting of those who must have been leaders of the people, a youth of twenty years could not have voted, nor is it probable that he would have been consulted. It has been shown (see note, xxiv. 6) that the Romans allowed the Jews the power of life and death over their own people in cases where religious questions alone were concerned.

11. *'Compelled.'* The word in the original may be rendered 'endeavoured to compel;' it does not mean

^a So Elsner and Kypke.

and compelled *them* to blaspheme ; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

¹ ch. 9. 3. & 22. 6. 12. 'Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13. 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.

14. 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.*

15. And I said, Who art thou, Lord ? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16. But rise, and stand upon thy feet : for I have ² appeared unto thee for this purpose, ³ to make thee a

that he succeeded. Pliny uses similar language in his celebrated account of the Christians.¹ He acquitted those who cursed Christ, since, as he says, no true Christian could be compelled to do that. The Romans learned the art of persecution from the Jews.

'*Mad.*' St. Paul attributes his conduct to madness—not as extenuating its atrocity, or as denying his responsibility, but to mark his sense of the unreasonableness as well as wickedness of the persecution.

'*Strange cities.*' This also is an additional circumstance by which we may judge of the extent of the persecution. St. Paul had visited cities in other districts before he went to Syria.

13. '*At midday.*' The time is mentioned twice by St. Paul to show how awful and dazzling was the splendour which outshone the mid-day sun.

14. See notes on chap. ix. The last

words of the verse are found in the best MSS. in this and not in the former passages. The proverbial saying is common in classic authors, hence perhaps its special propriety as addressed to the Apostle of the Gentiles.²

'*In the Hebrew tongue.*' This circumstance is mentioned by St. Paul to show the distinctness of the communication. It was no mere impression, but articulate words were addressed, though it may have been to the inward and spiritual ear.

16. '*But rise.*' &c. It is evident that St. Paul gives the substance of what our Lord communicated to him, both at the moment of his conversion, and afterwards at Damascus, nor is it impossible that he includes the message delivered to him by Ananias. Nothing is more common with the inspired writers than such condensed and connected statements of important transactions.

¹ Ep. x. 97. See Suicer. Thess. i. 697.

² Wordsworth.

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, ^aunto whom now I send thee,

18. ^oTo open their eyes, and ^pto turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, ^qthat they may receive forgiveness of sins, and ^rinheritance among them which are ^ssanctified by faith that is in me.

19. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision :

^a ch. 22. 21.
^o Isa. 35. 5.
& 42. 7.
Luke 1. 79.
John 8. 12.
2 Cor. 4. 4.
Ephes. 1. 18.
1 Thess. 5. 5.
^p 2 Cor. 6. 14.
Ephes. 4. 18.
& 5. 8.
Col. 1. 13.
1 Pet. 2. 9,
25.
^q Luke 1. 77.
^r Ephes. 1. 11.
Col. 1. 12.
^s ch. 20. 32.

'To make thee a witness.' Paul was to be a witness of the glory of the risen Saviour, whom he then saw, and of the doctrinal truths and revelations which he afterwards received during his preparation for the ministry in Arabia, and afterwards in visions both in the temple and elsewhere.

17. '*Delivering.*' This implies that St. Paul would be persecuted both by Jews and Gentiles. It was of importance that Agrippa, who believed in prophetic inspiration, should be informed that St. Paul expected what then befell him. The word in the original might also mean choosing, electing; but that signification is less suited to the context.¹

'*I send thee,*' or, I appoint thee to be an Apostle.

18. '*Their eyes,*'—their spiritual eyes. This indicates, not the extinction, but the overclouding of the spiritual faculty in the unconverted. The eye of the understanding (Eph. i. 18.) must be opened by grace through whatever instrumentality the Lord sees fit to use.

'*From darkness into light.*' Our Lord refers to the words which His

Spirit had dictated to Isaiah, ix. 2. The analogy between physical and spiritual darkness and light is a frequent topic with St. Paul.

'*From the power of Satan.*' The heathen world, being ignorant of divine truth, and addicted to abominable idolatry and unnatural vices, is represented throughout the New Testament (see the marginal references) as being subject to Satan: this applies to all who, being in a state of unconversion, are led captive by him at his will.

'*Inheritance.*' A portion or allotment, such as was made to each of the tribes in Canaan, and is now offered in the heavenly Canaan, to those who are sanctified in Christ.

'*Faith.*' This is the condition of their receiving the two graces of forgiveness and adoption. Faith is a conditional means of sanctification by the Spirit; but here it seems rather to refer to the word 'receive'—that they should receive by faith in me forgiveness, &c.

19. '*Whereupon, O king.*' Agrippa would recognise the force of St. Paul's argument. Unless it were delusion, which under the circumstances was

¹ Meyer, see also Wordsworth.

¹ ch. 9. 20.
^{22, 29 & 11.} 20. But ¹shewed first unto them of Damascus, and
^{26. & 13, &} at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa,
^{14, & 16, &} and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and
^{17, & 18, &} turn to God, and do ²works meet for repentance.
^{19, & 20, &}
^{21.}
² Matt. 3. 8.

² ch. 21. 30,
^{31.} 21. For these causes ²the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

⁷ Luke 24.
^{27, 44.} 22. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great,
^{ch. 24. 14. &} saying none other things than those ⁷which the prophets and ²Moses did say should come:
^{28. 23.}
^{Rom. 3. 21.}

² John 5. 46.
² Luke 24.
^{26. 46.} 23. ²That Christ should suffer, and ²that he should
¹ 1 Cor. 15.
^{20.} be the first that should rise from the dead, and ²should
^{Col. 1. 18.} shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.
^{Rev. 1. 6.}
² Luke 2. 32.

impossible, obedience was indispensable. The only alternative would be to suppose that St. Paul was a liar; and who ever lied in order to exchange riches for poverty, honour for dishonour, and temporal prosperity for bitter persecution?

20. '*First unto them,*' &c. A brief summary of St. Paul's labours, the object being to show that he directed his attention in the first place to his countrymen, and did not address the Gentiles without a special command.

'*To do works meet for repentance.*' St. Paul seems to use this expression in order to show the fundamental harmony between his preaching and that of the Baptist, whom the Jews, and doubtless Agrippa also recognised as a prophet.

21. '*For these causes.*' The argument of St. Paul is that the Jews seized him in the temple, not on account of what he was then doing, but of what he had previously been preaching, which, whether it were true or not, was clearly not contrary to any existing law. He points out also that, having arrested, they did not bring him to trial, but attempted to kill him—a course which proved their consciousness of wrong.

22. '*Help of God*' must be understood of the support afforded to him during the whole course of his ministry, including, of course, the intervention of the tribune at Jerusalem.

'*To small and great.*' To persons of all stations and of all ages. This is said to show that he acted under an irresistible impulse, which made him indifferent to all worldly and selfish considerations.

'*None other things.*' It was a matter of great importance to show the perfect harmony between the law and the Gospel.

23. '*That Christ should suffer.*' See note ch. iii. 18., and ch. xiii. 27. The expression used by St. Paul means that the Christ should be capable of suffering—a doctrine which most of the unbelieving Jews denied.

'*That He should be the first.*' Christ is called 'the first fruits of them that slept' (1 Cor. xv. 20), and 'the beginning, the first-born from the dead' (Col. i. 18). Others had been raised from the dead miraculously, but His resurrection is the cause and pledge of the general resurrection. Since, moreover, the resurrection here means peculiarly the resurrection into a state of immor-

24. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, ^dthou art beside thyself; ^d 2 Kings 9. 11.
much learning doth make thee mad. ^{John 10. 20.}

25. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; ^{1 Cor. 1. 23.}
but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. ^{& 2. 13, 14.}
^{& 4. 10.}

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.

27. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

tality, Our Lord was literally and exclusively the first.¹ Lazarus and others were merely restored to an earthly existence, and for a season only.

'Light' may be understood of hope and bliss, as well as of doctrine. He brought life and immortality to light by His resurrection.

'The people,' viz., the chosen people, the Jews.

24. '*Thou art beside thyself*,' &c. This exclamation of Festus seems to express very exactly what he felt. He had ample opportunity of estimating the strength of Paul's character and the vigour of his intellect, and he could only account for what must have appeared to him a mere hallucination, by the supposition that such intense study, as every discourse of St. Paul implied, had ended in partial madness or monomania.² It cannot be supposed he spoke ironically, for he appears to have been fully aware of the dignity of his office. The 'loud voice' indicates extreme surprise and amazement.

'Much learning.' It is important

to observe that the inspired apostle was a diligent student, and as we are assured neglected no opportunity of acquiring whatever knowledge might be useful to a preacher of the word.³

25. '*Soberness*' contrasted with madness means soundness⁴ and perfect sanity of mind. The same word is used by St. Mark (ch. v.) of the demoniac restored to his senses.

26. '*For the king knoweth*,' &c. It is a very important point in the evidence of religion that St. Paul appeals to Agrippa as to the great facts which were then matters of notoriety, including the resurrection of the Lord (v. 23), and that he is not contradicted.

27. '*Believest thou the prophets?*' The question of St. Paul, which addressed itself directly to the conscience of Agrippa, is important as showing that a genuine faith in the inspiration of the prophets is incompatible with the rejection of Christ. Had the Jews believed and listened to their own scriptures, they would have received Jesus.

28. '*Almost thou persuadest me.*'

¹ Œcumenius.

² Heinrich ap. Kuinoel.

³ See Bishop Bull's Sermon on

² Tim. iv. 13.

⁴ Phavorinus and Isidor. ap. Kuin., Rosanmüller, &c.

* 1 Cor. 7. 7. 29. And Paul said, *I would to 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.

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 * ch. 25. 11. have been set at liberty, *if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

Almost : literally, in a little, i.e. with a few words, in a very short time, or with little effort. Thou art persuading me to be a Christian by a very rapid process—as though I were to be converted like thyself suddenly. Agrippa is supposed by late commentators¹ to have spoken ironically. We can hardly give him credit for so much candour and courage as would have been required to make, what almost amounted to a confession of Christianity, in the presence of the Roman governor. Still it is very probable that if the tone were ironical, which is by no means certain, it was assumed to disguise the lively though transient impression which St. Paul's words could scarcely fail to produce.² On the appellation 'Christian,' see note, xi. 26.

'Except these bonds.' The chains which had attached St. Paul to the Roman soldiers remained on his arms during the trial.

30. 'The king rose up.' It seems evident that Agrippa was much af-

fected by St. Paul's touching and affectionate appeal. He broke up the court by rising without pronouncing an opinion, or consulting Festus.

'They that sat with them.' The counsellors or assessors.

31. 'When they had gone aside.' They appear to have retired to the residence of the governor, in order to hold a consultation on the proceedings.

'Nothing worthy of death or of chains.' A very important testimony to the legality of St. Paul's conduct, and to the integrity of his character.

32. 'Then said Agrippa.' Instead of assigning grounds for a formal accusation before the Emperor, Agrippa simply states his opinion that St. Paul ought to have been set at liberty, had he not removed himself from the jurisdiction of Festus by appealing to Cæsar. So wonderfully were all events overruled to bring the apostle to the metropolis of the Gentile world.

¹ Neander, i. 424; Meyer, &c.

² Olshausen.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1—3. A Christian should esteem himself happy when he can count, if not upon the sympathy, yet upon the candour and intelligence of those who hear him. True humility is not indifferent to the good opinion of man, although it enjoins resignation when encountered by prejudice and silenced by unjust power.

4. 5. Integrity and purity in early life give a just claim to the respect of man, and when they proceed from soundness of faith, they bestow peace of conscience towards both God and man. Strictness in a mistaken course still left Paul the consciousness of sincerity; in his enlightened state, after conversion, that consciousness enabled him to look forward undoubtingly to a crown of righteousness.

6. 7. Hope may exist without charity: but it is then no saving grace, it is but another form of presumption; loving and faithful hope is the sustainer of true devotion, and the 'antepast of heavenly joys.'

8. Nothing is so unreasonable as incredulity touching the power of God. Scepticism originates in the weakness of corrupt faculties; an angelic intelligence perceives no difference between the ordinary and extraordinary works of Providence—both are alike miraculous, and alike intelligible, as demonstrations of omnipotence.

9—11. Sincerity and consistency are indispensable to the character of a Christian warrior, but unless they are guided by a right faith, they may subserve the purposes of Satan. Our first duty is to seek after truth, and to acquaint ourselves with the will of God. We should distrust our convictions if they lead us to hate or injure our fellow-men, for the wisdom that cometh from above is 'first pure and then peaceable.' We are only safe when love to God manifests itself in love to man.

12—15. May Christ speak to our hearts in a language which we may understand, and reveal to us, as He did to Saul, His oneness with His people. That voice, once heard leaves no choice,—we shall cease to resist the guiding motions of His good Spirit, and have but one longing, viz., to be counted among those whom Christ has incorporated in His own mystical body, and so made one with Himself.

16, 17. This is a world for action, not merely for contemplation. We must not remain in the prostrate and desponding state into which we are plunged by the consciousness of sin, but must listen to him who bids every one whom He calls to arise, whether it be to follow Him in the discharge of personal and relative duties, or to exert the new power which He bestows, in bringing the tidings of salvation to others.

18. The state of grace after conversion may be described in three words—sight, light, liberty. The faculties must be restored, the truth must be revealed, and the bonds must be broken, before the sinner can advance in the way of salvation.

19. How beautiful and consistent is the life of him who has found the true centre of his existence, who moves in subordination to the true law of his being! What, to him who knows the powers of the world to come, are the assaults of

earthly enemies? He is sure of help from above—he is obedient to a heavenly vision—he is filled with anxiety for perishing souls—he knows that the so converting truths which he is commissioned to proclaim have been effectually preached from the beginning, and will resound unto the end—he learns to glory in his afflictions, being well aware that to share the resurrection of Christ, must needs suffer with Him, and that ‘they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.’

24—28. The deepest truths are discerned only by the spiritual faculty, and he who is guided and sustained by them moves in a course which seems wild and frantic to the mere worldling. The Roman magistrate was amazed to see the apostle declare that light was to be poured upon the Gentiles by Christ—that they, the inheritors of Grecian wisdom, the lords of the world, were to be enlightened by a crucified Hebrew—and since he could not question the tales he could only deny the sanity of the speaker. It is, however, to be observed that soberness in the statement of truth, and consistency in acting upon it, has a singular power over the minds of the most prejudiced. Some, like Festus, will learn to respect the advocate; others, like Agrippa, will be half moved to accept the truth, while they who are ordained to eternal life will receive it as the conversion and salvation of their souls.

29. Why except these bonds? Are they not chains of honour, badges of nobility in the eternal kingdom? Why except the bonds? Are they not symbols of subjection to Christ—of an indissoluble union with the King of Glory? True, but they are also signs and causes of suffering: and the apostle, who rejoices in tribulation which he knows to be needful for his own perfection, is tender and sparing of others. He would, if possible, divest religion of all that is painful or repulsive to the weak convert. But we may not forget, that the feelings which led St. Paul to glory in his own infirmities, and to spare the feelings of others, appertain alike to the high state of his advancement in the life of Christ.

30—32. How mysteriously the passions and inconsistencies of men work together to fulfil the secret counsels of God! But for the malice of the Jews, the perfect innocence of the apostle would not have been repeatedly recognised by their own governors and princes; but for the inconsistency of Festus, he would not have appealed to Cæsar, or have been sent to Rome. A deliverance thus would have been a hindrance to the Gospel; he was to be sent in the manner most likely to attract notice, and to give effect to his preaching; and his journey to Rome was as the ‘path of the righteous, shining more and more unto the perfect day.’

CHAPTER XXVII.

The account of St. Paul's voyage, which terminates in this chapter with his shipwreck at Malta, is chiefly remarkable for its natural and graphic descriptions. It is evident that the writer was familiar with the navigation of the Mediterranean; and late investigations have brought many curious coincidences to light, and fully proved the historian's scrupulous accuracy in the minutest details of this interesting voyage.¹ Such facts may not be necessary to confirm the belief of Christians, but they are among the most incontrovertible evidences of the authenticity of the book, and enable us to defend by argument what we receive in faith.

I. AND when [•]it was determined that we should sail [•]ch. 25. 12,
into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other pri-^{25.}
soners unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus'
band.

1. '*When it was determined.*' That is, when the time for the departure of St. Paul was fixed, since Festus had already determined to send him to Rome.

'*That we should sail,*' viz., St. Luke and Aristarchus with St. Paul. Festus must have been willing to favour St. Paul as much as lay in his power, or he would scarcely have allowed two devoted friends to attend him on the journey. It is an additional proof of the deep impression which the noble defence of the apostle had produced. Luke and Aristarchus, most probably, defrayed their own expenses during the voyage, which was performed throughout in merchant vessels.

'*Certain other prisoners.*' It is probable, from the expression in the original, that these were not Chris-

tians.³ They were probably, persons of some importance, who had been compromised in late political disturbances.

'*Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.*' There is much difference of opinion as to what band was so designated. It appears most probable⁴ that Julius was one of the body-guard of the emperor, who were selected from the Prætorian guard. They enjoyed peculiar privileges, with the rank of centurion, and had received from Nero the title of Augustans just before this time, viz., at the Juvenalian Games, A.D. 60.⁵ Julius is not said to have been one of the soldiers under Festus, and it is conjectured⁶ that he may have been sent by Nero on a mission to Corbulo, the president of Syria (who had just defeated the Parthians), and was now

¹ See especially Smith's *Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*.

² Tittman, Syn. See Meyer.

³ Wieseler, p. 389, note.

⁴ Tacitus, Ann. xiv. 15.

⁵ Wieseler, p. 392.

2. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; *one*
^b ch. 19. 29. ^b Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

3. And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And
^c ch. 21. 25. ^c Julius ^c 'courteously entreated Paul, and gave *him*
^d 28. 16. liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

4. And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

returning to Rome. A Julius Priscus is mentioned by Tacitus¹ as a brave and distinguished officer of the Prætorian guard in the following reign.

2. '*A ship of Adramyttium.*' The ship belonged to a merchant of Adramyttium, a city of Mysia, and an Athenian colony, now a village called Endramite.² The ship was returning home, and not proceeding to Italy; but the centurion expected to meet with some vessel on the way, by which the prisoners might be conveyed to Rome.

'*Aristarchus*' had accompanied St. Paul on a former journey, and was with him at Ephesus (xix. 29. See also xx. 4). At Rome he was a fellow-prisoner with St. Paul (Col. iv. 10), and is called by the apostle one of his fellow-workers (Philemon i. 24). He remained with him until the latter part of his imprisonment. These facts prove that he was a zealous Christian and an affectionate friend of his spiritual father, St. Paul.

3. '*Sidon*' was a city of some importance at that time: the present Saida lies to the west of the old city: it numbers from 5,000 to 8,000 inhabitants, and is a commercial port.³ The distance

from Cæsarea is sixty-seven geographical miles.

'*Courteously entreated.*' Behaved with humanity and courtesy towards St. Paul. It is probable that Festus had recommended the apostle especially to Julius; but the consistent kindness of his conduct throughout the voyage proves that he was personally affected by St. Paul's demeanour, and reflects great credit on his own character. Chrysostom remarks the candour of the historian, who never exaggerates the sufferings of the apostle, and is careful to record the fact, when he met with kindness and courtesy.

'*Gave him liberty.*' St. Paul went accompanied, of course, by the soldier to whom he was bound, but the permission implied great confidence in the honour of the apostle.

'*To refresh himself.*' To receive comfort and assistance from his Christian friends, who would be anxious to supply him with necessities for his long voyage.

4. '*Under Cyprus.*' Near the coast, between Cyprus and the mainland of Asia Minor, instead of sailing directly across the open sea.⁴ The west winds blow with great

¹ Hist., xiv. 15.

² Winer, v. Ad.

³ Robinson, Buckingham and Pocock.

⁴ Wetstein. See Smith's Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul, p. 25.

5. And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.

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 ¹Or, *Candy*, Salmone;

8. And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

violence in the Levant during autumn.

5. '*Myra*.' A city on a rock, about twenty furlongs¹ from the sea-coast of Lycia. It still bears the same name among the Greeks, but is called Dembre by the Turks.² Its seaport was called Andriaca. There are some noble ruins in the neighbourhood of the modern town.³ Chrysostom is mistaken in supposing that Aristarchus left St. Paul at this place for Macedonia. See ver. 2.

'*A ship*,' &c. The ships from Alexandria, employed in the transport of corn, were generally of large size, equal to the largest class of merchant ships in modern times.⁴ When the winds were favourable, they sailed direct across the Mediterranean, but in adverse weather kept near the coast of Syria and Asia Minor, where this vessel was found by Julius.

7. '*Cnidus*.' A city of Caria, or Dosis, between Cos and Rhodes, famous for a statue of Venus by Praxiteles. The distance between Myra and Cnidus does not exceed 130 geo-

graphical miles, so that the winds must have been unfavourable, as is intimated by the expression 'scarce,' that is, with difficulty.⁵

'*Not suffering us*,' i.e. to proceed to the eastward in that direction. The Etesian winds which prevail at that season blow from the N.W.

'*Crete*.' Now called Candia, one of the most important islands in the Mediterranean, famous for its hundred cities. The character of its inhabitants is described by St. Paul in very unfavourable colours, in his Epistle to Titus, who was left there with the authority of a provincial bishop (Titus i. 12).

'*Salmone*.' The eastern headland of Crete, opposite to Cnidus. It still bears the same name.

8. '*Lasea*' and the fair havens, its seaport, are not elsewhere named by the ancients. Stephanus, however, mentions a city called 'Fair Coast,' and Hoek identifies Lasea with Lisia—a point which has since been completely proved by the Rev. J. Brown, in a letter published by Mr. Smith in this second edition of the work, so often referred to in these notes. Fair

¹ Strabo, xiv. 665.

² Winer.

³ Described by C. Fellows, Lycia, p. 196.

⁴ Hasæus ap. Kuin.; and Smith, l. c., p. 32.

⁵ Smith, p. 34.

9. Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, ^dbecause the fast was now already past, Paul admonished *them*,

^d The fast was on the tenth day of the seventh month. Lev. 23. 27, 29.
^e Or, injury.

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.

12. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also,

Havens, still bearing the same name in modern Greek (Calos Limeones) is the nearest harbour to Cape Matala.¹

9. '*Much time.*' The time of their detention here cannot be ascertained. It was probably sufficient for St. Paul and his companions to lay the foundation of a Christian Church. There appear to be sufficient grounds for believing that the Gospel had previously been preached in other parts of the island by St. Paul and Titus.²

'*Sailing was now dangerous.*' The ancients considered that all navigation should cease from November to March.³ This was not merely owing to their dread of storms, but to the difficulty of making out their route, without a compass, in dark and cloudy weather. It was regarded as an act of the greatest temerity to cross the Mediterranean in winter.⁴

'*The fast,*' that is, the great fast of expiation, took place on the 10th of Tisri (Lev. xvi. 29 and xxiii. 27, 29), about the beginning of October,¹ or end of September, in the year A.D. 60, on the 23rd, according to Lewin.

10. '*I perceive.*' This expression

seems to imply that St. Paul formed this conclusion from his own judgment. But we do not know the limits or conditions of that inspiration which always guided or restrained him. Chrysostom regards it as a prophecy.

'*Of our lives.*' This expression does not necessarily imply that any lives would be lost, but that they would be in jeopardy.

11. '*The master.*' The pilot or helmsman, who acted as captain, giving orders to the crew. St. Paul uses the word found in the inscription referred to at the note on v. 9.

'*The owner.*' The merchant to whom the ship belonged. This man must have been nearly ruined by the adoption of his advice, since both his cargo and ship were lost. It is evident that Julius was not a convert at that time, or he would have believed St. Paul; as a heathen he acted rightly in following the advice of those persons who were responsible for the ship.

12. '*The haven was not commodious,*' because it was open to nearly one half of the compass.⁵

¹ Wieseler, p. 333; Smith, p. 37.

² Wieseler, p. 331.

³ Veget. de R. M., iv. 39; Plin. H. N. ii. 37.

⁴ Many curious facts are given by

Wieseler, p. 48—50.

⁵ Reland, Ant. p. 457; Auger, Temp. Rat. p. 31.

⁶ Smith, p. 47.

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 *¶* Or, *beat*. 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 Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat :

'*Phenice*,' or Phoenix, a port on the S.W. coast of Crete, now called Lutro.¹ We learn from the inscription that Alexandrian ships usually stayed a long time, and probably wintered here.

'*South west and north west*.' This appears contradictory, but Dr. Howson observes that sailors speak of every thing from their own point of view, and that such a harbour as Phoenix does look from the water to the land which encloses it, in the direction of south-west and north-west.

13. '*And when the south wind*.' The southerly wind would not be very unfavourable on a westerly voyage along the southern coast of Crete.²

14. '*Against it*.' That is, against the island. The word Euroclydon which is not used elsewhere by Greek authors, denotes a wind that raises large waves, or a hurricane, such as are common in the Levant, and are called '*Levanders*' by English sailors. The direction of this wind was about north-east, and it is probable that Euracylon, which means a north-

easterly wind, and is found in very ancient MSS. is the true reading. 'The sudden change from a south wind to a violent northerly wind is a common occurrence in these seas.'³

'*Arose against it*,' or beat down from it, i.e. from high land of Crete.⁴

15. '*Caught*,' or, we gave in, and were carried away. The effects of this storm were that the ship must have strained and suffered severely in her hull, and that the leaks she then sprang were gradually gaining upon the crew, who must have suffered great hardships. St. Luke shared them all; but he never mentions them except on one occasion, and that was to illustrate a passage in the life of St. Paul.⁵

16. '*Clauda*,' a small island to the S. W. of Crete, now called Gozo, inhabited by some thirty families.⁶

'*The boat*.' The small boat, which was usually towed by a rope fastened to the ship. It was a work of much difficulty to hoist it into the ship, as it must have been nearly filled with water in so heavy a gale.

¹ Smith, p. 50.

² Heinrich.

³ Smith, p. 60.

⁴ Alford, C. and K. H. p. 335.

⁵ Smith, p. 61—63.

⁶ Pocock.

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 we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship;

* Jonah 1. 5. 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.

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.

17. '*Helps.*' This appears to be a technical term for props¹ set under the ship's side while the sailors were undergirding it, i.e. passing strong cables under the keel from one side of the ship to the other, to keep the planks from starting.² This expedient was then common, and has occasionally been adopted in modern times.³

'*The quicksands.*' The greater and less Syrtis, two very formidable sandbanks off the coast of Africa.

'*Strake sail.*' The words so translated probably mean lowered. The gear, that is, not the mast, which was immovable in large vessels, but the yard with the sailed attached to it. Every step hitherto taken indicates skilful seamanship.⁴

'*So were driven,*' means driven as the wind listed, without resistance, the vessel being quite unmanageable. The direction in which a vessel under these circumstances would drift according to Smith and Penrose (fol-

lowed by Dr. Howson) would be west by north, and such is very nearly the bearing of the North Coast of Malta from the south side of Crete.

18. '*Lightened,*' by throwing overboard part of the freight.

19. '*The tackling.*' This does not include the anchors, see v. 29; nor the masts and sails, see v. 40. Some commentators understand the luggage belonging to the passengers. It was more probably the mainyard.⁵

20. They could not ascertain their position or the direction in which they were going, when the sun and stars were hidden. See above, v. 9.

'*Was then taken away,*' owing to the leaks that had been sprung.

21. '*Abstinence.*' Their incessant labour and terror of death had hitherto prevented them from taking food, or more probably it was impossible to prepare a regular meal during the storm, still a very common incident in voyages. See note, v. 33.

'*To have gained.*' The meaning

¹ Wetstein.

² Raphelius, Obs.; Polyb.

³ Smith, p. 65.

⁴ Smith, p. 70. 72.

⁵ Kypke, Wetstein, Rosenmüller, Kuinoel, Smith, p. 73.

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.

23. 'For there stood by me this night the angel of ' ch. 23. 11.
God, whose I am, and ⁵whom I serve, ⁵ Dan. 6. 16.
Rom. 1. 8.

24. Saying, Fear not, Paul ; thou must be brought ² Tim. 1. 3.
before Cæsar : and, lo, God hath given thee all them
that sail with thee.

25. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer : ^bfor I be- ^b Luke 1. 45.
Rom. 4. 20,
21.
lieve God, that it shall be even as it was told me. ² Tim. 1. 12.

26. Howbeit 'we must be cast upon a certain ' ch. 28. 1.
island.

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 ;

28. And sounded, and found *it* twenty fathoms :

is, they would have been saved ¹ from this harm and loss if they had attended to the advice of St. Paul. His object in reminding them of this is not to taunt them but to induce them to give credit to his present assertions.

23. '*For there stood by me this night.*' This appearance of 'an angel' was probably in a vision.² It is evident that St. Paul had acquired a very commanding influence over the ship's company. The centurion had not previously felt himself justified in acting upon his advice when opposed to that of the helmsman and owner ; but he now listened, as we may be assured, with deep interest to the words of one whose former prediction had been verified by the event.

24. '*God hath given thee.*' Hath granted. This declaration implies

that St. Paul had prayed earnestly, not only for the lives of himself and friends, but of all the crew, and that they were spared for his sake.

27. '*Fourteenth night.*' Storms of equal and even longer duration are recorded at the same period of the year in that part of the Mediterranean.

'*Adria.*' This name anciently comprehended all that part of the Mediterranean which lies between Greece, Italy, and Africa.³ They were now driving before the wind between Crete and Malta.

'*The shipmen deemed.*' They probably saw or heard the breakers near the rocky coast.⁴

28. '*Sounded.*' Tried the depth of water with a lead, as at present. The soundings correspond exactly with those taken by seamen in the present century.

¹ Elsner, Kypke, and Kuinoel.

² Olshausen.

³ Kuinoel ; Hesych. ; Strabo, ii. 185 ; vii. 488.

⁴ Smith, p. 79.

⁵ Smith.

and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

29. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

30. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour 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.

32. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

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.

34. Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for

29. '*Four anchors*' were commonly used in case of extreme danger. The object was to run the ship ashore as soon as daylight enabled them to select a spot where it could be done with a prospect of safety; for this purpose the very best position in which the ship could be was to be anchored by the stern. Some interesting facts are added by Dr. Howson, who proves that vessels in the Levant, both in ancient and modern times, have been fitted up with a special view to anchoring from the stern. The sea must then have been breaking with great violence on the breakers, which are about a quarter of a mile from the spot where anchor was cast.

The harbour of St. Paul, where this shipwreck undoubtedly took place, is described as being safe for small ships; and while the cables hold there is no danger, as the anchors will never start.¹

30. '*The shipmen.*' The crew were well aware that the ship must go to pieces, and were only anxious to save themselves.

31. '*Paul said to the centurion.*' The centurion took command of the ship on extraordinary occasions (see above, v. 11). He was, in fact, the representative of the imperial power.

'*Ye cannot,*' i.e. humanly speaking. The shipmen were the very means by which Divine Providence would save them from this peril.

33. '*Nothing.*' No regular meals; indeed it was scarcely possible to have any food prepared for the seamen during the continuance of the storm. A naval officer, describing a storm in the same locality, says, 'we were four days without being able to sit down at table for a regular meal, during which time we saw neither sun nor stars.'

34. '*For your health,*' or safety.

'*Not an hair.*' A proverbial ex-

¹ Smith, p. 92.

this is for your health : for ^kthere shall not an hair ^kfall from the head of any of you. ^k 1 Kings, 1. 52.
Matt. 10. 30.
Luke 12. 7. & 21. 18.
^l 1 Sam. 9. 13.
Matt. 15. 36.
Mark 8. 6.
John 8. 11.
1 Tim. 4. 3, 4.

35. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and ^lgave thanks to God in presence of them all : and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat. ^l 1 Sam. 9. 13.
Matt. 15. 36.
Mark 8. 6.
John 8. 11.
1 Tim. 4. 3, 4.

36. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat. ^m ch. 2. 41. & 7. 14.
Rom. 13. 1.
1 Pet. 3. 20

37. And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen ^msouls.

38. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea. ^m ch. 2. 41. & 7. 14.
Rom. 13. 1.
1 Pet. 3. 20

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.

40. And when they had ^ltaken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the ^l Or, cut the anchors, they left them in the sea, &c.

pression. 2 Sam. xiv. 11; 1 Kings i. 52; Matthew x. 30; and Luke xii. 7.

35. '*Gave thanks to God.*' One of the Fathers' remarks that St. Paul took this occasion of impressing upon their minds the duty of offering thanksgiving to God before breaking bread. It seems evident that the apostle contemplated this solemn meal as having something of a sacramental, or, at least, peculiarly religious character. The expression used by St. Luke reminds the reader involuntarily of the Eucharist, to which the passage was understood to refer by many of the Fathers.²

36. '*Of good cheer.*' The influence which St. Paul had acquired over their minds gave great weight to his address, and they now began to hope that they might escape the land, which was evidently near.

38. '*Cast out the wheat into the sea.*' The chief part of the cargo was

probably wheat. See note on ver. 6. Sir C. Penrose observes that the hatchways could scarcely have been opened while the ship was drifting, but that it would be necessary to do it not only to make the ship lighter but to enable her to be navigated towards the land at daybreak.

39. '*They knew not the land.*' See note on chap. xxviii. 1.

'*With a shore.*' That is, a level shore, not a ridge of rocks. The description of the creek, now called St. Paul's Bay, which is given by late voyagers, corresponds minutely with this narrative.

40. '*Taken up.*' Rather, cut off (as in the margin); there would be no object gained by taking them on board.

'*Loosed the rudder-bands.*' Ancient ships were steered by two large paddles, one on each quarter. When anchored by the stern, in a gale, it would be necessary to lift them out

¹ Ammonius ap. Cramer.

² Neander, p. 500.

rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

41. And falling into a place where two seas met, ^{a 2 Cor. 11. 25.} they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

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

of the water, and secure them by lashings or rudder-bands, and to loose the rudder-bands when the ship was again got under way.¹

'*The mainsail.*' This was probably the foresail, but the meaning of the word used in the original has been much disputed.²

41. '*Where two seas met.*' At the bottom of the creek, there is a communication with the sea outside. There, of course, two currents would meet under the circumstances of weather, wind, &c., which are here described.³

'*The fore part,*' &c. This is a peculiar circumstance, and would be difficult to account for, but for the peculiar nature of the bottom of St. Paul's Bay. The ship there would strike a bottom of mud, graduating into tenacious clay, in which the fore part would fix itself and be held fast, while the stern would be exposed to the force of the waves.⁴

42. '*To kill the prisoners.*' This cruelty of the soldiers, who had reason to believe that their safety was owing to St. Paul, may be accounted

for by the severity of Roman discipline, and the recklessness of human life which peculiarly characterised the Roman soldiers, and by the fact, that guards who allowed prisoners (whether condemned or merely accused) to escape, were liable to undergo the same punishment⁵ as would have been inflicted on the fugitive. The other prisoners were, in all probability, persons of some political importance, either taken in the late Parthian war, or heads of marauding bands. See note, ver. 1.

43. '*Willing to save Paul.*' The centurion must have loved and esteemed St. Paul, when he incurred the responsibility of taking off the chains of all the prisoners in order to save his life.

'*Who could swim.*' Swimming was very properly held to be an essential point in the physical training of the Roman youth.

44. '*They escaped all safe to land.*' Thus the prophecy of St. Paul was fulfilled, as Chrysostom remarks, notwithstanding the great variety of peculiar dangers which the several par-

¹ Smith, p. 101.

² Smith, p. 102, 103.

³ Smith, 'Dissertation on Ancient Ships.'

⁴ Smith, 103, 104.

⁵ See note, Acts xii. 19.

broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, ° ver. 22.
°that they escaped all safe to land.

ties had encountered. The soldiers would have been destroyed by the selfishness of the crew, the prisoners by the cruelty of the soldiers, had not all passions and actions been controlled and overruled by Him who heard and answered the prayers of His apostle. It cannot be doubted that many of those whose lives were thus providentially saved, became converts to the salvation of their souls.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

How singularly contrasted in character and destiny were the passengers in that ship which bore the apostle of the Gentiles to the scene of his glorious martyrdom ! There were prisoners, liable to suffer as evil-doers ; veteran soldiers and hardy mariners, whose rough bosoms were, perhaps, less impenetrable to Gospel truth than the toiling and scheming traders : there, too, were devoted ministers, voluntary partakers of the captivity of St. Paul, and co-heirs of the same hope. A strangely blended group ; yet not so unlike in the eyes of man, as in that eye which searcheth the inner heart. Thus, too, in the vessel of the visible Church, are all diversities to be found, saints, whom the apostles recognise as their fellows ; and sinners, at whose guilt the most ignorant heathen might be amazed, all bound apparently to the same bourne, but with destinations, in truth, wide asunder as heaven and the nethermost abyss.

3. God vouchsafes alleviations to His tried servants, and among the most refreshing are those which they derive from the care and affection of sympathising friends. Happy are those who avail themselves of an occasion to serve one of His people. The good deed of the centurion has embalmed his memory to all generations of the Church ; and we cannot but hope that he who granted liberty for a season to the apostle, became a partaker of the everlasting freedom of the kingdom of God.

4—6. The difficulties and sufferings of that protracted voyage may have symbolised the future destinies of the Church of Christ. Whatever may have been the agency by which the delay was caused, of this we are sure, that it was providentially overruled for the good of Christ's people. The change of vessels brought the apostle into contact with many hearts, and secured many additional witnesses to his patient endurance of suffering for the name of Jesus.

7—10. Difficulties and perils are as rocks which give out fire when struck by the steel of an unbending will ; and when the firmness of the will is derived from union with Christ, the light that flashes from the contact is a revelation from heaven.

11. The centurion soon learned that the calculations of human reason were not to be depended on, but that the Word which God put into the mouth of His apostles was a sure and safe guide. His faith needed the outward testimony of accomplished predictions.

12—15. For a season the man of the world seems to be wiser than the children of light. His plans prosper, all goes smoothly, and he looks back with triumphant scorn upon the warning which he rejected. But, not long after, the tempestuous storm arises, violent passions are stirred up, unexpected contests are excited, and the schemes and projects and hopes of unbelievers are driven before the wind,

16—20. How fertile in resources, and energetic in exertions, is man, when struggling for existence! His ingenuity and efforts, however, serve but to prove his absolute dependence upon Him who alone controls the power of nature, and without whom all hope of salvation is taken away.

20—26. Here we have an example of the tone which a true Christian will adopt, when some great calamity has befallen his friends, in consequence of their disregard of his admonition. He may remind them of the cause of their misfortune, but briefly and tenderly; their conscience may need to be awakened, but it should not be scared, much less crushed and tortured. He will point out whatever hope may be reasonably entertained, as a motive for cheerful and sustained exertions. And, above all, while he offers earnest prayers on their behalf, he will take care not to bid them to depend upon any one save God, who hath given to His own Son all them who sail with Him in the Ark of the Church, and who believe in His Word.

27—29. This voyage presents a very lively emblem of human life, unguided by the Spirit of God. Driven up and down without chart or compass, the shipmen watch with anxiety each glimmering of hope, which soon gives place to gloomy fears. There is one among them whose presence is a pledge of their deliverance, but they know it not, and are equally reckless of his promises and exhortations. How many nominal Christians are in the same condition, without the same plea of ignorance!

30—32. 'The end and the means are always joined together in the purpose and decree of God. The same God that ordained the end ordained the means in order to that end; therefore, as to trust to means is to neglect God, so to neglect the means is to tempt God.'¹ This maxim is of universal application, and should never be lost sight of in spiritual matters.

33. True courage is grounded on faith. Paul trusted implicitly in his Lord's promise and power, and was therefore perfectly serene under all his trials. So far as the sailors believed him, they were also of good cheer, and took some meat. What keeps so many Christians sad and anxious, without even a desire for spiritual meat, but the weakness or unsoundness of their faith? May we listen to Christ's word, be comforted by His promises, and so be made partakers of that bread, which will preserve both body and soul unto everlasting life!

38—41. Truth is apt to be minute and particular in recording facts, especially those which are connected with the sufferings of a dear friend. If we love St. Paul, our own peculiar apostle, we shall not pass lightly and carelessly over these details. If we read them closely, we may learn to realise and understand many particulars, which have important bearings both upon our own faith and practice as Christians.

42—44. As St. Paul's counsel had saved the lives of the soldiers from the treachery of the sailors, so his character now saves the lives of the prisoners

¹ Burkitt.

from the cruelty of the soldiers. How importunate and cruel a passion is selfish fear ! The soldiers are ready to imbrue their hands in the blood of their deliverer ; but their ferocity served but as an occasion for drawing forth the centurion's affection, and, as we cannot choose but hope, of drawing him nearer to Christ, whom he served and protected in the person of His minister. How full of life and deep feeling is this simple narrative ; but to a spiritual mind it is far more ! It will be found full of types of the world, of the Church, of the Spirit, and of the motions and tendencies in our hearts, if we read it with prayer.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The eventful history of the apostolic career of St. Paul draws near to its termination. From Malta he passes by a rapid voyage towards the shores of Italy, and finally arrives at the imperial city—the metropolis of the ancient world. The transactions at Rome complete the vast circle of the apostle's labours, and represent the fulfilment of the work which forms the subject matter of the inspired narrative. Beginning at Jerusalem, the Gospel had been preached in Judæa, and in Samaria, and now reached the remote centre of heathendom, whence it was rapidly disseminated to the uttermost parts of the world.

1. AND when they were escaped, then they knew

* ch. 27. 26. that ^athe island was called Melita.

^b Rom. 1. 14.

¹ Cor. 14. 11.

Col. 3. 11.

2. And the ^bbarbarous 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.

1. '*Then they knew.*' The circumstance that the sailors did not know the island at first is easily accounted for. The scene of the shipwreck lies remote from the great harbour of Valetta, the only point of the island with which they were likely to be acquainted, and there is no marked feature in the configuration of the land.¹

'*Melita.*' The latest investigations prove beyond all doubt that this is the island of Malta,² although some writers³ have supposed that Meleda, a small island in the Gulf of Venice, was the scene of St. Paul's shipwreck. That opinion has little in its favour; it arose probably from the restriction of the appellation '*Adria,*' to the Gulf of Venice in later times (see note, chap. xxvii. 27), and it is sufficiently refuted

by the course of the ship, which touched at Syracuse, on the direct way from Malta to Rome. Malta, which now belongs to the English, is an island about 100 square miles in extent, consisting of one vast rock of white freestone. It was colonised by the Carthaginians, and its name signifies '*the Refuge*' in the Phœnician language, which is still spoken, though in a corrupt form, by the native inhabitants. The Prayer-book and Bible have been lately translated into their dialect, which is nearly allied to the Hebrew and Arabic.

2. '*Barbarous.*' This expression merely signifies that they spoke a language unknown to the Greeks and Romans, who regarded all other nations as vastly inferior to themselves

¹ Smith, p. 108.

² Kuinoel, Bochart, Michaelis, Winer, &c.; especially Smith, *Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*; and Dr.

Howson.

³ Constant. Porphy. Ign. Georgi, Rhoer.

⁴ Winer.

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 ^{Mark 16.} ^{18.} felt no harm. Luke 10. 19.

in civilisation, and used the term contemptuously.

'Of the present rain.' Heavy rain and cold in November prove that the wind must have been to the north of east.¹

3. 'A Viper.' The fact that no vipers or poisonous reptiles are now to be found in the island of Malta is connected with an old and pleasing, though unfounded, tradition, that they were expelled by St. Paul.² If the viper were not venomous, the Maltese would have known it. At that time the island appears to have had many woods, in which such reptiles probably abounded, although they have disappeared since the woods have been cleared away.³

'Out of the heat.' It is well known that reptiles remain torpid during cold weather, and are revived at once by heat.

'Fastened.' This expression must mean that it fixed its fangs in his hand.⁴ It was not coiled round the arm, for it hung from his hand (ver. 4).

4. 'And when the barbarians,' &c. When the natives saw the viper on the *hand* of St. Paul, they probably considered it to be a retributive

punishment, the hand being the instrument of murder. They may also have observed that he was a prisoner, especially if the manacle remained on his hand, which I should suppose to have been the case, even when the long chain was removed. The opinion that justice pursues the murderer and never suffers him to escape, was universal among the ancients.⁵

'Vengeance,' that is, retributive justice, was generally worshipped as a deity, under the name of Nemesis.

'The venomous beast.' The word in the original is used by all classical writers of venomous animals, and especially of serpents.⁶

5. 'And felt no harm.' This miracle exemplifies the promise of our Saviour, Mark xvi. 18: 'They shall take up serpents, and it shall not hurt them.' The promise was of course to be understood under certain limitations, since the disciples were far from expecting to enjoy a perpetual immunity from these and similar dangers. In this case St. Paul knew that it was his Master's intention that he should see Rome, and was therefore certain that his life would be preserved until that purpose was accomplished. He

¹ Smith.

² Walch. Diss.

³ Smith.

⁴ Suicer. Thess. s. v., and Meyer.

⁵ Mitscherl. on Horat., Car. iii. 2. 32.

⁶ Suidas, &c. ap. Kuinoel, and Wolf.

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 ^ach. 14. 11. him, they changed their minds, and ^dsaid that he was a god.

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.

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 ^eprayed, and ^flaid his hands on him, and healed him.

9. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed ;

10. Who also honoured us with many ^ghonours ;

appears not to have apprehended any danger for a moment.

6. '*They looked that he should have swollen.*' The blood is corrupted very rapidly by the venom of some species of serpents ; the body swells, and sudden death ensues. The Maltese were evidently familiar with the effects produced by the bite of this particular species, and were quite convinced that the occurrence must be preternatural.

'*He was a god.*' See note on chap. xiv. 11. This opinion was very probably connected with the popular superstition about serpents,¹ which were regarded as attendants and favourites of the gods.

7. '*Chief man.*' The Roman magistrate, who resided as governor at Malta, had the legal title of first or chief man of the island, which is found in an ancient inscription discovered at Malta.² He was the deputy or lieutenant of the prætor of Sicily, and was probably appointed

to that office as being the principal landed proprietor.

8. '*Bloody flux.*' The disease appears to have been a species of jaundice, which is very often fatal in those climates. St. Luke uses the technical language of a physician.

These two miracles, which reached all classes of society, prepared the Maltese for the reception of that truth, which was preached by St. Paul, of whose divine commission they could no longer entertain any doubt.

9. '*Others also which had diseases.*' By this verse we are reminded that few out of many miracles are recorded by the inspired historians. The rapid propagation of Christianity would have been scarcely possible, without a continuous chain of miraculous evidences.

10. '*Honours.*' This expression is understood by some commentators to mean gifts, presented as tokens of gratitude ; but it more probably sig-

¹ Elsner.

² Grotius, Bochart, Kuinoel.

and when we departed, they laded *us* with such things as were necessary.

11. And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days.

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.

nifies, as in English, demonstrations of reverence.' It is distinguished from the gifts with which they were laden on their departure.

11. '*After three months we departed.*' The sea was generally held to be 'closed,' or unnavigable until March: see above, chap. xxvii. 9. As they arrived in November, it was now only February; but the weather was probably favourable for an early voyage.

'*Whose sign was Castor and Pollux.*' Representations of these twin sons of Jupiter and Leda were painted or carved on the prow. They were worshipped especially as the tutelary deities of mariners.³ The constellation of the Gemini, or twins, which is only visible in fine weather, was dedicated to them.

12. '*Syracuse,*' the rich and populous capital of Sicily was then one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Its ruins are found at a short distance from the modern city of Saragossa.⁴ There is a local and by no means improbable tradition that

St. Paul then founded the Sicilian Church.

13. '*Fetched a compass.*' Mr. Lewin supposes that the vessel was obliged to stand out to sea in order to fill the sails, and so come to Rhegium by a circuitous sweep. He 'adds a vessel in which a friend sailed from Syracuse to Rhegium took a similar circuit for a similar reason.'

'*Rhegium.*' A city on a promontory on the southern coast of Italy, opposite to Sicily; it is now called Reggio.

'*Puteoli.*' Now Pozzuoli, a sea-port on the coast of Campania, about eight miles from Naples, on the north side of the bay, about 180 miles due north from Rhegium. It was celebrated for its warm baths and springs, and was, at that time, one of the most important marts in Italy, where the ships from Egypt and Syria generally landed their cargoes, there being no safe harbour between it and Rome.⁵

14. '*We found brethren.*' That is, Christians. These incidental notices are very important, showing that believers were already found in most of

¹ Kuinoel.

² Meyer.

³ Horat. Od., i. 3. 2., ed Mitscherl.

⁴ Leake, Morea, iii. 278.

⁵ Winer, ii. 292.; Strabo, v. 245.; xvii. 793.; Plin. H. N. xxxvi. 14; Joseph. Ant. xvii. 12. 1.

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.

16. And when we came to Rome, the centurion de-

the places which had any communication with the East.

'Were desired.' There must have been a considerable number of converts, or good reason to expect an extension of the Church, to induce St. Paul to remain so long. Much as the centurion may have felt personally attached and grateful to St. Paul, it is improbable that he would have permitted him to comply with their request, had he not, at this time, been himself a Christian. He may have been converted during the winter passed at Malta.

15. *'From thence.'* From Rome. The Christians of Rome must have been anxious to see St. Paul, and to testify their reverence for his character, when, upon so short a notice, they sent two deputations, the one to Appii Forum, a town¹ about thirty-two miles, and a second to The three taverns, a station about twenty-four miles distant from that city. The epistle addressed to them by the apostle had been received between two and three years previous to his arrival.

'Took courage.' He was convinced that whatever might be the issue of the appeal to himself, the cause which lay far nearer to his heart was now prospering, and would be advanced by his labours in union with brethren so earnest in the demonstration of their affection and reverence.

16. St. Paul's entry to Rome, the

last and most glorious scene of his labours and triumphs, was that of a conqueror and a prince. Among that numerous band there probably was not one, even of the rough soldiers, who did not venerate him as a messenger of God; while the brethren no doubt anticipated, from his personal presence, little less than the conversion of the metropolis of the world. It was a time of mingled anxiety and hope. The character of Nero was beginning to show symptoms of that ferocity which afterwards made him proverbial. But the impression produced by five years of wise and gentle government was not obliterated by the crimes of the sixth. He was still under the influence of Seneca, the great philosopher, and of Burrhus, the humane and noble commander of his Prætorian guards. Octavia had not yet been repudiated. The Jews who had been banished by Claudius had been allowed to return and to settle at Rome unmolested, though the edict was not formally repealed. The Christians had probably not yet attracted the notice, and certainly had not excited the enmity of the emperor or his advisers, and they had been treated with justice and even courtesy by his delegates. Believers might well hope that St. Paul, bringing with him a highly favourable report from the governor of Judæa, and having a warm friend in the officer charged with his safe conduct to Rome (who, as one of the select

¹ Described by Horace, Sat. i. 5. 3.

livered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but

^b Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier ^{1 ch. 24. 25. & 27. 8.} that kept him.

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 ^{1 ch. 24. 12, 13. & 25. 8.} the people, or customs of our fathers, yet ^{2 ch. 21. 33.} I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

body-guard, was likely to have great personal influence), would not only succeed in establishing his innocence, but in obtaining full security against future oppression of himself and his brethren. It might not even be very unreasonable to expect that the remarkable influence which the apostle had hitherto exerted over the hearts of men, might arrest the emperor in his course of crime, and make him the protector, if not a member, of the Church. If, however, such anticipations were indulged, they were disappointed, and the Church was subjected to a long succession of fiery trials, instead of being, as human reason might have thought desirable, at once recognised as the true religion by the governor of the world.

'*The captain of the guard.*' The Prætorian prefect, or commander of the life-guards, was at that time Burrhus Afranius.¹ He was a man of high character, and though his influence was beginning to decline, was still the most powerful subject in Rome. He was poisoned A.D. 62, about ten months after the arrival of St. Paul, by the order of Nero, on account of his opposition to the shameful divorce of Octavia. The

expression used to St. Luke is remarkably accurate, and of importance in settling the chronology, since, after the death of Burrhus, there were two captains of the guard. Prisoners who appealed to the emperor were always placed under the charge of these functionaries, who were responsible for their safe keeping; and it depended upon their will how far the strict rules of military custody were enforced or relaxed.² St. Paul might have been confined to the prison in the prætorium, or barracks, which adjoined or formed part of the palatium.³ The permission to dwell by himself, or at a friend's house (most probably that of Aquila and Priscilla, who had returned to Rome),⁴ though with a soldier of the prætorian guard,⁵ to whom he was still attached by a chain is a proof not only that Burrhus believed him to be innocent, but that he had formed a very high opinion of his integrity. Persons of mean rank seldom obtained any relaxation, and notorious or strongly-suspected criminals never.

17. '*The chief of the Jews.*' The Jews had returned to Rome during the first year of Nero's reign, but as the edict of Claudius had not been

¹ The facts in this note are fully proved by Wieseler, p. 83—88.

² See an excellent note of Wieseler, p. 394.

³ Wieseler, p. 421.

⁴ Olshausen; Wieseler, p. 394.

⁵ Grot. Krebs.

¹ ch. 22. 24. 18. Who, ¹when they had examined me, would
 & 24. 10. & have let *me* go, because there was no cause of death
 25. 8. & 26. in me.
 31.

ch. 25. 11. 19. But when the Jews spake against *it*, ²I was
 constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought
 to accuse my nation of.

20. For this cause therefore have I called for you,
 * ch. 26. 6, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that ³for
 7. the hope of Israel I am bound with ⁴this chain.

* ch. 26. 29. Ephes. 3. 1. 21. And they said unto him, We neither received
 & 4. 1. & 6. letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of
 20. the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of
 2 Tim. 1. 16. thee.
 & 2. 9. Philem. 10. 13.

22. But we desire to hear of thee what thou
 * Luke 2. 34. thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that
 ch. 24. 5, 14. every where ⁵it is spoken against.
 1 Pet. 2. 12. & 4. 14.

repealed, they appear not to have considered themselves to be permanently settled. This may account for their apparent ignorance of the affairs of the Christians, who formed a numerous community at Rome.¹ The objects of St. Paul's address are, first, to vindicate himself from the charge of hostility to his nation and their religion, of which the Jews would suspect him when they heard of his arrest at Jerusalem; secondly, to disclaim any vindictive feelings, or wish to accuse his countrymen; and, thirdly, to explain to them the principles of the Gospel, and its accordance with the promises hoped for by Israel.

19. '*I was constrained.*' The appeal was involuntary and unpremeditated. It was the only means of defending the character and saving the life of the apostle. It thus meets the objection that he had appealed from an ecclesiastical to a secular tribunal.

20. '*For the hope of Israel.*' For

preaching the resurrection and glory of Messiah, the object of all the national hopes. See note, chap. xxvi. 5.

21. '*And they said unto him.*' The Jews of Jerusalem had not yet sent any persons to prosecute the charges brought by them against St. Paul. They had to wait for the formal summons of the imperial court, before they could be permitted to forward accusers and witnesses, and a considerable time would necessarily elapse before these preliminaries would be completed.² Still it is remarkable that as many '*brethren,*' that is, Jews, had come to Rome from Jerusalem, none should have brought any charge against him; and I am inclined to believe that they dissembled their feelings, on account of the favourable estimation in which they observed that the apostle was held by the imperial officers.

22. '*This sect.*' The word heresy, used in the original, means a party or sect in religion or philosophy. The Jews speak very cautiously,

¹ Davidson, Intro. vol. ii. p. 50. ² Meyer, Wieseler, p. 394. note.

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.

¶ Luke 24. 27.
ch. 17. 3. & 19. 8.
¶ See on ch. 26. 6. 22.

24. And ^{*}some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

¶ ch. 14. 4. & 17. 4. & 19. 9.

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:

¶ Isa. 6. 9.
Jer. 5. 21.
Ezek. 12. 2.
Matt. 13. 14, 15.
Mark 4. 12.
Luke 8. 10.
John 12. 40.
Rom. 11. 8.

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 sal-

merely stating, what could not be denied, that Christianity was spoken against by all their countrymen who were not converts.

23. '*Lodging.*' See note, ver. 16. St. Paul very probably remained some time at the house of a friend, and then occupied a hired house. The word here used seems rather to denote the former alternative.

It will be observed that St. Paul pursued the same course of reasoning as on former occasions. The only argument which can be used to persuade the Jews is that derived from the correspondence of the types and prophecies with the person of our Lord Jesus.

24. The effect of St. Paul's address seems to prove that these Jews had never before heard the arguments by which the Christian religion is defended.

25. '*One word,*' i.e. one solemn warning.

'*The Holy Ghost.*' The inspiration of the prophets is always attributed to the Holy Ghost in the New Testament.

26, 27. These words are of perpetual application to that part of the Jewish nation which resists the truth. Their spiritual blindness is traced to grossness of heart, i.e. sensuality and selfishness, which under the various forms of covetousness, envy, and spiritual pride, equally characterised the Sadducee and the unbelieving Pharisee. As the blindness is not only a result from, but a judicial infliction for, these evil affections, it is sometimes attributed to the justice of God, even while the passions themselves are traced to the instigation of Satan.

28. '*The salvation.*' Not merely

^a Matt. 21. 41, 43. vation of God is sent ^aunto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

29. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

30. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

^a ch. 4. 31. Ephes. 6. 19. 31. ^aPreaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

the doctrine, but the converting efficacy of the Gospel, with all its blessings and privileges.

29. The result of this was doubtless the conversion of a part, and increased animosity of the others.

30. These two whole years are probably to be reckoned from the arrival of St. Paul. The trial of the apostle may have then commenced, or his liberty been abridged by the influence

of Poppea, who was a Jewish proselyte and the infamous Tigellinus.

St. Paul was in custody during the whole time, but not in the prætorium. Most probably, the upper room of the house in which he dwelt was used as a Church by the Roman Christians. Dr. Wordsworth observes that this silence (as to St. Paul's after life) proves that the arrival of the great apostle at Rome is the confirmatory point of the history.

PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS.

1, 2. While the chosen people of God persecute His apostle, he receives kindly and humane treatment from barbarians. The natural feelings are links which bind mankind together until they are worn out by sensuality, or broken by malignant passions. They were employed on this occasion as means of conveying some consolation and refreshment to St. Paul, not indeed to preserve him from suffering, but to enable him to endure it, that his nature might not succumb to his afflictions.¹

3, 4. Far more consonant with the principles of true philosophy were the conjectures of these untutored heathens than the spurious humanity which sympathises with crime, and would abolish the very notion of retributive justice. They were right in believing that the murderer is pursued by a living curse, and that if vengeance be delayed it is only to become more exemplary and terrible. We should hold fast this persuasion with reference to ourselves, and be well assured that our sins, whatever may be their character, will find us out, here or hereafter, and unless they be cast upon Christ, and nailed upon His cross, will cause our destruction. At the same time, we shall be careful not to prejudice others, or to assume that evils which befall them are judicial inflictions.

¹ From Quesnel.

Calamities in this life are often but chastisements, intended to warn, or purify, or perfect the sons of God, and may even be the means of signalising them as objects of His special grace and love.

5, 6. The dominion over the lower orders of creation, which was partially forfeited by Adam, will be fully restored to all who are with Christ at the time of the restitution of all things. He manifested some portion of His divine power in the primitive saints as pledges and signs of that glorious futurity. But He has not vouchsafed a continuance of such gifts, as we may reverentially conjecture, because the minds of ordinary men are too weak to discriminate between the honour due to a saint and to the sanctifier. The world would be divided, so to speak, between hardened opponents, and ignorant worshippers, of miracle-working saints.

7—10. Kindness shown to the members of Christ is never unrequited. The hospitable magistrate of Malta entertained an angel unawares, and brought an infallible physician home to his afflicted father. The miracles of St. Paul, doubtless, made a way for the entrance of the Gospel into many hearts that had sympathised with the sufferings of the shipwrecked sailors; and we may well hope that Publius, together with Julius and the first Christian nobleman, Sergius Paulus, not only learned to love St. Paul, but were brought by him into that kingdom, where a cup of cold water only given to one of Christ's people will be abundantly rewarded.

11—14. Another change of scenes and labours. St. Paul is withdrawn from the grateful attentions of his Maltese converts, and is borne rapidly towards the metropolis of the world, there to encounter new trials and win new triumphs. With what different feelings were the coasts of Italy viewed by the voyagers! There the merchant hoped for gain; there the warm-hearted centurion longed for his home; there the criminal anticipated lengthened and anxious trials, to be terminated by an ignominious death; and there the Apostle of Christ knew that he was to 'bear witness' to the truth, and fulfil his Master's last injunction to His disciples, preaching the Gospel where its influence would be felt to the uttermost parts of the earth.

14, 15. Loving hearts are open to receive the apostle with the affection and reverence of children. Whatever else might await him—whatever he might be called to do, or doomed to suffer, henceforth he was sure of sympathy: and for that 'he thanked God, and took courage.' If we remember that the expression of Christian sympathy strengthened the heart of an apostle, we shall let no cold reserve or dark suspicions cast a cloud over our intercourse with the followers of a common Saviour.

16. A sad parting for the poor criminals. Let us hope that some of them at least bore with them a better source of consolation than even the consciousness of innocence could supply, even a well-assured hope of reconciliation with God in Christ.

17—20. One ruling passion moved the heart of the apostle, one restless and unceasing yearning for the salvation of Israel. He had good cause to know that in apprising the Jews of his arrival he was but raising up new enemies, who would soon surround the imperial throne with machinations against his own life; but he does not hesitate, nor after so many trials will he turn to the Gentiles first, even in the city where he lay in bonds through the envy of his people. He will not leave any means untried, so that he may win a way into

the heart of one who belongs to the remnant of grace. How simple and touching are the words of truth in the mouth of the suffering Christian! Affection for his brethren breathes in each accent, and his chain reminds him not of the backsliding, but of the hope, of Israel.

23—27. The dealings of God with His people vary in form, but are always the same in principle. Every where His messengers state the truth fully, distinctly, and powerfully—the gate of the heavenly city is opened to all, and every inducement held out that they may enter therein; but the choice once made alters their position—evidences affect them no more, and the gate is closed. The Hebrews then entered the chamber of St. Paul as curious or sceptical inquirers; they left it, either with hearts thrilled into ecstasy at the fulfilment of a glorious hope, or with a hardened and embittered spirit, prepared to persecute the servants of Him whom they had pierced. Christians are not in the same condition, for they have been admitted within the walls and enrolled among the citizens of the true Zion. Of how much sorer punishment must they be worthy, if they have forced their way through its gates, and chosen their portion with the evil ones who are without,¹ in spite of the restraints of discipline and the inward admonitions of the Spirit of God!

28, 29. In those two years the apostle completed the vast work entrusted to him by his Lord. He then planted the young tree of life deeply in the strange and uncongenial soil of heathen Rome. There it was so watered by the outpourings of divine grace, that it attained an early maturity, and brought forth abundantly the fruits of righteousness. Ere long the storm of persecution burst forth, stripped it of its foliage, and tore away some of its noblest branches; but, sustained by the indwelling might of the Redeemer, the trunk stood firm and unimpaired, and soon put forth new shoots, extending its shadow to the remotest West. Rome became, for a season, the spiritual metropolis of the world, and did not lose her pre-eminence until she ceased to be faithful to the truth, which the apostle preached in the fulness of the Spirit, and sealed with his blood. But no local dwelling-place can circumscribe the operations of the Spirit, no earthly city was to succeed to the glory of fallen Zion; and while we may deplore the removal of the candlestick from Rome, we should be unutterably thankful that the light which then first beamed on the Gentiles, still shines with all its original brightness, and sheds its radiance on every quarter of the habitable world.

¹ Revelations xxii. 14, 15.

CLOSING PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY God, who through Thy Holy Spirit didst enable the apostles to perform the work entrusted to them by their Lord, grant unto all ministers, rulers, and evangelists of Thy Church the same mighty aid, that they may continue in the same glorious course, and extend Thy Gospel to every quarter of the world. Inspire all members of the Church with a fervent desire to advance Thy kingdom, and thus to attest the reality of their faith, and the sincerity of their gratitude, for the inestimable blessings Thou hast vouchsafed to them in Christ Jesus. And, O blessed Lord, make us a truly united community, of one heart and of one soul. Banish all unseemly and discordant passions; enlighten our spirits to discern all saving truth, and quicken our affections, that we may cleave to it with full purpose of heart. So may we be an acceptable people in Thy sight, and become fit instruments for bringing others to the knowledge of Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for the sake of Him who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

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