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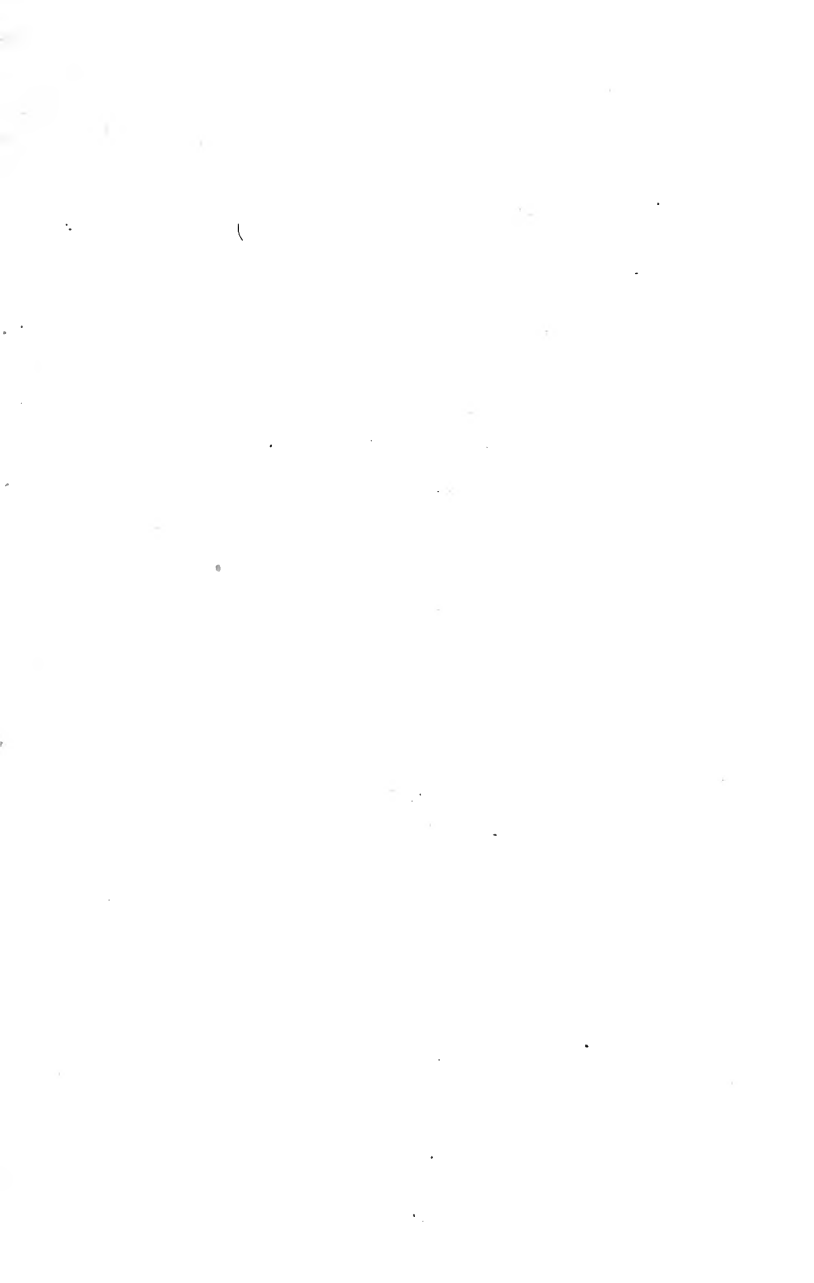
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REV. MARCUS DODS, D.D.,  
AND  
REV. ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D.

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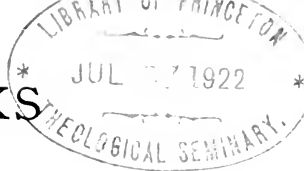
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HANDBOOKS



FOR

BIBLE CLASSES

AND PRIVATE STUDENTS.

EDITED BY

REV. MARCUS DODS, D.D.,

AND

REV. ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D.

*THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES—CHAPTERS XIII.-XXVIII.*

*BY THOMAS M. LINDSAY, D.D.*

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THE  
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,

WITH INTRODUCTION, MAPS, AND NOTES.

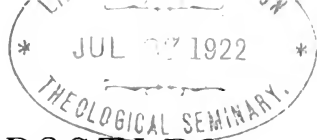
BY  
THOMAS M. LINDSAY, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY AND CHURCH HISTORY, FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

VOL. II.

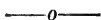
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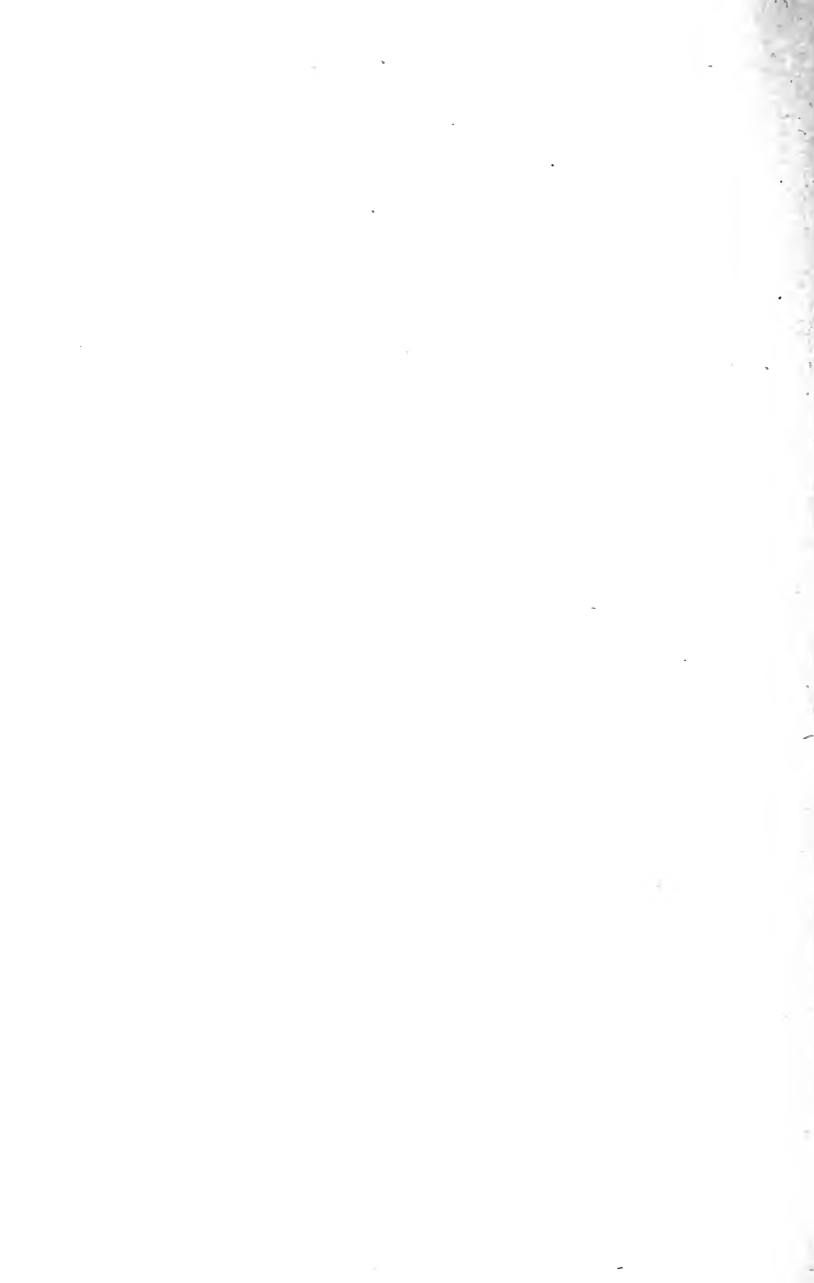
## P R E F A C E.



THIS little Commentary makes no pretension to be anything else than an aid to teachers of Bible classes and to private students of the Bible. In my Commentary on the first twelve chapters I have called attention to the various introductory matters which help to the understanding of the Book—its aim; its author; when, where, and for whom written; the earlier missionary journeys; the world, social and religious, lying round the Book; and the condition of the Jews in Palestine and of the Dispersion—and have not thought it necessary to go over the same ground again. Two very important critical questions are suggested more particularly by the second part of the Book of Acts :—(1) The solution of the problem of the early Christian Church, how to reconcile the commandments of Moses with the new law of liberty taught by Jesus; (2) and the result of the discussion of this problem in the two parties within the Christian Church. The Introduction to this Commentary on chapters xiii.—xxviii. is mainly occupied with these questions.

THOMAS M. LINDSAY.

FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW,  
*September 1885.*



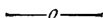
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# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

XIII.—XXVIII.



## INTRODUCTION.<sup>1</sup>

### THE PROBLEM OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

NO attentive reader of the Acts of the Apostles can have failed to note that one of the great difficulties which forced itself on the early Apostolic Church, was how to reconcile the commandments of Moses with the new law of liberty which was an essential element in the Catholic Church of Jesus Christ, nor to see that the solution of this problem was not accomplished without divisions among the brethren and many painful conflicts. Modern criticism has expended much investigation on the matter, and has in particular raised the question whether the book of the Acts gives a trustworthy account of the way in which the Church acted, or whether the conflict provoked was not much deeper and deadlier than the writer persuades his readers to believe. Ever since Ferdinand Christian Baur published, in 1831, his celebrated article on *The Christ Party in the Corinthian Church*, the theory that there was a deep-seated opposition between Jewish and Gentile Christianity has been used to discredit the authenticity of many of the New Testament writings, and among them of the Acts of the Apostles. In the Introduction to chapters I.—XII., reference was made to this theory and its effects

<sup>1</sup> For the general introduction to the Acts of the Apostles, the reader is referred to my *Acts of the Apostles*, chapters I.—XII., published in this series.

on the aim and date of composition of the book. "The special position of the Tübingen school has been very generally abandoned, but its criticism of particular books, their authenticity, historical credibility, and date, are still not without influence. . . . According to Zeller and other critics, two parties existed in the Apostolic Church in irreconcilable opposition, the Jewish and the Gentile Christians. Jewish Christians asserted that their faith was Judaism with a new Prophet, that the Law of Moses and Mosaic ceremonial practices were binding on Christians as well as on unbelieving Jews, that Gentile believers must first become proselytes to Judaism before they could become Christians, that circumcision was the only gateway to baptism. Gentile Christianity, on the other hand, refused to admit this, was intolerant of Mosaic injunctions, and insisted on starting with the New Testament, or if it admitted the Old Testament at all, put value only on the prophetic element. These differences within the Church were also represented, it is said, within the College of the Apostles. At the head of intolerant Jewish Christianity stood Peter, John, and James ; at the head of intolerant Gentile Christianity stood Paul. As years went on, a middle party gradually grew up, which became the Catholic Church of Christ : some members of this middle party, wishing to show that it had always been in the Church, wrote the Acts of the Apostles, making Peter on occasions speak words and utter sentiments which only one holding Paul's opinions could have made, and showing Paul accepting compromises and submitting to conditions repugnant to his declared convictions. The question arises, What historical evidence is there for these sweeping assertions? When examined, it is ludicrously small. Stript of the glamour of erudition and of historical imagination, the real basis of this Tübingen theory is as follows. There were undoubtedly in the second century Jewish Christian sectaries bitterly opposed to all Gentile Christianity, who claimed St. Peter as their special Apostle ; and there were Gentile Christians such as Marcion, outside the Christian Church, who hated everything Jewish ; and there was undoubtedly in the Apostolic Church an extreme Judaizing party, called 'the sect of the Pharisees who



believed,' who were continually thwarting Paul. Baur and Zeller take the opinions of the Jewish Christian heretics of the second century, read them back into the Judaizers of the Apostolic times, make the Twelve sharers in these beliefs and usages, and then by dint of ingenious exegesis they try to find these opinions and practices in those New Testament writings which bear the names of those whom they call the Judaizing Apostles. That is the basis of the theory ; and on this theory Zeller declares that the narrative of the acquiescence of the Church in Jerusalem in the admission of Gentile Christians must have been unhistorical, and that Peter could not have baptized Cornelius and his household in the manner described." The fact of the difficulty of the problem remains, however, although we may refuse to accept the guidance of the Tübingen school in describing it and its consequences, and requires serious attention. Criticism has made the historical investigation of the problem more difficult by the doubts it has cast on some of the documents naturally employed in its solution. Three of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles cannot be used until it has been shown that the criticism which has refused to place them in the first century of the Christian era is erroneous. We have still St. Mark's Gospel, the Apocalypse, the principal Epistles of St. Paul, the General Epistle of James, and the First Epistle of Peter. These are documents which present criticism has almost unanimously admitted to be authentic, and to contain the earliest description of Christian life and thought. It is not of course admitted that the other canonical writings are as late as some critics make them ; but for *our present inquiry* they are left out of consideration. The question then before us is, What light do the Apocalypse, the Epistles of James and of Peter, and the principal Epistles of St. Paul—especially those to the Galatians, to the Romans, and to the Corinthians—shed on the problem? and when this has been answered, the result can be compared with what is said in the Acts of the Apostles. The inquiry is twofold : (1) What were the precise relations between Jewish Christians and unbelieving Jews, and how did Jewish Christianity solve the problem at issue?

(2) How did Jewish look on Gentile Christianity, and how far did the two coalesce to make the Christian Church catholic?

#### THE PROBLEM HAD TO BE SOLVED BY JEWISH CHRISTIANS.

It must be remembered that the earliest Christian Church was a strictly Jewish Church, and that the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was poured out upon Jews only. The eleven were Galilean Jews. The Church of the Upper Chamber was a Jewish Church. The Church of the First Revival had only Jews of Palestine or of the Dispersion for its members. How did they differ from other Jews? It may be answered that there was this difference, that while the rest of the Jewish nation still looked forward to a Messiah that was to come, Christian Jews believed that the Messiah had come—that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. But this meant a great deal more than that the unbelieving Jews thought that the Messiah was yet to come, while believers thought that He had come. A dead Messiah was unintelligible, a crucified Messiah was an abomination to the Jews. Christians had to believe that something had occurred which had overcome the death and had glorified the crucifixion. Every Jewish Christian based his faith in the Messiahship of Jesus on the Resurrection. It was a living, risen, ascended Messiah that he believed on, and this thought separated him widely from the old circle of Messianic ideas; and therefore Baur and his followers are hopelessly wrong at starting when they say that “had no new development (Paul and his work) taken place,” the only difference between them “would have been that the one regarded the Messiah as having come already, while the other looked upon Him as still to come.” This event of the Resurrection, and *all that it implied*, lay between the Christian and the non-Christian Jews. There is no need to suppose that believing Jews at once perceived all that was implied in the Resurrection of Jesus, but their earnest faith in the facts of the Resurrection and Ascension, and their apprehension that the Spirit of Jesus was always with them, their Guide and Comforter, raised them at once into a new world of thought and action into which unbelieving

Jews could never penetrate. They felt themselves at the beginning or starting-point of a new life in the world, and this made them missionaries of an earnest, aggressive type. They spent their lives in making converts, in increasing the boundaries of the New Kingdom. Their belief in the Messianic idea still remained, but it was changed by the personal influence of Jesus, and they appear as men ready to accept whatever changes in the Messianic idea of their fathers the unique personality of Jesus compelled them to adopt. These changes gradually unfolded themselves to the Jewish Christians, and were at first rather doctrinal than practical. They lived their old Jewish lives, circumcised their children, were strict in Jewish observances, remained fenced off from fellowship with Gentiles. But the history of their own personal experience, more especially of their missionary experience, compelled them to consider their own position and those of their converts to the Mosaic Law. At present we are leaving out of consideration the Acts of the Apostles, and limiting ourselves to the two facts that Gentiles were brought within the Christian Church, and that the presence of these Gentiles compelled the Jewish Christians to reconsider the relation of themselves and of their converts to the Mosaic Law—facts abundantly proved by New Testament documents whose authenticity no criticism has questioned.

It must be remembered that when this problem was forced upon them, the Christians had not the New Testament canon. Their Scripture was the Old Testament, interpreted by the personality and by the sayings of Jesus. Where are we to find that picture and these sayings of the Master which were before the Christians of the earliest Apostolic Church? The captiousness of advanced criticism compels us for the present to pass over the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John; but there remains the Gospel of Mark, which the most recent criticism almost unanimously declares to be the nearest counterpart to the oral Gospel of the earliest Christian Church. This Gospel does not give us so much aid as we could find in the Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew, nor as the pictures of our Lord presented in the Gospel of St. John, but enough remains for our purpose.

## OUR LORD POINTED OUT THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

In His sayings recorded in the Gospel of St. Mark, Jesus treated the Mosaic Law as a divinely appointed way of approach to God, and therefore taught that it should be carefully observed with literal exactness by all who did not accept Himself as the Messiah ; but that His disciples had transcended the old relation in which all Jews stood to the Law by their relation to Him. Thus our Lord looked at the Mosaic Law in a twofold way. It was as binding on unbelieving Jews after His Advent as before ; but after His coming, His disciples stood in a new relation to it. Our Lord was careful to make this distinction between unbelieving Jews and His followers. He never spoke lightly of the Law of Moses. When He had to describe to a promiscuous audience the new relation in which His disciples stood to the Law, the truths were for the most part taught in parables which had to be expounded in private. It was only when alone with His disciples, or when compelled to vindicate publicly His conduct or theirs with respect to the Law, that He declared broadly and openly that all men who came to Him were no longer under the letter of the Law in the way that they had been before His coming.

Jesus broke the Law and made Himself unclean when He touched the leper to heal him, but He sternly commanded the man to fulfil all that the Law required of lepers who had been healed (Mark i. 42-44). When He refused to ask His disciples to fast, and justified the refusal by principles which, if applied, must have cut at the root of any Mosaic observances (ii. 19-22), He was not opposing the Mosaic Law, for Moses had commanded *one* fast only, on the great day of Atonement, and the custom of fasting which the disciples had broken was only a rabbinical addition ; and His principles were expressed in short parables, not in plain statements.

(a) The first case where Jesus plainly interfered with the Law of Moses, was when the Pharisees charged His disciples with disregarding the commandments of Moses by doing what was unlawful on the

Sabbath day (ii. 23-28). He justified their disobedience by the example of David, who in a case of necessity had violated the law of the Shewbread, and by distinguishing between the essential part of the Law and commandments which were its partial expression. He claimed as the Son of Man to have full authority over all these commandments of the second class; and because He was Lord of the Sabbath, *His* disciples might disregard the Old Testament precept. But this vindication of their conduct did not imply that those who did not own His lordship could plead it for their licence, nor that for the disciples the whole Mosaic Law was abolished by His Advent and by their faith on Him.

(*b*) Our Lord's discussion of the laws of ceremonial purification is still more instructive (vii. 1-23). The Pharisees had complained that the disciples had eaten without ceremonially washing their hands. Jesus answered that the Pharisees had made the Law of none effect by their traditions, which had misread the whole spirit of the Mosaic economy, and then went on to describe what real purity was. It was purity of the heart, and external purification was of no use save as a sign of inward sanctification. It is evident that His description of what purifies and what does not must render a great part of the Mosaic Law useless for the new kingdom of God which He was establishing. But while laying down these principles, He never asserts that the great mass of the Jewish people are freed from their obligations to the Mosaic Law; His principles are given in parables which require to be explained to His disciples in private (ver. 17); and it is only His followers who are taught that true purity is in the heart, not in hand-washing and other ceremonial observances.

(*c*) The Mosaic laws of Divorce furnish another means of exhibiting the relation of the new kingdom to the Mosaic Law (Mark x. 3-9). Our Lord points out the imperfection of the Mosaic Law, which unfits it to be the law of a more spiritual kingdom, an imperfection due, He says, to the hardness of heart of the people. The imperfection of the law of Divorce can be read back into the whole round of Mosaic observances, and it can be seen that our Lord freed His disciples from such portions of it as ceremonial purity and Sabbath observance,

because His disciples through their faith in Him had within their reach a more excellent way.

(d) Lastly, our Lord openly told His disciples what parts of the Mosaic Law were no longer binding on His followers, and what were of permanent obligation, when He distinguished between the first and greatest commandment and the whole code of observances founded on it (Mark xii. 28-34). The one commandment on which all others depend is that which enjoins the perpetual obligation of love to God and to man. But only those near the kingdom can see this (ver. 34), and only those within the kingdom can be trusted to apply this as a positive touchstone to discover what separate Mosaic commandments are to be retained and what may be safely rejected, or as a negative test to bring out the fact that mercy is better than sacrifice. It is only by fellowship with Jesus, by entrance within the new kingdom, that the faithful are freed from the old law of sacrifice.

Our line of investigation confines us to St. Mark's Gospel, but it would be easy if time and space permitted to show how our Lord's discourses reported in the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John only work out more fully the principles here laid down.

#### THE ORIGINAL DISCIPLES AND THEIR SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

It is plain that our Lord's disciples during His lifetime were very slow to understand all that He taught them, but it is equally evident that the Resurrection and Ascension wrought a wonderful change on their preparedness to look back and appropriate the lessons of His life. If these sayings given in Mark were known and in a measure understood, the disciples could not have been Jews who differed from the rest of their neighbours merely in this, that they believed that the Messiah whom the rest of their countrymen still expected had already come. They must also have seen that they no longer stood in the same relation to the Mosaic Law with the rest of their nation. Criticism has almost universally maintained that the Epistle of James, the First Epistle of St. Peter, and the Apocalypse of St. John repre-

sent the thoughts of the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem ; and when these writings are examined, they confirm the view that it was historically impossible for the personal disciples of Jesus to remain outside of the idea that Christianity was something more than a part of Judaism, and that it had a universality to which Judaism never pretended.

#### JAMES THE BROTHER OF THE LORD.

The Epistle of James reads like a commentary on the sayings of Jesus about the imperfection of the Mosaic Law which have been quoted from St. Mark. Purity is purity of heart (iv. 8, iii. 11, 12), not ceremonial cleansing. The *royal law*, the law which forms the fundamental code of the kingdom, is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (ii. 8), the rule which Jesus had called the second of the two great commandments. Men are enabled to enter into a higher relationship with God through faith, and thus united, enter into a higher sphere of life which can manifest itself in good works. Finally, James recognises that the law of the new kingdom of God is a perfect law, a law of liberty, which is implicitly contrasted with the imperfect and unbending Mosaic code. There is not a single sentence in the whole Epistle going to show that the writer holds that Christians are bound to observe the ceremonial law of Moses ; on the contrary, the whole argument implies that believers, in and through Christ, have been raised into a higher sphere, and have transcended the circle of Jewish ceremonial observance. The Epistle of James is no document of Jewish Christianity, if by that term is meant an anti-Pauline, anti-Catholic, Judaizing Christianity.

#### PETER.

The First Epistle of Peter is written to Jews of the Dispersion. It contains not a word about the observance of the Mosaic Law, not a sentence which St. Paul might not have written to Gentile Christians (i. 14, 18, ii. 9, 10, iii. 6, iv. 3). Purity is found not in ceremonial washings, but in obedience to the truth, in refraining

from the lusts of the flesh, in living in devotion to the will of God (i. 22, ii. 1, 2, iv. 2). Believers become new creatures (i. 3, 23, ii. 2) in Christ, and therefore transcend the old economy; the law of the new kingdom, the law of love to God and love to man, takes the place of the old ceremonial code (i. 22, ii. 19, iii. 8); and in one striking passage St. Peter seems to put Judaism on the same level as heathendom ("which in times past were no people at all, but now are the people of God," ii. 10).

### JOHN.

The Apostle Peter and James the brother of the Lord do not speak of any conflict between parties in the Christian Church, and unless other sources had made us aware of the fact, these Epistles reveal no trace of a Judaizing party wishing to limit the Church to the confines of Judaism. A knowledge of the actual state of matters, however, enables us to see why James lays so much stress on the law of liberty, and why Peter insists so strongly that purity is purity of heart and soul from evil lusts. When we turn to the Apocalypse, the evidences of conflict are abundant. We find men who, the Apostle says, boast that they are Jews while they are not, and men who abuse the law of liberty by joining in heathen feasts and by indulging the lusts of the flesh. It is therefore of importance to see how the author of the Apocalypse regards this conflict of parties within the Christian Church. No one can avoid noticing how the whole setting of the book is Jewish in a sense that belongs to no other part of the New Testament canon. The writer sees on the foundation walls of the New Jerusalem, the names of the twelve Apostles, who represent the twelve tribes of Israel. The new kingdom is a glorified Israel; the new city, a New Jerusalem. But his Christology is the Christology of St. Paul, and he nowhere requires believers to be subject to the Mosaic Law. "Nowhere does he put forward the requirement of circumcision, or of the observance of Jewish festivals: on the contrary, to the moderate party of Gentile Christians at Thyatira, who did not, like the radical



libertines with their cultus of the flesh, think they were obliged to sound 'the depths of Satan,' he expressly declares that he will lay upon them no further burden, only they must hold fast to their past good practice" (Rev. ii. 24, 25). What that was he does not expressly state, but from other exhortations it is evident that it must have been abstinence from heathen worship and from heathen unchastity. He promises the crown of life, a place at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and a share in our Lord's universal dominion, to all Gentile Christians who hold fast to these simple precepts of Christian morals and who maintain their confession and life in spite of persecution; while Jews who are the enemies of Christ, perhaps Judaizing Christians who were for ever disturbing the Church, he brands as false Jews of the synagogue of Satan (Rev. ii. 9, iii. 9).

In these writings of the heads of the Church in Jerusalem, we find no narrow Judaism, but a generous recognition of the universality of the gospel. The new law is a law of liberty, and finds expression in perfect love to God and man. Jews, in spite of their obedience to the Mosaic code as well as heathen, are aliens to God unless reconciled in Jesus Christ. The Apostle John calls Mosaic observances a burden, and enjoins on Gentile Christians the observance only of the principles of Christian morality. There is no trace whatsoever of a conflict between these Apostles and St. Paul.

#### PAUL ON THE CONFLICT BETWEEN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

When we turn to St. Paul's Epistles, however, it is evident that numbers of Jewish Christians did not acquiesce in a Catholic Christianity, and desired to see circumcision made the door of entrance into the Christian Church. These men were the avowed opponents of St. Paul, refused to acknowledge his missionary work, would not give him the title of Apostle, and denied that he preached a true Christ and a true salvation.

Paul tells the story of their interference in his Epistles to the Galatians and to the Corinthians. He tells us that for fourteen years

he was personally unknown to all but the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem, but that all the brethren there "glorified God" because of the success attending his missionary labours. While at Antioch, after the end of his first missionary journey, certain men whom he calls "false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage," raised a dispute in the Church there. The cause of it was whether Gentiles who believed must be circumcised before they could be admitted into the Christian Church. During the controversy, Paul was encouraged "by revelation" to go with Barnabas to Jerusalem and lay the matter before the brethren there. He took with him Titus, a baptized Gentile who had never been circumcised. He had a private audience with the leaders of the Jerusalem Church, and the result was—(1) that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised, and therefore that circumcision was not laid on Gentile believers ; (2) that Paul was formally recognised to be an Apostle of equal standing with the Twelve ; (3) that his special sphere of work was to be among the Gentiles, while Peter's work was to be among the Jews ; (4) and that no legal burdens were to be laid on the Gentile Christians save that they were to exhibit the great law of Christian love to God and to man in their care of the poor. It is evident from this account that there was an animated discussion in Jerusalem, and that the result arrived at was in no small degree owing to Paul's firmness. The decision come to was that "faith in the Messiah Jesus was acknowledged as constituting a new common religious life, transcending the distinction between Jew and Gentile ; and Christianity could no longer be regarded as a smaller society within the wider Judaism." Unhappily, this decision of the Jerusalem Church did not end the difficulties that Paul had to encounter. Peter paid a visit to Antioch, and while there consorted freely with Gentile Christians, treating them as brethren in the Lord ; but when "certain came from James" he drew back and "separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision." Peter's conduct influenced the Jewish members of the Church, and they also withdrew from the society of their Gentile brethren, and even Barnabas was

induced to follow their example. Paul resisted, charged Peter with double-dealing, and exposed the inconsistency of the Jewish standpoint. Judaizing Christians were not better Christians than others, but worse; because, by their perverse adherence to the Law, they frustrated the grace of Christ. Paul does not tell us how the matter ended. It is implied that Peter, Barnabas, and the other Jews at Antioch accepted his clear vindication of Christian liberty; but it is evident that from this time onward, Paul was continually thwarted by Judaizing Christians. They followed Paul, they raised dissensions among his converts, they denied his Apostleship, and they asserted that he preached a false gospel. They were active in the Churches of Galatia and of Corinth. In the former they had persuaded the Gentile Christians to submit themselves to the Mosaic Law; in the latter they asserted that Paul was not an Apostle of the same rank as the Twelve, and was therefore not to be obeyed in the same way.

Paul's Epistles tell us how keenly he felt these persecutions, these "perils among false brethren;" but there is no evidence that the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem were in sympathy with the Judaizing party who tried in all ways to overturn the work of the great Apostle to the brethren. The progress of historical criticism since the rise and fall of the Tübingen school has been in the direction of showing that the conflict between Paul and the Twelve or the Three (Peter, James the brother of our Lord, and John) has been greatly overrated. Thus Pfleiderer dismisses any fundamental difference between Paul and Peter, but holds that James and Paul were in opposition which could not be overcome. The whole evidence for this, however, rests on the phrase, "Certain came from James" (Gal. ii. 12); but as James was the recognised head of the Church in Jerusalem, the phrase cannot be taken to mean more than that these disturbers of the peace came from the mother Church.

#### PAUL'S SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

There is no evidence even in St. Paul's Epistles to show that Paul held one view of the relation in which Christians stood to the

Mosaic Law, and that Peter, John, and James held another. Paul's way of stating the relation is undoubtedly put in clearer and more definite language, and insists on practical application of principles in a way that is not to be found in the Epistles of James or of Peter. But it must be remembered that, when writing to the Galatians, he was dealing with Gentiles who had been taught the perfect law of liberty, and who had been persuaded by intruders to go back from that liberty; and when writing to the Corinthians, he was vindicating his apostolic rank and his right to preach the gospel committed to him by the Lord. His Judaizing opponents among the Galatians seem to have taught that in the Old Testament the Law was added to the Promise as a condition of sharing the blessings foreshadowed, and they drew the inference that faith in Christ was not sufficient for salvation, but must be complemented by observance of the Mosaic Law. Paul argues as one living in New Testament times, when the Messiah in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen has come, and therefore as one in a position to distinguish between the permanent evangelical elements in the Old Testament and those which were merely propædeutic, and from this standing-ground he insists that Law and Gospel as preached by his Judaizing opponents are not complementary in the sense that the Gospel is not promised unless the Law be kept, but are exclusive principles—salvation by *deed* of man, and salvation by *grace* of God. Hence to free oneself from the Jewish Law is a positive Christian duty, and freedom from that Law may not be surrendered but at the risk of losing Christ also. "For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage" (Gal. v. 1). He goes still further, and declares that Judaism in the sense in which his opponents taught it, is on a level with heathenism (compare Gal. iv. 3 with iv. 8). Circumcision is nothing in itself; but if a man receive it in the spirit that he is thereby completing a bargain with God and putting himself in such a position that he can have effectual faith in Christ, he steps out of the sphere of the gospel into the sphere where man is left to work out his own salvation in a perfect obedience which is impossible (Gal. v. 2-6).

It cannot be doubted that these statements must have been causes of offence to the Jews, and to many Jewish Christians ; but it should be noticed that Peter makes assertions quite as strong when addressing Jewish Christians of the Dispersion. He says, "Who called you out of *darkness* into His marvellous light : which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God." The matter was one of life and death with Paul. He saw that the fate of the whole future spreading of the gospel was involved in understanding the true relation of Christians to the Mosaic Law, and when he insisted that believers must make their choice between the Mosaic ceremonial and faith in Christ, he felt that what was really at stake was salvation through Christ by the grace of God. Let it be once admitted, however, that believers are saved by faith, not by works ; by God in Christ, and not by their own more or less accurate observance of a Mosaic code, then Paul insisted that the principles of Christian forbearance find place. "He himself became all things to all men, that he might by all means save some" (1 Cor. ix. 22). He distinguished between what was lawful and what was expedient, and directly applied the distinction in cases where Jewish prejudices were sure to be excited. It was pollution for a Jew to eat things offered to idols, and the practice might offend other weak consciences. Paul argues that an idol is nothing, and that the ceremony of presenting meat to an idol does not alter the food, but things which are lawful are not expedient if they are occasions of stumbling to Jews or to Greeks, or to the Church of God. He warns the Corinthian Church against eating things offered to idols and against fornication, just as John warns the Churches at Pergamos and Thyatira (Rev. ii. 5, 14). It is a poor use, he says, to make of the freedom for which Christ has made us free, to cause other weaker brethren to stumble. Paul's statement of the relation between Judaism and Christianity did not differ in any essential point from the views of Peter, John, and James ; nor so far as recorded acts tell us, was his practical application of principles very different from theirs.

Yet the Epistle to the Galatians testifies that Paul was viewed with suspicion by a large number of Jewish Christians, who looked up to

Peter and James as their natural leaders. Can this be readily explained, still without reference to the book of Acts?

### PAUL AND THE THREE.

It is somewhat difficult for us to put ourselves in the place of the Christians of the first generation when everything was a beginning. Their past lives had been Jewish, they had lived under the Mosaic dispensation, and the ceremonial Law had been not merely a written code, but part of their lives. Jesus was the Messiah foretold and witnessed in that Law and in all the Old Testament writings. The God of their fathers had sent His Son according to Old Testament promises. Their Christian life, if it transcended, at least had grown out of their past. Their Scriptures were the books of the Old Testament with its precepts given to their nation by God—commandments from Jehovah. It is a difficult thing to break with the past; perhaps more difficult to see how past and present may combine in one unity of spiritual experience without visible continuity of customs, usages, and religious practices. It was easy to say that in Jesus all God's promises were yea and amen, but very difficult to translate that thought into the everyday conduct that it implied. Then these Old Testament commandments which went to make up the Mosaic Law, had they not been commanded by Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel? Language could not be clearer than the law of circumcision: "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee: every man-child among you shall be circumcised;" or than, "My covenant shall be in your flesh *an everlasting covenant.*" Their forefathers through long generations back had been circumcised; the Forerunner had been circumcised; Jesus Himself had been circumcised on the eighth day. Circumcision was not a human invention, but a Divine institution, and one that our Lord had never in so many words spoken against either in public or privately to His disciples. We, living now after centuries of spiritual experience have made things plainer, who have had no past life under Mosaic ceremonies, who have never had the Old Testament as our only Scripture,

we can see that circumcision had a spiritual signification, and that the moment the spiritual purpose was fulfilled the outward sign vanished. We can understand that circumcision came to be abolished, not by violent abrogation, but "as noontide abolishes dawn, or as summer abolishes springtide, or as our manhood has abolished our infancy." But can we see how our present is abolishing our past, or how religious or political maxims take new meanings in our own day? All that ceremonial ritual which fenced off the Jews from other nations had been part of their lives for generations. They were used to it; the distinction between clean and unclean food had become part of their bodily framework, part of their physical lives: they loathed blood and things strangled with a physical loathing; they knew how much physical wellbeing, how many wholesome prescriptions, lay in the ceremonial enactments. And this ceremonial code had in times of dire national disaster preserved the common life of Israel. It is Spinoza, the greatest of modern Jewish thinkers, who has said that but for circumcision the Jews would long ago have been absorbed in the nations of Europe; and the ancient rite and the ceremonial that was built on it have kept the Jew true to himself, a separate indomitable people during ages of Persian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman conquest and tyranny. Religious sentiment, bodily likes and dislikes, honest patriotism, all combined to make the Jew, Christian though he had become, cling to the Mosaic Law. He might know that every believer had transcended that Law, that men were now called on to live under a new law of liberty, that the Mosaic Law belonged to the past, and was in many parts imperfect, but he could not suddenly break with that past. The original disciples, the heads of the Church in Jerusalem, felt that their chief mission was to win their countrymen for Christ. They were to begin at Jerusalem: their Master had announced that He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He had never denounced circumcision, although he had rebuked pharisaical observance of the seventh day, the hypocrisy of rabbinical legalism, the imperfection of ceremonial cleansing, and had even said that the Mosaic law of Divorce was founded on the hardness of the human heart. They had gradually grown to be Christians, had

been led slowly from one stage of experience to another, and had been taught the freedom of the gospel only as they were able to bear it. Is it surprising that they should have been afraid to offend Jewish prejudices, that when they saw numbers of converts who were ignorantly zealots for the Law, they should have been at pains to consult their prejudices, and been afraid to follow out in practice what their consciences told them was the path of Christian liberty? They knew—the Epistles of Peter and of James bear witness to it—that the Mosaic Law was transcended in the new law of liberty, that they were free to test each part of the ceremonial code by the chief commandment which enjoined love to God and love to man ; but was it surprising that they applied the principle with some hesitation, and were slow to depart from any Jewish usage without what seemed to them direct Divine guidance, and that each departure had no consequences beyond itself, and did not for them, in practice at least, mean the abandonment of the whole ceremonial code, or of any part of it save that portion which had in certain circumstances been found inconsistent with fidelity to their Master? And if all this be true, is it wonderful that Jewish believers, who were zealots for the Law, and who did not apprehend, as the Apostles were taught to do, that it had been transcended by the Christian life, should claim them as their leaders, and hinder the progress of the Church towards catholicity by their inconvenient devotion to Peter and James.

Paul, on the other hand, had no such gradual training in the mind of Jesus ; he had not been led step by step from incident to incident, nor had he been weaned from Judaism in half-conscious ways. His was a sudden conversion ; he was parted from his past life by a sharp wrench, and in his lonely musings had been obliged to think out clearly *the principles* which were to guide his future conduct : he saw his way while they felt theirs ; and because he had been taught in inward spiritual experience, in musings and visions and raptures, he appeared to the Jewish zealots a rebel against that Law which had nursed him, and a traitor to that fatherland which had once looked on him as its rising leader.

It was hard for the Three who were the recognised leaders of the



Church at Jerusalem to look forward to the inevitable break between Judaism and Christianity. It was natural for them always to lean to the Jewish side when conflicts arose within the Church of the first generation, and to be anxious to preserve to the community those of their followers who were zealots for the Law. It was to be expected that they should be somewhat afraid of impetuous missionaries who carried out at once and to the full extent principles which they acknowledged and taught, and which when clearly stated as the touchstone in any incident of conflict they could not help assenting to and supporting. No difference in principles can be seen between the Three and St. Paul. The Apostles of the circumcision and the Apostle of the uncircumcision were at one in all the fundamental ways of stating the relations between Judaism and Christianity. But in the application of these principles, at what time, in what circumstances, to solve what practical problems—there one may expect differences to arise, and there differences did arise.

#### THE ACTS ON THE CONFLICT BETWEEN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

Thus far no reference has been made to the Acts of the Apostles; but if what has been stated above is correct, the history of the gradual solution of the problem, how to reconcile Moses and Jesus, recorded in that book, is both natural and what might have been expected. The Apostles clung to Jerusalem and to their work among the Jews. They went to the Temple regularly, they kept the Jewish hours of prayer, they had no communication with the uncircumcised, they did not allow themselves to deviate from the customs and ceremonial ritual of Jewish life, and they may have congratulated themselves on all this. When the first controversy arose between Palestine believers and believers of the Dispersion, they accepted the situation and made provision for the difficulties that arose. It may be that they had doubts about the freedom of speech which won for Stephen his martyrdom, and dispersed many of their followers. It was with some surprise that they heard that Samaritans were converted; but when

God manifested His power over the converts and bestowed on them the Holy Ghost, they rejoiced in this widening of the circle of the gospel, though they themselves had done nothing to break down the wall of partition. Peter was perplexed when he was called by a manifest leading of Providence to preach to the Gentile Cornelius, and had to justify his intercourse with uncircumcised persons to members of the Church at Jerusalem, who are called, "they that were of the circumcision." His defence was that the Holy Spirit gave him no option to do anything but what he did; but he made no further attempt to enter in by the door God had opened to him. I have traced the strange and yet natural hesitation of the Apostles to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, the apparent helplessness with which they saw the gospel passing beyond the bounds of the Jewish nation, in my Introduction to the earlier portion of Acts.<sup>1</sup> They decided for catholicity, for a fair and honest application of the law of liberty as each case presented itself to them, but they seem to have treated each separate case as an episode to be dealt with, and then allowed to fall out of sight, until the result of Paul's first missionary journey, and the dispute in Antioch forced upon them by their too zealous followers, made it necessary to face the whole question of the relation of Christians to the Mosaic Law.

#### THE CONFERENCE AT JERUSALEM.

Criticism was wont to dwell upon the inconsistencies in the accounts of the conference at Jerusalem given in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistle to the Galatians; but even those who greatly exaggerate the differences between Paul and the Church at Jerusalem, such as Pfleiderer, are now disposed to admit that there is no irreconcilability between the two narratives, and base their arguments for the opposition on the dispute between Peter and Paul which took place later at Antioch. It is evident that there were at least three meetings between the delegates from Antioch and the brethren at Jerusalem (compare notes on xv. 4), and that Paul states the resolution come to at the private

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 25, 26.

conference, which practically was that the independent apostleship of Paul was formally recognised, that the sphere of labour which he had accepted was formally approved of, and that no ceremonial burdens were to be laid on the newly-received Gentile converts. It is said that because Paul does not allude to the four obligations imposed on the Gentiles by the decision of the Jewish Church, because he asserts that nothing was required of him by those of reputation save that he should remember the poor, and because when afterwards, in speaking of the eating of flesh offered to idols, he does not even distantly allude to a resolution of the Apostles bearing upon it, the doubt as to the historical character of the formal resolution reported in the Acts of the Apostles is probably well founded. But this reasoning overlooks some of the facts of the case. The decree is carefully limited in its application. It is addressed to Churches in Cilicia and Syria, where preaching to the Gentiles had been in discourses delivered in Jewish synagogues, and where the converts must have been in all likelihood proselytes of the gate, men who had already come under the four obligations laid upon them by the council. Nothing in addition to what they already did was required of them, and there is nothing said to warrant us inferring that this decree was to be binding on converts in Galatia and in Corinth beyond the bounds of the provinces where the disputes had arisen. It was quite in accordance with the general attitude of the Apostles that they should strictly limit their decision to the special case that was presented to them. And it should be noted that the Apostle John, writing to the Churches of Pergamos and Thyatira—Churches outside of Syria and Cilicia—on the eating of flesh offered to idols, makes no allusion to the decree of the council. Paul bases his commandment on the duty of love to our neighbour, and makes it an inference of the law of liberty applied according to the principle of brotherly love.

#### FURTHER CONFLICT.

The result of the conference, brought about by Peter and James—the one more impetuously, the other more cautiously throwing the

weight of their opinions on the side of Paul—did not settle the question. The more obstinate opposition to Paul was later. But it is idle to say, as Pfeiderer does,<sup>1</sup> that in the decision “the continuance of the validity of the Jewish Law in the case of Jewish Christians was presupposed as a matter of course, and that the restrictive conditions of the agreement were meant in the minds of the Jewish Christians to protect the legal position of Jewish Christianity from all the dangers which threatened it from contact with heathen Christians.” Cornelius was probably a proselyte of the gate, for he kept the Jewish hours of prayer, and yet he was to Peter “a man common and unclean,” whom it was unlawful for him to join himself to or come unto. The decision asserted that faith in Jesus the Christ was a new common religious life superior to the distinction between Jew and Gentile ; it was come to after Peter had related his experience in the case of Cornelius ; and it justified such intercourse with Gentiles as Peter had declared was unlawful according to strict Jewish law. The party in Jerusalem, who are variously called “those of the circumcision,” “the zealots for the law,” “those of the sect of the Pharisees who believed,” could not help feeling that it broke down the middle wall of partition, and although the strange narrative of Paul and Barnabas, and the sympathetic speeches of Peter and James had silenced their opposition, it is not wonderful that they strove to recover lost ground. It is quite impossible to say how large this party in the Church of Jerusalem was. It need not have been in a majority. Nothing is more obvious than that a small persistent and noisy minority, more especially when it is supposed to represent traditions of the past, has a power out of all proportion to its significance, and can bring pressure to bear on the leaders of a community. It was not Jewish, but Judaizing Christians that were henceforward to trouble the Apostle Paul, and to them he never gave place. Paul was always conciliatory when conciliation did not involve the denial of principles, and he recognised as fully as any Apostle the gospel privileges of the Jewish people. He began his

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the Influence of the Apostle Paul on the Development of Christianity.* London, 1885. Pp 112.

work everywhere in the Jewish synagogues : he circumcised Timothy, who was a Jew, when circumcision did not imply that it was necessary to salvation ; he made no attempt to ask Jews to depart from their ceremonial usages when these did not interfere with the great principle of Christian freedom ; he quite naturally fell in with old Jewish usage when he wished to express thanks to God for recovery from illness or peril, and took the Nazarite vow when in Greece ; he took the Nazarite vow a second time at the close of his third missionary journey, to prove that he did not teach the Jews everywhere to disregard the commandments of Moses. It is thus that the book of Acts describes his conduct, and the description corresponds with what is said in his Epistles.

That school of criticism which would discredit the Acts of the Apostles, because it makes Peter too like Paul, and Paul too like Peter ; because it does not describe a conflict between Paul and all Jewish Christianity represented by the "pillar" Apostles Peter, John, and James the brother of our Lord, has run its course, and its critical positions have had to be abandoned one after another. At the first start no book bore such evidence of the Anti-Pauline position of Jewish Christianity as the Apocalypse of St. John. The latest adherent of the school which still maintains the radical opposition between Paul on the one hand, and Peter, James, and John on the other, has decided that the Apocalypse must have been written by an author deeply imbued with Pauline doctrine, and that St. John cannot have been its author !<sup>1</sup>

The Acts of the Apostles gives us very brief hints about the conflict between Paul and the extreme Jewish party, but it tells us enough to supply an historical framework to the statements in the Epistles. It is impossible to say how far the majority of Jewish Christians were influenced by them, but it seems that the leaders of the Church at Jerusalem, while they recognised the labours of Paul, and when time of need came—as in his last visit to Jerusalem—loyally stood by him, yet consistently endeavoured to keep hold on the Christian zealots. They were content to declare in their

<sup>1</sup> Pfeiderer, *Lectures*, pp. 158-166.

Epistles that the Mosaic Law had been resolved into the universal law of liberty, but as Apostles to the circumcision they were unwilling by their actions to give offence to certain unenlightened and extreme followers. In the last glimpse given of them they are again acting as mediators between Paul and the Christian zealots. Their doctrinal position was the same as Paul's, their principles were in no way different; but as they were surrounded by circumstances very different from his, they were content to forego a universal and immediate application of their principles, and to wait until God brought matters to a direct issue in the Church in Palestine.

The siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple had a profound effect on Jewish Christianity. The followers both of Peter and of Paul saw in these events a confirmation of the prophecy of Christ, and an intimation, not to be disregarded, that Mosaic ceremonial had come to an end in the death and resurrection of Jesus; but to trace the history further would take us far beyond our limits.

#### ANALYSIS OF CHAPTERS XIII.—XXVIII.

The book of the Acts of the Apostles divides naturally into three parts: (1) Chapters i.—xii., which may be entitled: From Jerusalem to Antioch. (2) Chapters xiii.—xxi. 14: Paul's missionary journeys. (3) Chapters xxi.—xxviii.: Paul at Rome, and the events which brought him there. The analysis of chapters xiii.—xxviii. only is given here.

#### Part II.—Paul's Missionary Journeys, xiii.—xxi. 14.

##### i. *Paul's First Missionary Journey*, xiii.—xiv.

1. In Cyprus—A contest for a soul, . . . . .	xiii.	1-13.
2. At Antioch in Pisidia, . . . . .	xiii.	14-52.
<i>a.</i> Paul's first recorded sermon, . . . . .		14-43.
<i>b.</i> The Apostles turn to the Gentiles, . . . . .		44-52.
3. At Iconium—Persecution, . . . . .	xiv.	1-5.
4. In Lycaonia—The cripple healed, . . . . .	xiv.	6-21.
5. Return to Antioch in Syria, . . . . .	xiv.	21-28.

ii. *A Christian Council—Can Gentiles be Christians?* xv. 1-35.

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| 1. The question raised at Antioch in Syria, | . . . . . | xv. | 1.     |
| 2. The deputation to Jerusalem,             | . . . . . | xv. | 2-5.   |
| 3. The brethren in council,                 | . . . . . | xv. | 6-29.  |
| 4. The decision received at Antioch,        | . . . . . | xv. | 30-35. |

iii. *Paul's Second Missionary Journey*, xv. 36-xviii. 23.

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| 1. Through Syria and Cilicia to Lycaonia,            | . . . . . | xv.    | 36-41. |
| 2. Paul and Timothy,                                 | . . . . . | xvi.   | 1-5.   |
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| <i>a.</i> Lydia, the seller of purple,               | . . . . . |        | 13-15. |
| <i>b.</i> The soothsayer and her masters,            | . . . . . |        | 16-23. |
| <i>c.</i> The prisoners and the jailor,              | . . . . . |        | 23-40. |
| 5. Thessalonica to Athens,                           | . . . . . | xvii.  | 1-15.  |
| 6. At Athens—The Living God preached,                | . . . . . | xvii.  | 16-34. |
| 7. At Corinth—The Crucified Christ preached,         | . . . . . | xviii. | 1-17.  |
| 8. From Corinth to Antioch by Ephesus and Jerusalem, | . . . . . | xviii. | 18-22. |

iv. *Apollos*, xviii. 24-28.v. *Paul's Third Missionary Journey*, xviii. 23, xix. 1-xxi. 14.

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| 1. At Ephesus,                                 | . . . . . | xix. | 1-41.  |
| <i>a.</i> Paul completing the work of Apollos, | . . . . . |      | 1-12.  |
| <i>b.</i> The seven sons of Sceva,             | . . . . . |      | 13-20. |
| <i>c.</i> Great is Diana of the Ephesians,     | . . . . . |      | 21-41. |
| 2. Through Macedonia to Troas,                 | . . . . . | xx.  | 1-6.   |
| 3. At Troas,                                   | . . . . . | xx.  | 7-12.  |
| 4. At Miletus with the Elders of Ephesus,      | . . . . . | xx.  | 13-38. |
| 5. To Cæsarea by Tyre,                         | . . . . . | xxi. | 1-14.  |

## Part III.—Paul at Rome, and the events which brought him there,

xxi. 15-xxviii. 10.

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| 1. Doubtful friends—beginning of the end,         | . . . . . | xxi.   | 15-26.        |
| 2. The riot and Paul's apprehension,              | . . . . . | xxi.   | 27-36.        |
| 3. Paul's speech to the crowd, and what followed, | . . . . . | xxi.   | 37-xxii. 29.  |
| 4. Paul before the Sanhedrin,                     | . . . . . | xxii.  | 30-xxiii. 11. |
| 5. Conspiracy of the Zealots—Roman protection,    | . . . . . | xxiii. | 12-30.        |

ii. *At Cæsarea—Paul a Prisoner*, xxiii. 31-xxvi. 32.

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| 1. Sent to Cæsarea,              | . . . . . | xxiii. | 31-35. |
| 2. Paul's accusers before Felix, | . . . . . | xxiv.  | 1-9.   |

3. Paul's first defence—Still a prisoner, . . . . .	xxiv. 10-27.
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<i>a.</i> Festus and Agrippa, . . . . .	xxv. 13-27.
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1. Cæsarea to Crete, . . . . .	xxvii. 1-12.
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1. Arrival at Rome, . . . . .	xxviii. 11-16.
2. Intercourse with the Jews, . . . . .	xxviii. 17-29.
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## CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY.

A.D.	CHRISTIANITY.	PALESTINE.	ROME.
47	Paul's <i>First Missionary Journey</i> (about 3 years).	Ananias, high priest.	CLAUDIUS, Emperor since 41 A.D.
49	... ..	Herod Agrippa II., king of Chalcis.	
50	Council at Jerusalem.	... ..	Caradoc a prisoner at Rome.
51-54	Paul's <i>Second Missionary Journey</i> (about 3 years).	<i>Felix</i> , Procurator of Judea.	The Jews banished from Rome, 52 A.D.
53	I. and II. THESSALONIANS, at Corinth.	Herod Agrippa II. gets Batanea and Trachonitis.	Gallio, Procurator of Achaia.
54	Paul at Jerusalem (Feast of Pentecost).	... ..	NERO, Emperor, 54 A.D.
55-58	Paul's <i>Third Missionary Journey</i> (3 to 4 years).		
56	I. CORINTHIANS, at Ephesus.	Tumult in Judea, headed by an Egyptian (xxi. 38).	
„	GALATIANS & II. CORINTHIANS, in Macedonia.		
57	ROMANS, at Corinth.		
58	Paul's Journey to Jerusalem, sails from Troas in April.		
„	Paul at Jerusalem (Feast of Pentecost).		
58 60	Paul a prisoner at Cæsarea.		
59	... ..	Ishmael, son of Phabi, high priest.	
60	... ..	<i>Festus</i> , Procurator of Judea.	
61	Paul at Malta.	... ..	Boadicea revolts in Britain.
„	Paul arrives at Rome.		

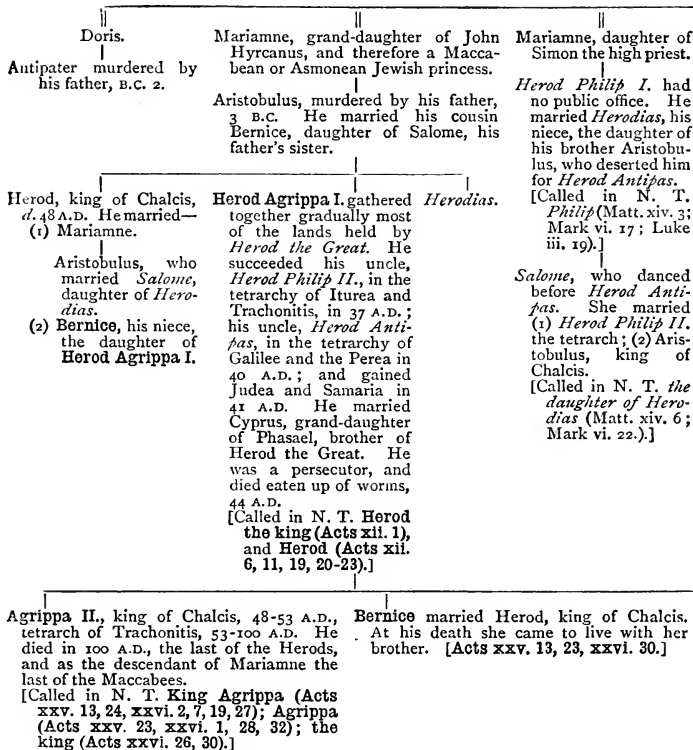
## GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF

Antipas, an Idumean chief, made governor of Idumea under

Antipater, at first confidential adviser of John Hyrcanus,

Phasaël,

Joint tetrarch with Herod of Judea, 41 B.C.

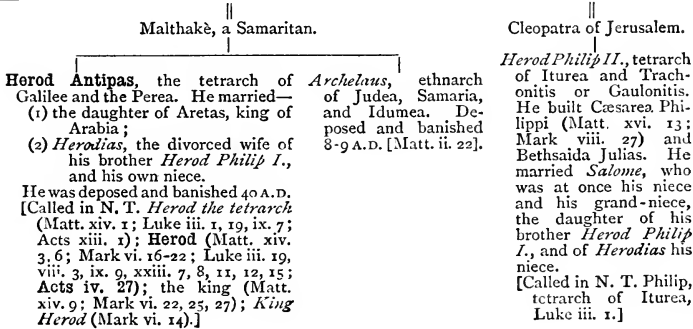


<sup>1</sup> This table contains only the principal members of the Herod family. The names

THE HEROD FAMILY.<sup>1</sup>

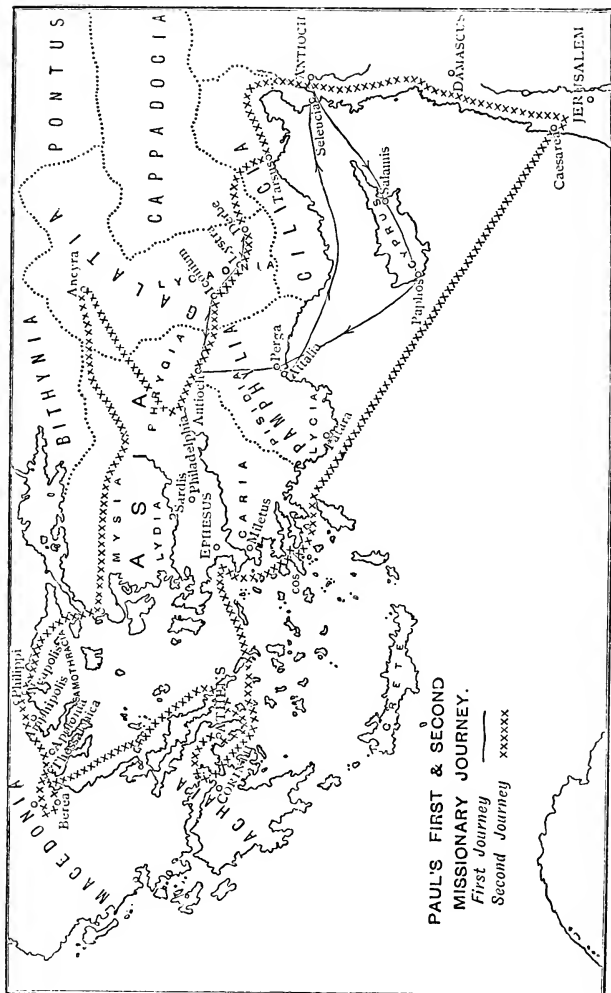
Jannæus, and confidential adviser of Queen Alexandra.  
then made procurator of Judea by Julius Cæsar, 47 B.C.

*Herod the Great*,  
Joint tetrarch of Judea, 41 B.C. ; sole king, 36 B.C. ; died February or March, 1 B.C.  
[Called in the New Testament *Herod the king* (Matt. ii. 1, 3 ; Luke i. 5) ; *Herod*  
(Matt. ii. 7, 12, 13, 16, 19, 22) ; *the king* (Matt. ii. 9).]  
He married ten wives, among whom were—



Drusilla (Acts xxiv. 24) married (1) Azizus, king of Emesa ;  
(2) **Felix**, procurator of Judea (Acts xxiii. 26, xxiv. 3, 22, 24, 27).  
|  
Agrippa, d. 79 A.D.

mentioned in the New Testament are in italics ; those mentioned in Acts, in black letters.



# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

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CHAP. XIII. 1. **N**OW there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of

PART II.—PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS, xiii.—xxi. 14.

I.—PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY, xiii.—xiv.

1. *In Cyprus—A contest for a soul*, xiii. 1-13.

1. **Antioch** was the capital of the Greek kingdom of Syria, and afterwards the residence of the Roman governor of the province. It was made a free city by Pompey the Great, and contained aqueduct, amphitheatre, baths, and colonnades. It was situated on the Orontes, about 20 miles from the mouth of the river. Its port was Seleucia. It was intimately connected with Apostolic Christianity. "Here the first Gentile Church was formed (Acts xi. 20, 21); here the disciples of Jesus Christ were first called *Christians* (xi. 26); here St. Paul exercised (so far as is distinctly recorded) his first systematic ministerial work (xi. 22-26, xiv. 26-28, xv. 35, xviii. 22, 23); hence he started at the beginning of his first missionary journey (xiii. 1-3), and hither he returned (xiv. 26). So again after the Apostolic Council (the decrees of which were specially addressed to the Gentile converts at Antioch, xv. 23), he began and ended his second missionary journey at this place (xv. 36, xviii. 22). This too was the starting-point of the third missionary journey, which was brought to an end by the imprisonment at Jerusalem and at Cæsarea." Antioch continued an important seat of Christianity. After the fall of Jerusalem it became the Christian centre for the province of Syria, and ranked with Rome, Constantinople, and Alexandria as a patriarchate. It is now the chief seat of the American Missions to the East, and has again become a great missionary centre.

**Prophets and teachers.** *Prophets*, men inspired by the Holy Spirit with a direct message from God (Acts ii. 17; 1 Cor. xii. 28, xiv. 1-5), were commonly also teachers; *teachers*, who gave instruction to believers (2 Tim. ii. 2). An old prophecy (Joel ii. 28, 29) had foretold that there would be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all the members of the religious community. The Spirit manifested His presence in manifold ways, and through a variety

Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod 2 the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and

of gifts. Particular persons were raised up specially gifted to be the guides of the community, and among these prophets are continually mentioned. They are found in the Church at Jerusalem (Acts xi. 27, xv. 32), at Antioch (Acts xiii. 1), and must have been in most of the Apostolic congregations (1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11). They seem to have ranked next to the Apostles in dignity, and are to be distinguished from the ordinary teachers because they spoke under the direct influence of inspiration, and from the office-bearers who were chosen by the congregations to rule over them. The position of the prophets in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic Church may be summed up as follows:—(1) Down to the close of the second century prophets were regarded as an essential element in a Church possessing the Holy Ghost; (2) they were the regular preachers, but were not of necessity attached to a single congregation; (3) the common form of prophetic utterance was reasoned exhortation, but it sometimes became ecstasy; (4) prophecy might embrace anything that was for the edification of the Church; (5) the prophets were expected to put in practice what they preached, and to live Christlike lives; (6) individual congregations had no right to control the prophets or submit them to discipline; (7) the prophets gradually degenerated, and at last disappeared from the Christian Church. Compare A. Harnack, art. "Prophet," *Encyc. Brit.* xix. p. 822.

**Barnabas.** See note on iv. 36.

**Simeon, that was called Niger.** Nothing is known about him. Niger was a common Roman name. The phrase is an instance of the practice of Jews to take a second name when they had much intercourse with strangers.

**Lucius of Cyrene,** not St. Luke; for Lucius is a different name from Lucas or Lucanus. We have no further information about him in Scripture; a tradition embodied in the Apostolic Constitutions says that he was made Bishop of Cenchreæ by St. Paul.

**Manaen, or Menahem;** the words which had been brought up with are a translation of the one Greek word *syntrophos*, which is translated in the R. V. *foster-brother*. The Herod mentioned must have been Herod Antipas, who with his brother Archelaus was educated at Rome. Josephus tells that a certain Menahem, an Essene, foretold to Herod the Great in early youth that he was destined to royal honours, and that the king ever afterwards treated the prophet with great respect. It has been conjectured that the Menahem of the text was the son or grandson of the old Essene, and that Herod had him brought up with his son Antipas as a mark of royal favour. Freed now from the temptations of a court, he appears in the list of Christian teachers.

**Saul,** last mentioned, but soon to be placed first (verses 9-13). Saul is not given the first place by the officials of the Church even after the missionary journey (xv. 25); officialism is slow to recognise work not done in its own way.

2. **As they.** "One a Cypriote, another a Cyrenian, another a Jew, but from his double name accustomed to mix among non-Jews, one a connection of the Idumean house of Herod, and Saul the heaven-appointed Apostle to the Gentiles, the list may be deemed in some sort typical of 'all the world,' into which the gospel was now to go forth" (Lumby).

fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the

**Ministered.** The common word to denote the temple service (LXX. Ex. xxviii. 41; Num. iv. 37; Ex. xl. 13. Compare Rom. xv. 27 and Heb. x. 11); here used to mean Christian worship (ii. 42). Old words were taking new meanings, and worship (*leitourgia* or liturgy) now meant prayer and fasting.

**The Holy Ghost,** dwelling in the Christian Church according to Christ's promise. Notice how this second part of the Acts begins by assuming the existence of a separate society, men uniting in the name of Jesus, united in the act of worship, and the Holy Ghost finding its abode in their midst, touching the minds of every member, inspiring them with various gifts fitting them for service.

**Separate me.** The Holy Ghost spoke probably by one of the prophets. The Christians at Antioch had formerly set apart their money (xi. 29, 30), now they set apart men for the work of Christ. The Divine *call*, which every true worker for God must have, came here to Barnabas and Saul. The call had been foretold (xxvi. 16-18), and now it had come. "All things tend to show that no man should teach in any place to which he is not called by God" (Justus Jonas). Notice too how Paul relied on the word and on what it meant, "Separated unto the gospel of God," he says (Rom. i. 1). The inward call was now sanctioned by the outward call of the Church, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

**3. Fasted and prayed, etc.** A solemn service of dedication and ordination. Jesus fasted and prayed at the setting apart of the Twelve (Luke vi. 12, 13). Compare also Acts vi. 6, xiv. 23, 1 Tim. v. 22, which show that what is here described was the ordination service employed in the Apostolic Church, signifying that it accepted the service of these missionaries, and derived from our Lord's action in setting apart the Twelve.

**They sent them.** Compare verse 4, **being sent forth by the Holy Ghost.** This first missionary journey had its origin in "a combination of the human and the Divine;" it was the joint work of the Church and of the Holy Ghost. Every work for Christ is a partnership with God, and as Jesus put His wonder-working power into the five barley cakes and two small fishes, and so, along with the lad who gave his provisions for the purpose, fed 5000 men, He still puts His miraculous strength into all the weak efforts of His servants, and enables them to do great things for Him. Every true Christian is and must be a fellow-worker with God.

**4. Seleucia** was the seaport of Antioch, 16 miles down the Orontes and 4 miles from the mouth of the river.

**Cyprus,** the country of Barnabas (iv. 36); an island with a large Jewish population, and full of Greeks; already visited by Christian missionaries (xi. 19); some of whose inhabitants had been witnesses for Christ (xi. 20).

**5. Salamis.** The port in Cyprus nearest to Seleucia, in the bay now called

synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to *their* minister. And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name *was* Bar-jesus: which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the

Famagousta. It contained large numbers of Jews, who abounded in the island of Cyprus, and who in 116 A.D. rose in insurrection and massacred 240,000 of the Greek population. Salamis, like Damascus (ix. 20), had more synagogues than one; while Thessalonica and Corinth, probably more populous towns, had only one (xvii. 1, xviii. 4).

**John to their minister.** John Mark, the author of the second Gospel, went with them as their attendant to wait on the Apostles, to aid them in preaching, and perhaps to baptize (1 Cor. i. 13-16).

6. **Paphos**, the capital of the island. It was noted for its worship of Venus, "the deification of lust," as Athanasius called it, and was one of the most wicked places in the old Roman world. Paul, Barnabas, and John, armed (*a*) with the message of pardon for sin, and (*b*) with prayer, which "moves the Hand that moves the universe," began their attack on paganism in one of its greatest strongholds, where the worship, half Greek and half Oriental, combined the iniquities of both.

**Sorcerer, magician or magus.** The man's name was Bar-Jesus. Like Simon (Acts viii. 9) he called himself a *magus* or wise man (Matt. ii. 1). (*Elymas* is an Arabic word which means wise man, and corresponds to *ulama*, the Arabic name for a theological student.) Luke calls him a *false prophet*. In that age of superstition many great men kept wizards to foretell the future. Many of these wizards and witches were depraved Jews and Jewesses (xix. 13).

7. **Deputy.** *Proconsul*, *i.e.* the governor of a province which had become so thoroughly Roman as not to need the presence of troops to overawe the people. Roman provinces were divided by Augustus into two classes. Those that required to be overawed by the presence of troops were placed under the direct control of the Emperor, and were governed by *proprators*, commanders of the legions; the others were under the rule of the Senate, and were governed by civil magistrates, *proconsuls*. Cyprus was an imperial province up to 22 A.D., when it was given over to the Senate; later it became imperial, and still later again proconsular. Luke is strictly accurate.

**Prudent man.** *A man of understanding or discernment*: not a devout man, not wise enough to do without a wizard, but of an inquiring mind, ready to hear the truth.

**Sergius Paulus.** We know nothing about this proconsul save what is mentioned in this chapter; but M. de Cesnola has discovered an inscription at Soli which bears the name of *Paulus, Proconsul*, who may be this Sergius Paulus.

8. **To turn away, to turn aside.** "Missionary records are full of accounts of the unvarying hostility of wizards, sorcerers, medicine-men, to the gospel." The Christian minister will always meet an Elymas and a Sergius Paulus, a



9 faith. Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the  
 10 Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all sub-  
 tilty and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of  
 all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways  
 11 of the Lord? 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,  
 13 being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. Now when  
 Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to  
 Perga in Pamphylia: and John, departing from them, returned  
 to Jerusalem.

charlatan fearful of loss of influence, and a sober-minded friendly inquirer. Thus began the contest for the soul of the proconsul.

9. **Saul (who also is called Paul).** This is the first mention of the name Paul. Up to this time he has always been called Saul ; from this time onwards always Paul. It is probable that Saul (like almost all other Jews who mingled much with Gentiles) had had the two names previous to this occasion ; it is possible that the second name Paul was the Latinized Saul (as Hillel was changed to Heliio), but it is certain that the change of name really marks a change of work and position. Paul was beginning the special work to which he had been called on Damascus road ; he worked his first miracle, spoke his first recorded speech, had his first triumph over apostate Judaism, and made his first impression in the great world of Rome, all at this time.

**Filled with the Holy Ghost ;** a sudden inspiration making Paul see the earnestness of the proconsul, and the evil temptings of Bar-Jesus, and giving him power to rebuke miraculously.

10. **O full of all subtilty, etc.** *O full of all deceit*, to deceive was his occupation, *and all villainy*, his character was bad, not Bar-Jesus (son of the saviour) but *son of the devil*, and therefore by disposition *the enemy of all righteousness*, and bent upon making crooked God's straight paths.

11. **The hand of the Lord is upon thee** (Ex. ix. 3 ; Judg. ii. 15 ; 1 Kings xviii. 46). Paul saw in Elymas his old self while he was ignorant of the Lord, and his first miracle inflicts on the sorcerer what he had suffered in order to be brought to Christ. He had been struck blind for a season (ix. 8, 9). It was the only miracle he had seen done, and apprentice-like he does what he had seen the master do.

**A mist and a darkness.** Luke the physician notes the symptoms. The blindness was gradual. *First* dimness, *then* darkness, *then* such total blindness that the sorcerer instinctively groped about.

12. **At the doctrine of the Lord.** *At the teaching which had for its one theme the Lord Jesus Christ*, and so the soul of the Roman proconsul was won for Christ. The word *believed* implies that the Roman was baptized.

13. **Loosed from, set sail.** They sailed north-west to Perga, and without tarrying there went on through the country to Antioch.

**John departing from them.** See chap. xv. 38.

14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in  
 Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and  
 15 sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets,  
 the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye men  
 and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the*

2. *At Antioch in Pisidia, xiii. 14-52.*

(a) *Paul's first recorded sermon, 14-43.*

14. **When they departed.** *They passing through from Perga.* Pamphylia lies on the sea-coast of Asia Minor, and Perga is its capital; Pisidia is inland to the north, and Antioch is at its north end. See Map, p. 40. Pisidia is a mountainous district, many of its people were brigands, and travellers were often "in perils of robbers" (2 Cor. xi. 26).

**Pisidia.** The names of the divisions of Asia Minor which occur in the Acts of the Apostles are somewhat perplexing. The country had been divided into seven Roman provinces—Asia, Bithynia, Pontus, Cappadocia, Galatia, Pamphylia, and Cilicia, and these were the legal divisions; but the old names lingered, and were popularly used. Scotland is legally divided into counties, but we still speak of Galloway, Clydesdale, the Reay country, etc. In the Acts the popular district names are generally given, but *Asia* is always used to denote the proconsular province which included the old divisions of Lydia, Caria, and part of Phrygia. See Map, p. 40.

**Antioch** in Pisidia must be carefully distinguished from the capital of Syria. It was a city of the Roman province of Phrygia, and a Roman colony. It stood on a height above a great plain. It is mentioned several times in the New Testament (Acts xiii. 14, 50, 51, xiv. 19, 21; 2 Tim. iii. 11).

15. **The reading of the law.** The Jews divided the Old Testament Scriptures into three divisions—(1) The Law or the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses; (2) the Prophets, including Joshua, Judges, the two books of Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets; and (3) the Hagiographa, containing the rest of the canonical Old Testament Scriptures. The Law had to be read in consequence of a Divine command (Deut. xxxi. 10), which declared that it was to be recited at the end of every seven years in the feast of the year of release at the Feast of Tabernacles. It was found to be impracticable to read the whole Law on one occasion, and therefore the Pentateuch was divided into portions so as to be read through in a space of seven years, from Feast of Tabernacles to Feast of Tabernacles. Various modifications of this arrangement took place, until we find the Babylonian Jews, four centuries after Christ, dividing the Pentateuch so that it could be read through once a year, beginning with the Sabbath after the Feast of Tabernacles. Passages selected from the Prophets were read along with the lessons from the Law, care being taken that the one corresponded to the other. If this Babylonian division of lessons was in use in Antioch in Paul's day, it may be inferred from the references to Deut. i. and to Isa. i. 2, that Paul reached Pisidia by the end of July or the beginning of August 47 A.D.

**If ye have any word,** etc. It was the custom in Jewish synagogues to ask distinguished strangers present in the audience to address the congregation. The synagogue service consisted of (1) prayers read by the *ruler*; (2) reciting

16 people, say on. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.  
 17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt,  
 18 and with an high arm brought he them out of it. And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilder-  
 19 ness. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land

of Psalms; (3) reading (*a*) from the Law, and (*b*) from the Prophets; (4) the *word of exhortation*.

16. **Then Paul stood up.** The missionaries had started "Barnabas and Paul," but since the scene at Paphos it became "Paul and Barnabas," "Paul and his company." Men are tested by their work. The disciples at Antioch put Barnabas first; God gave him the second place, and he took it loyally.

**Men of Israel, and ye that fear God.** The audience was Jewish, but there were also Gentiles who had accepted the God of Israel (42, 43).

17. **The God of this people.** This first recorded sermon by St. Paul recalls Stephen's address, which Paul must have heard, and which he could not get out of his thoughts. The main thought in it is God's covenant relationship to Israel expressed in a long series of saving acts, and rising to full expression in giving the Saviour. The line of argument appears to be: (1) The covenant God of Israel has shown His purpose to save His people in delivering them from Egypt, from wilderness perils, from the seven nations of Canaan, from national foes and internal troubles by means of the Judges, Saul, and David, and finally by the promise of a Saviour of David's race; a series of acts of imperfect salvation threaded together by the promise of the perfect Saviour (17-23). (2) This perfect Saviour has come, and is Jesus (*a*) proclaimed by John the Baptist; (*b*) rejected through ignorance by the Jewish rulers; (*c*) the rejection itself being evidence of His Messiahship (23-28). (3) He was put to death but rose again, and this death and resurrection evidence His perfect Messiahship; for from death come forgiveness and justification, and from the resurrection come testimony for the Messiahship, evidence of Sonship, of sure deliverance and everlasting salvation, which could not be accomplished by saviours who served their own generation and passed away (29-39). (4) True salvation is salvation from that sum of all enemies sin, and Jesus is the Christ because He can gain for His people that pardon and justification which the whole Old Testament dispensation until completed by the coming of Jesus could not give (38-39). (5) A word of warning not to neglect the salvation and the Saviour offered (41-42).

18. **Suffered he their manners.** *Bare them as a nursing father.* The reference is to Deut. i. 31. The words *exalted the people* correspond to the Septuagint of Isa. i. 2. Deut. i. was always read along with Isa. i. 1-27 as first and second lessons for the forty-fourth Sabbath of the year. Some have thought that Paul entered the synagogue in Antioch on that Sabbath (July-August) and began his exhortation by references to the passages read in the hearing of the audience. Compare note on ver. 15.

19. **Seven nations.** Deut. vii. 1. The Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, the seven nations destroyed by Joshua.

20 of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred  
 21 and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.  
 22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine  
 23 own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man's seed hath God, according to *his* promise, raised unto Israel a  
 24 Saviour, Jesus: when John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

Divided their land by lot. Compare Num. xxvi. 55, 56; Josh. xiv.-xix.

20. About the space of four hundred and fifty years. Verses 19-20 ought to be, *And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan he gave them their land for an inheritance, for about four hundred and fifty years; and after these things he gave them judges until Samuel.* This passage has long been a difficulty. According to the Authorized Version, the reading implies that the rule of the judges lasted about 450 years, and this agrees with the chronology of Josephus; but in 1 Kings vi. 1, the fourth year of Solomon's reign is said to be 480 (LXX. 440) years after the exodus, which would leave a much shorter period for the judges' rule.

Years in the wilderness . . . . .	= 40
Joshua's rule (according to Josephus) . . . . .	= 25
Rule of the Judges . . . . .	= 331
Reign of Saul . . . . .	= 40
Reign of David . . . . .	= 40
Solomon . . . . .	= 4

480 years.

The Revised Version adopts a better reading which makes the period of 450 extend to the beginning of the distribution of the land, and thus avoids any comparison with 1 Kings vi. 1. It should be remembered, however, that it is quite impossible to enter into exact chronological statements in explaining the Old Testament. The Old Testament writers do not use figures with invariable exactitude; thus, *e.g.*, the phrase *forty years* undoubtedly means sometimes a *very long time*, not exactly 40 years.

21. **Saul.** The length of Saul's reign is not found directly in the Old Testament, but agrees with what Josephus says.

22. **I have found David.** Most of the quotations from the Old Testament in this address are not literal, but are made by combining the sense of separate texts, Ps. lxxxix. 20; 1 Sam. xiii. 14. Paul quotes in such a way that the Bible explains itself, and David is seen to be a type of Christ.

23. **According to his promise.** Ps. cxxxii. 11; Zech. iii. 8, 9. "The mention of the *promise* gives the hearers an opportunity for faith."

24. **Baptism of repentance.** Acts ii. 38; Luke xxiv. 47; Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 Pet. iii. 21.

25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*: but, behold, there cometh one after me,  
 26 whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation  
 27 sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in  
 28 condemning *him*. And though they found no cause of death  
 29 *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took  
 30 *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre. But  
 31 God raised him from the dead: and he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem,

25. Whom think ye. John i. 20, 27.

26. And whosoever among you. Compare 16. The message is for others than Jews; but Paul put it courteously, and avoids the hated word Gentiles.

27. Because they knew him not. Compare Peter, Acts iii. 17, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers;" and our Lord Himself, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The voices of the prophets. See note on verse 15. These readings from the prophets, if they were only listened to, would tell of a suffering Saviour as well as of a conquering Messiah; would show how Christ had to suffer and so to enter into His glory. Jesus quoted them to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 27).

28. Though they had found no cause of death in him. Pilate had used these very words (Luke xxiii. 22). The Sanhedrin had technically found Him guilty of blasphemy, but they had been unable to prove it, and only condemned Him by extorting evidence from Himself, and making Him incriminate Himself. Compare my *Commentary on St. Mark's Gospel*, pp. 222-229.

29. When they had fulfilled. Paul sees every detail of trial, indignity, and death foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures; the Greek is fuller, *all the things which were written of Him*.

They took him down, etc. The descent from the cross and the burial are here regarded as witnesses to the reality of both the death and of the rising again from the dead.

30. God raised him from the dead. The crowning proof to Paul and to every apostolic preacher that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, *by the resurrection from the dead*." It was God's interposition after man's deeds: *man* had rejected Him, slain and buried Him; *God* raised Him from the dead; and this was the *sign* of His Messiahship. It was a fact that could be witnessed to (31), and it was also the fulfilment of prophetic promises (32-37).

31. Who are his, etc. *Who are now His witnesses*. The special work of Apostles. Compare Acts i. 8, 22, ii. 32, iii. 15, v. 32, x. 41. In verses

32 who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto  
 you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto  
 33 the fathers, 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  
 34 thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the  
 dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this  
 35 wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore  
 he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine  
 36 Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served  
 his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was  
 37 laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he, whom God  
 raised again, saw no corruption.

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that  
 through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:  
 39 and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from  
 30-33, Paul brings forward the resurrection as proof that Jesus is the Son of  
 God. Compare Rom. i. 4; I Cor. xv. 3-8.

32. Glad tidings. The gospel of the Messiah, now not a promise to be  
 looked forward to, but a fulfilment to be looked back to—no longer hope  
 but faith.

33. Unto us their children; better, *unto our children*. Compare Peter, *to  
 us and to our children* (ii. 39).

In that he hath raised up Jesus again, *by this, that He raised up Jesus  
 again*. The line of thought is: (1) Jesus was innocent, but the Jews slew and  
 buried Him (28, 29): (2) yet Jesus slain and buried was seen after His  
 burial over and over again by His Apostles, who are witnesses to the fact;  
 hence, God must have raised Him from the dead (30, 31): (3) by this resur-  
 rection God has completely fulfilled the promises (33, 34): (4) And the Jesus  
 who has been raised from the dead will never again die (34-38).

34. The sure mercies. *The holy and sure mercies of David* (Isa. lv. 3),  
 made sure by a redeemer who had conquered death.

35. Wherefore he saith. *Because He saith*. Compare Acts ii. 29-31.  
 The words of the Psalm cannot refer to David, because David died, was  
 buried, and did not rise again: he saw corruption; the Psalm speaks of one  
 who cannot see corruption.

37. Saw no corruption. The resurrection makes the salvation not only  
 sure (34) but permanent, for a redeemer who has triumphed over death abides  
 for ever.

38. Forgiveness of sins. Pardon is the keynote of apostolic preaching.  
 Compare xxvi. 18, ii. 38, v. 31, x. 43; Mark i. 4; Matt. ix. 2-6.

39. Are justified. Man can overlook an offence, but God's forgiveness  
 implies cleansing from spiritual corruption, or the utter destruction of the sins  
 which are pardoned; and this sense of freedom from guilt, of destruction of  
 sins, Paul's own experience had taught him could only be found in Christ, the  
 Saviour from sin. Hence, in the most important part of his first recorded  
 sermon, Paul lays stress on his favourite doctrine of justification, or the declared  
 acquittal from the guilt of sin, a thing not obtained through the Mosaic Law,

40 which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets ;

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish :

For I work a work in your days,

A work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them

43 the next sabbath. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas : who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city

but only through the death and rising again of Christ, and through the sinner's trust on His saving work. The use of the Law was to make man know sin (Rom. vii. 1) ; the Gospel frees him from its power (Rom. iii. 24, 25, iv. 25 ; Gal. iii. 13).

Paul does not fully explain his doctrine of justification by faith alone in this sermon. He does not specially connect pardon and Christ's death, nor does he say clearly that the Law could never in any case bring pardon and acceptance. He was speaking to unbelievers, and is content to give them a bare outline. The risen Christ justifies, and Paul will afterwards explain how justification has for its cause or source the atoning death, which was evidenced to be more than a martyrdom by the resurrection which followed. The Christ justifies from things for which the Law could bring no justification, and Paul will afterwards explain, that man can be justified in nothing by the Law, and therefore that all pardon and acceptance come through Christ. It was enough for him now to make his hearers (1) feel the sinfulness of sin and the difficulty of forgiveness ; (2) know that without Christ the destruction of corruption, which God's forgiveness of sin implies, would be impossible.

41. Behold, ye despisers, etc. Quoted from the Septuagint version of Hab. i. 5.

42. And when the Jews, etc. *And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next Sabbath.* See Revised Version. The whole congregation, Jews and proselytes, on leaving the synagogue, wished to hear Paul's address again, and talked about it during the week to their Gentile acquaintances, so that on the second Sabbath Gentiles as well as Jews and proselytes thronged to the synagogue.

43. Urged them to continue. The Apostles were not content with preaching in public, but had personal interviews with those who had been impressed during the sermon (Acts xi. 23).

(b) *The Apostles turn to the Gentiles—Persecution, 44-52.*

44. Almost the whole city. Heathens as well as Jews and proselytes ; for the Apostles had been labouring among all classes, according to Paul's usual custom.

- 45 together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and  
 46 blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the  
 47 Gentiles : 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.
- 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord : and as many as were ordained to eternal

45. **The Jews . . . were filled with envy or jealousy.** Compare with verse 52. *The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.* They had received the message gladly when they thought it limited to themselves, but when Gentiles, mere heathen, were thought as worthy as themselves, they refused to hear. A Jew had no right to look on a Gentile as a brother in Christ, they thought.

**Contradicting and blaspheming.** *And contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed or railed.* "Those who begin by contradicting commonly end in blaspheming" (Matthew Henry). They assailed the Apostle with reviling words. Compare xviii. 6.

46. **Waxed bold.** *Spake out boldly.* It was a crisis, and the Apostles found courage to face it.

**It was necessary,** according to the counsel of God, and according to their apostolic duty. Wherever he went, Paul first of all addressed himself to the Jews. His apostleship to the Gentiles had not cancelled his duty to his own countrymen. He was assured that God had not utterly cast off His ancient people, and that He was using their temporary rejection of their Messiah for the purpose of blessing the Gentiles. Compare Rom. xi.

**Ye put it.** *Ye thrust it from you.* God had chosen them to be the covenant nation. Paul had given them His message ; but covenant relationship includes missionary zeal for the souls of others. The Jews had thrust this from them, they had judged themselves unworthy of the high calling, and God and His Apostle can do without them. Men are continually called to be sharers with God in His work, and some reject the calling : God's work goes on, only they are left outside (Matt. xxii. 1-9).

**Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.** There will always be hearers if preachers know where to find them. Paul and Barnabas had lost their first audience, but they had the courage to find another. If they had lost touch with the Jews, they had found touch with the Gentiles. This *Lo* marks a mighty revolute ; Christianity was to become world-wide not by the Jews, but in spite of them.

47. **A light to the Gentiles** (Isa. xlix. 6). Paul sees that the *Servant of the Lord* is the Christ, and that when the prophets spoke of the exaltation of Israel their promises included the proclamation of the Divine purpose of love to the heathen world as well. Compare Rom. ix. 25, x. 12.

48. **They were glad.** "Many grieve under doubts, whether they have an



49 life believed. And the word of the Lord was published through-  
 50 out all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and  
 honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised  
 persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them  
 51 out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet  
 52 against them, and came unto Iconium. And the disciples  
 were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

CHAP. XIV. 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

interest in Christ or no, when they should be rejoicing that they *may* have an  
 interest in Him" (Matt. Henry).

**As many as were ordained to eternal life.** Luke carries out Paul's  
 thought of God's Divine purpose of salvation, including those Gentiles who  
 believed rather than the Jews who, though belonging to the covenant nation,  
 rejected the Saviour.

49. **Throughout all the region.** The gospel had spread beyond the town,  
 and in the neighbouring villages believers were to be found.

50. **Devout and honourable women.** *Devout women of honourable estate.*  
 In the decay of heathen religions many Gentile ladies became proselytes, and  
 many more were influenced by Jewish teachers. In Antioch the fanatic Jews  
 moved these ladies to take what action they could against the Apostle.

**Cast them out of their coasts or borders.** "This was the method which  
 the overruling providence of God took to keep the first planters of the Church  
 from staying too long at a place" (Matt. Henry). Compare Acts ix. 16;  
 2 Tim. iii. 11. It is a common lot to suffer ill for doing well.

51. **Shook off the dust.** Matt. x. 14.

52. **Were filled with joy.** Matt. v. 12. There was an intensity of  
 spiritual life among the converts at Antioch, probably because they were  
 called on to suffer for the Master's sake. "The suffering of the teacher  
 makes the disciple more courageous" (Chrysostom).

### 3. At Iconium—Persecution, xiv. 1-5.

XIV. 1. **Iconium**, the modern Konieh, was an influential town in the  
 central tableland of Asia Minor. It was the point of intersection of some of the  
 most important Roman roads, and was therefore a good place for missionary  
 work, and could scarcely fail to be a great centre of Christian influence in the  
 early ages of the Church. It was 90 miles south-east from Antioch, and had a  
 Jewish synagogue. The Apostles remained, it is probable, several months in  
 Iconium, and spoke often, not only in the synagogue but elsewhere where they  
 could address Gentiles or heathens as well as Jews. The curious legend of  
 Paul and Thekla has its scene in Iconium. Thekla, betrothed to Thamyris,  
 became so impressed by Paul's preaching, that, when the Apostle was im-  
 prisoned on the charge of practising magic, she bribed the jailer, gained  
 admission, and was fully instructed by Paul in the Christian faith. After the  
 Apostle got away from Iconium, Thekla refused to marry Thamyris, and was  
 condemned to death in consequence. She was saved by a miracle, made her  
 escape, joined Paul on his missionary travels, and in the end lived in Seleucia  
 the religious life of a nun, and died at the age of ninety. Iconium became an

- 2 believed. 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, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted  
 4 signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews,  
 5 and part with the apostles. And when there was an assault

important city in the Middle Ages. It was the capital of the kingdom of the Seljuk Turks, and was taken in the first crusade. It is still a large town.

**Greeks.** The word is *Hellenes*; but some wish to alter it into *Hellenistæ*, or Jews of the Dispersion: they say that Greeks could not be in the synagogue. The word probably means not Greek Jews, nor even proselytes, but pagan Greeks. Pagans were not as rigidly excluded from the synagogue as from the temple, and the context implies that the Apostles spoke elsewhere than in the synagogue.

2. **The unbelieving Jews, etc.** *The Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles and made them evil affected.* The phrase suggests unbelief breaking out into open rebellion, and is the opposite of faith, which is submissive to the Divine call. It is the word which says that Herod had done *harm* to the Church (Acts xii. 1). Compare Acts xxvi. 19, and John iii. 36, Revised Version. The Jews began this riot which ended in persecution, and it is noteworthy that most of the persecution which the Apostles suffered was brought upon them by the Jews.

3. **Long time therefore.** Their stay must have lasted some months, and all the while Paul and Barnabas earned their own living by working at a handicraft. The phrase implies that the long time was spent because of both the success of and the hostility to their message. Persecution gave them inspiration.

**Speaking boldly in the Lord,** not merely courageously, but preaching a full and free gospel in spite of temptation to give in to the prejudices of Judaism. Notice that the Apostles had prayed for this freedom of speech (iv. 29), and that then, when they prayed, and now when the prayer was answered, miracles confirmatory followed the acts of faith.

**Gave testimony.** "The signs mentioned here, as elsewhere, follow after faith, and do not precede it" (Lumby). Compare Acts iv. 30.

**The word of his grace** is a beautiful definition of the gospel.

4. **Was divided.** There was a Christian and a non-Christian party, the converts belonging probably, as at Antioch (xiii. 50) and at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 26, 27), to the lower classes. The gospel must cause divisions (Luke xii. 51), for it does not admit compromises: we must follow Christ or oppose Him. It was so in apostolic times (xvii. 4, 5); it is so now. Here, as elsewhere, it was the Jews whose hostility began persecutions against the Christians. When the assault came, *the stoning* shows that Jews were the chief actors in the riot. Paul and Barnabas were "in perils from their own countrymen."

**When an assault was made, etc.** *And when there was made an onset both of the Gentiles and of the Jews with their rulers.* The words do not imply that there was any actual attack made. The whole city was excited and an attack might have come at any moment. The leaders of the Jewish community were active in organizing the outbreak.

5. **To use them despitely.** Paul uses the phrase to describe his own

made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews, with their 6 rulers, to use *them* despitefully, and to stone them, they were ware of *it*, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, 7 and unto the region that lieth round about: and there they preached the gospel.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had 9 walked: the same heard Paul speak; who stedfastly behold- 10 ing him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said

conduct when an unbeliever towards Christianity (1 Tim. i. 13). It means to insult and outrage wantonly. "They (the Jews) aimed to take away both reputation and life."

4. *In Lycaonia—The cripple healed*, xiv. 6-21.

6. **They were ware of it.** The words of the previous verses do not imply that the Apostles were actually stoned, but that there was intention to do it, and in accordance with Christ's command the Apostles fled (Matt. x. 23). "There is always abundant refuge for the godly whether it be on earth or in heaven" (Bengel).

**Lystra and Derbe.** Lystra is about 40 miles south-east of Iconium, at the foot of a great conical hill called the Black Mountain. Derbe is 20 miles farther to the east. *Lycaonia* (Wolf-land) was a dreary plain, bare of trees, with scarcity of water. There is no mention of synagogues, and Paul probably began his work there by preaching to the heathen. The verse is better rendered, "*fled unto the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about.*"

7. **They preached the gospel**, all the better for their sufferings. "The loss of persecution is a loss of spiritual energy" (Parker).

8. **A cripple.** Luke the physician notes particularly the man's case. His feet were useless, he had been born so, he had never walked.

9. **Heard Paul speak.** The Greek implies that he had heard Paul several times. Perhaps he had been carried by his friends to beg in the market-place or other public spot where Paul was accustomed to speak.

**Stedfastly beholding.** *Fastening his eyes upon him.* A phrase used often about Paul (xiii. 9, xxiii. 1). Some think that this "straining look was due to some weakness of sight remaining ever since his blindness at the time of his conversion" (Lumby).

**Perceiving that he had faith.** The man was a believer and scarcely knew it, and Paul, with his apostolic gifts and yearning for the salvation of men's souls, saw his state. True preachers must recognise faith "when it is only a light in the face, a gleam in the eye, a new movement in the body." If we were always on the outlook for faith in others our Christian work would probably be more successful. "Whilst the lame man listens to the word he feels power in his soul: and thus he is inwardly led to infer it in his body" (Bengel).

10. **On thy feet.** He named the weak part to give the man confidence.

**And he leaped up and walked.** A sudden spring as the faith found vent, one act showing that the cure was perfect (aorist tense), then a continuous power to walk (imperfect tense).

with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped  
 11 and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done,  
 they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia,  
 12 The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And  
 they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because  
 13 he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which  
 was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the  
 14 gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. *Which*  
*when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of,* they rent  
 15 their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and  
 saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of  
 like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should  
 turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made

**11. In the speech of Lycaonia.** It is plain that neither Paul nor Barnabas understood this language, for it was not until the oxen and garlands were brought that they saw what the people meant. It is impossible to tell what the language was; some think a corrupt dialect of Greek, others a speech akin to the Assyrian.

**The gods, etc.** *The gods made like men are come down to us.* Heathen stories of descents of the gods to the earth were common enough, but it was only among barbarous people like the Lycaonians that men were still prepared to believe in them. The old legend of the descent of Zeus and Hermes, and how they were hospitably entertained by Baucis and Philemon, belonged to this region. The people were familiar with the story of the former legendary descent, and the more readily believed that the gods had again descended. There may have been another Philemon in the crowd; there was one at Colosse, not very far off.

**12. Jupiter . . . Mercurius.** *Zeus . . . Hermes.* Zeus, the king of the gods, of stately and commanding presence. Hermes, the chief attendant of Zeus and the god of eloquence.

**13. The priest of Jupiter which was, etc.** *The priest of Jupiter whose temple was before the city, that is, at the entrance to the city.* A protecting shrine.

**Garlands.** The *vitta* made of wool, with leaves and flowers interwoven, used to deck the victim, the altar, the priests and the attendants, at a heathen sacrifice.

**To the gates** of the house in which the Apostles lodged (xii. 14). The procession came to the porch or outer door, for the house in which the gods were had become a temple in the eyes of the people.

**Done sacrifice.** This meant (1) to cut the throats of the oxen, (2) to receive the blood in a bowl, (3) then to pour it on an altar.

**14. Ran in among the people.** *Sprang forth among the multitude.* They did not know the language, and had not understood what the people were saying. When the truth flashed on them, they sprang up horror-stricken, rent their clothes, and threw themselves among the crowd to prevent the blasphemy.

**15. Men of like passions with you.** Compare Peter to Cornelius (x. 26). The same word occurs in Jas. v. 17, and means sharing in the same human life with all its weaknesses. Paul and Barnabas resist the preacher's great

heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein :  
 16 who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own  
 17 ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in  
 that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful  
 18 seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with  
 these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had  
 not done sacrifice unto them.

temptation to separate himself by theory, sacerdotal or other, from the people to whom he preaches.

**These vanities.** Perhaps pointing to the garlands and all the preparations for sacrifice ; but the terms *vanities* and *vain things* are constantly used to contrast the empty, worthless heathen worship with the reverence due to the living God, the Maker and Saviour ; and as the word is masculine and not neuter, *vanities* probably means Zeus and Hermes. Compare 1 Sam. xii. 21 ; Eph. iv. 17 ; 1 Pet. i. 17, 18.

16. **Who in times past, etc.** *Who in the generations gone by suffered all the heathen.* "We have here the first germ of what may be fairly described as St. Paul's philosophy of history . . . the ignorance and sins of the Gentile world had been allowed to run their course, as the Law had been allowed to do its partial and imperfect work among the Jews, as parts, if one may so speak, of a great Divine drama, leading both to feel the need of redemption, and preparing both for its reception. All were included in unbelief that God might have mercy upon all" (Plumptre). Compare Acts xvii. 30 ; Rom. i., ii., xi.

17. **Without witness.** Given in the Divine merciful providence seen in nature. Paul specially mentions *rain* to a rude country people who suffered continually from drought ; when speaking to men more accustomed to reflection, he brings human consciousness and conscience to witness to the same facts (xvii. 28 ; Rom. ii. 14, 15).

**Gave us rain, etc.** The Greek phrase reads like the snatch of a song, and it has been inferred that Paul quoted to these heathen Lycaonians a fragment from some well-known harvest song ; but this is mere guess-work.

18. **With these sayings.** The appeal made to the people of Lystra was as follows : *Sirs, why do ye do these things?* Then follows the persuasion against their acts. The Apostles were men in every way like themselves, and in no way raised above them—men of like passions, infirmities, as liable to pains, disease, and death. The one difference between them and the people of Lystra was that they were Apostles, men sent with a message to tell them of the living God, a God so different from their gods, that when they know Him they will, like the Apostles, see that their gods are vanities, *simularia*. This God is the living One, for all life comes from Him. He has made heaven, earth, and sea. He is the Creator and Life-giver (15). Why then did He conceal Himself so long from them? He had chosen one nation only before the coming of Christ, and had given the Jews a special revelation of Himself. Other nations He had left to work out their own inward and outward life in ways shaped by themselves, without *special* Divine regulation and influence, and also without the intervention of Divine wrath (16). But He did not entirely hide or withdraw Himself from them. His *providence* witnessed for Him. He it was who, Himself unseen, sent them good gifts. When the rain, best gift in the dreary, barren wolf-land,

19 And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people; and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead.  
 20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with  
 21 Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to  
 22 Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith,

came, it was God that sent it: He with the rain made the earth bring forth food, which made their hearts glad (17). Paul made himself all things to all men. When he preached to the Jews he quoted the Old Testament Scriptures, and facts which other Jews knew; when he preached to the Athenians, he drew his arguments from the beautifully carved images, the magnificent temples, from history, from literature, from soul and from conscience; here, speaking to a primitive people, he describes God as the food-giver, even the rudest intellect could appreciate that.

*They had not done sacrifice, from doing sacrifice to them.*

19. **Jews from Antioch**, etc. Jewish malice was so strong that men of two cities ninety miles apart combined to persecute, and some of them came 130 miles to harm the Apostles.

**They stoned Paul.** "To-day, Hosanna; to-morrow, Crucify Him: to-day, sacrificed to; to-morrow, sacrificed" (Matt. Henry). "Once was I stoned," says Paul (2 Cor. xi. 25). He could not forget this terrible day at Lystra (2 Tim. iii. 11).

**Supposing he had been dead**, as persecutors have often since supposed that they had slain the truth.

20 **Disciples.** The followers were as brave as the Master. We can fancy Eunice, Lois, and the young Timothy in the little company. Compare 1 Tim. i. 2 with Acts xvi. 1.

**He rose up**, not necessarily a miracle.

**Departed with Barnabas.** Barnabas had escaped: he was not so demonstrative as Paul, and the wrath of the fickle mob had concentrated itself on the chief speaker.

21. **Had taught many, had made many disciples**, among them Gaius of Derbe (xx. 4). There was no persecution at Derbe, but a church was formed.

#### 5. *Return to Antioch in Syria*, xiv. 21-28.

**Return again to Lystra**, to the places of persecution, for there were disciples whose faith needed strengthening.

22. **Confirming, strengthening.** The same word as in the command to Peter, "When thou art converted *strengthen* thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32).

**Through much tribulation.** "Paul was suffering when he said those words. His head had not recovered the stunning blows of the stoning at Lystra . . . the speaker was conscious that a new thread, a golden one, was being run through the web of his eloquence as he exhorted the Christians at Derbe and Lystra and Antioch and Iconium to continue in the faith and to accept tribulation, not as a discredit, but as an endorsement" (Parker).

and that we must through much tribulation enter into the  
 23 kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders  
 in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended  
 24 them to the Lord, on whom they believed. And after they  
 25 had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. And  
 when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down  
 26 into Attalia; and thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they  
 had been recommended to the grace of God for the work  
 27 which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had  
 gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had

23. **Ordained them elders.** Compare notes on Acts vi. 3-6. The disciples were gathered together into a Church or community having a common life, ruled by laws and governed by discipline. The rulers in these little commonwealths were *elders, bishops, "those that are over you"* (πρωϊστάμενοι), *pastors, "those that have the rule over you"* (ηγούμενοι); for all these names denote the same class of men. Thus at the head of each Christian community there was a college of elders who were responsible for the teaching and the discipline of the community. These elders were solemnly set apart for their office by prayer, fasting, laying on of hands; and then followed the commendation to the Lord—the special services of prayer and exhortation which accompanied every peculiarly solemn act in the Apostolic Church. These elderships once established were self-acting, and did not require the presence of an Apostle to rule or direct them. They could add to their number. The presbytery of Lystra set apart Timothy to the service of the Church (1 Tim. iv. 14).

25. **Perga.** The Apostles retraced their steps till they came to Perga. There they halted. It was the place where John Mark had left them, and on their first visit we are not told that they preached there. They gave the gospel message on their return, but with what results is not said. Perga was an important city of Pamphylia, situated on the river Cestius, which is navigable up to the town. The Apostles in their voyage from Paphos had sailed up the river and landed at Perga; on their return journey, instead of taking ship there, they crossed by land to Attalia (now Satalia), a seaport of Pamphylia, whence they sailed for Syria, coasting along Cilicia to the mouth of the Orontes, and thence by Seleucia to Antioch.

26. **The work which they had fulfilled.** They, fellow-workers with God, had done the work to which the Holy Spirit had called them, to which the Church had set them apart and commended them in special services of prayer and fasting.

27. **They rehearsed all.** They had been absent nearly three years, and probably few tidings had reached the Church at Antioch, and the disciples gathered eagerly to the earliest great missionary meeting of the Christian Church to hear news of the gospel's progress in heathen lands.

**That God had done with them.** They had been fellow-workers with God, and God had done all with them and for them. He had sent them hunger and danger, persecution and stoning, much tribulation; but He had given them Churches in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra, in Derbe, in Salamis, and in Paphos.

**The door of faith.** Probably a phrase used by Paul in his speech, for the

done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith 28 unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples.

CHAP. XV. 1. And certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after

metaphor occurs very often in his Epistles (1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3; 1 Thess. i. 9, *entering in*). The door had been opened to the Gentiles, and henceforth none could shut it.

Paul did not write letters to the Churches founded during this first missionary journey, and therefore there are not many side lights to be thrown on this portion of the Acts of the Apostles from the Epistles. One or two, however, may be gathered.

Luke tells us that Paul was twice threatened with stoning, and once actually stoned (Acts xiv. 5, 19); Paul says (2 Cor. xi. 25), "Once was I stoned." Luke recounts the persecutions at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra (Acts xiii. 50, xiv. 5, 19); Paul reminds Timothy, a native of Lystra, of the persecutions he had undergone in these three cities (2 Tim. iii. 11). The references to Timothy's early training, to his mother and grandmother, in the two Epistles sent him by Paul, are all memories of this first missionary journey made twenty years before the Epistles were written.

28. *There they abode long time.* *And they tarried no little time with the disciples*; how long it is impossible to say, probably about a year. Antioch was Paul's favourite centre; it gave him opportunities of work unsurpassed by any city except by Rome itself.

## II.—THE FIRST CHRISTIAN COUNCIL—CAN GENTILES BE CHRISTIANS? XV. 1–35.

### I. *The question raised at Antioch in Syria, xv. 1.*

1. **Ye cannot be saved.** The Apostles had told the brethren that God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles, and that many believers had been saved by the grace of Christ; men now wanted to close the door that God had opened. Certain brethren from Judea, in a spirit of Jewish exclusiveness, insisted that the missionary work of the Apostles among the Gentiles had been useless, because none could be admitted to the kingdom of God unless, by circumcision and observance of the Law of Moses, they first became Jewish proselytes. There was danger that the Christian community would be rent asunder at the beginning.

These busybodies were not sent by the mother Church at Jerusalem, and were afterwards repudiated by the Apostles and brethren there (xv. 24), but they evidently assumed the position of delegates, and spoke as if with the authority of the Apostles. Paul, speaking either of them, or more probably referring to a later occasion, calls them *false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage*. They were men of the strictest sect of the Pharisees, and were, notwithstanding, Christians; they had brought their pharisaism with them into Christianity. Their coming to Antioch was the beginning of a conflict in the Christian Church which embittered Paul's future life, and was continually thwarting his missionary efforts. Compare Introduction, *passim*.



2 the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the  
 3 apostles and elders about this question. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they  
 4 caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

2. *The deputation to Jerusalem, xv. 2-15.*

2. **Dissension and disputation.** Not merely calm debate, but the beginnings of insurrection or schism.

**Certain other.** Among the others was Titus (Gal. ii. 3), who was a strenuous supporter of Paul (Tit. i. 10, 14, 15).

**Should go up.** The idea of the deputation to Jerusalem to end the wranglings at Antioch was a sudden inspiration in the mind of Paul (Gal. ii. 1). An appeal to Jerusalem was as familiar to the Jews of the Dispersion as the appeal to Cæsar was throughout the Roman Empire: the Sanhedrin in the Holy City was the supreme court of appeal in all matters of Jewish religious law or custom. Paul transfers the appeal from the Sanhedrin to the Apostles and Presbytery of Jerusalem, yielding almost all apparently to the Judaizers.

**Being brought on their way.** (1) Convoy by the brethren at Antioch. (2) Journey by land through Phœnicia and Samaria. (3) Repeated descriptions of the conversion of the Gentiles. (4) Deep joy of the disciples in all the provincial Churches they visited on the road to Jerusalem, at the news. "Christ's family will never be the poorer for the multitude of its children: in Christ and in heaven there is portion enough and inheritance enough for them all" (Matt. Henry).

4. **When they were come to Jerusalem.** Combining the accounts in Galatians and in Acts, the order of events seems to have been: (1) A public reception of the Apostles, at which Paul and Barnabas gave an account of their missionary journey. (2) At the close an emphatic protest on the part of Pharisaical Christians against the labours of Paul and Barnabas, because they had received into the Church Gentiles without first making them Jewish proselytes. (3) In consequence a private conference between Paul and the Apostles, in which (a) Paul's claims to apostolic authority were acknowledged, and (b) the Three appear to have fully accepted Paul's principles of the freedom and catholicity of the Christian Church, and to have emphatically repudiated the ideas of the Judaizing Christians (Gal. ii. 2-10). (4) The public conference at which a solemn decision was come to.

It has been taken for granted that this visit of Paul to Jerusalem is the same which he describes in the second chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians. This view has been maintained by the great majority of writers, and it is most consistent with the facts of the case. In both narratives there is the same situation: men from Jerusalem trouble the peace of Gentile Christians of Antioch; an appeal to Jerusalem is resolved upon; and the Apostles of the

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which  
believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and  
6 to command *them* to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles

Gentiles go from Antioch to Jerusalem and return again to Antioch. In both accounts Paul and Barnabas are on the one side, Peter and James on the other—representing Antioch and Jerusalem. The men who made the disturbance are evidently the same in both narratives: Christians of the sect of the Pharisees, brethren who wish to curb gospel liberty. The dispute and appeal are about the circumcision of the Gentiles in both accounts; and both narratives bear witness that the decision was only come to after hard fighting on both sides, while the practical result is the same,—the authority of Paul was acknowledged, and circumcision was not forced on the Gentiles. The discrepancies between the narratives can be easily accounted for, when we remember that every event has different aspects. Paul did his work in the private conferences, and he describes them; Luke thought of the effects on the Church at large, and described the general conference. Paul evidently met with some hesitation on the part of some of the leading Apostles at the private conferences, and his feelings of dissatisfaction were not altogether allayed by the unanimous decision. Luke gives the official account, which ignores the previous differences, and describes only the deliverance of the whole Church. Luke lays great stress on the official deliverance, for he wrote for all the Churches; Paul does not quote it at all, because he is writing to the Galatians, who, so far from wishing to be relieved of Judaizing observances, are anxious to adopt them. Compare Bishop Lightfoot's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, note "On the Later Visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem," appended to discussion on Gal. ii. 10, and his Appendix iii., "St. Paul and the Three."

5. The sect of the Pharisees which believed. Jewish Christians (1) who insisted that all Gentiles must become circumcised (Jewish proselytes) before they could be accepted as Christians; (2) who regarded the conversion of Cornelius as an exceptional case; and (3) who, silenced for the time at Jerusalem, became the enemies of Paul; (a) doubting his claim to apostleship (1 Cor. iv. 1-4, ix. 1-6; 2 Cor. iii. 1, vi. 3-12, xi. 5, 22, 23; Gal. i. 11, 12, 18-20, ii. 6-9); (b) sneering at his work (1 Cor. ii. 1-5; 2 Cor. x. 10, xi. 6; Gal. iv. 13-17); (c) doing their best to mar his teaching by preaching "another gospel" (Gal. i. 6-9, iii. 1-3, v. 1-7, vi. 12-15). These Christians of the sect of the Pharisees evidently found fault with St. Paul's statements at the private conferences. They objected then and there to St. Paul's apostleship. He had asserted it to the fullest extent. He had no need to get a commission from the Twelve; they could give him nothing that he had not already got (Gal. ii. 6); the same grace which made Peter an Apostle had made him, Paul, an Apostle. His proofs of Apostleship were the same. Peter could show Churches in Jerusalem, Samaria, Cæsarea, etc. He could show Churches in Antioch, Paphos, Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra (Gal. ii. 8).

### 3. *The brethren in council*, xv. 16-29.

6. Came together. In this first General Assembly there were (a) the Apostles, extraordinary office-bearers, the evangelists of the first generation of Christians, occupying the same position as European missionaries in an infant Church among the heathen, but speaking and voting as simple elders; (b) the elders, or elected and ordained office-bearers; (c) the brethren or multitude (verse 12).

7 and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, 9 giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts 10 by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor

7. **Much disputing.** *Much questioning*, many speeches made on both sides, of which we have no record.

**Peter.** His speech is history with its lesson :—(1) God accepted Cornelius, his household and friends, without circumcision. (2) God can see into the heart, and must know best, and He had given Gentiles the Holy Ghost as fully and freely as it had been given to Jews on the day of Pentecost. (3) These Gentiles undoubtedly were unclean and needed to be purified; but God purified them by their faith on Jesus. (4) This is the only real purification possible for the Jews themselves, for Jews could not keep the whole law and thus purify themselves, it was an intolerable yoke. (5) To insist on the Gentiles keeping the ceremonial law is *to tempt God*, to distrust His guidance, and to disobey His revealed commands, in the same way as the Jews tempted God in the wilderness (Heb. iii. 9). (6) The Jews need the same salvation, and are saved in the very same way, as Cornelius and these Gentiles had been saved. Peter asserts the worthlessness of circumcision as strongly as Paul could have done. It is not circumcision, but the grace of Jesus, the Christ, that saves. Peter assumes no primacy; the Church has a difficult task before it; he has had some experience and gives it; he will not shirk the responsibility of decision; moral personal influence telling, as it always must tell.

**Good while ago.** He had been as bad as Paul, and that ten years ago; no matter though he was not as enthusiastic as Paul would have liked him to be in private conference, when public discussion comes he will stand by Paul's side and bear Paul's burden; he had received Cornelius and his household, and could not help doing so; God had made it impossible to him to act otherwise, and had simply used his mouth to speak His message, unfamiliar enough to Peter at the time.

8. **Which knoweth the heart**, a favourite phrase of Peter's. Compare i. 24.

9. **And put no difference.** Peter seems to be somewhat surprised that there should be no difference; but God had made none, and he had to accept that fact: Gentile hearts were purified by faith, cleansed by trust on Christ, and the Holy Ghost dwelt in them, as certainly as in any Jew purified by the outward observances of the Law of Moses. Compare Acts xi. 15-18.

10. **Why tempt ye.** To act as the Pharisaic Christians proposed to do was to distrust God's knowledge of the heart manifested in bestowing the Holy Ghost on Gentile Christians. It was to make further experiments by way of seeing whether after all God had been right in giving the Holy Ghost to uncircumcised Gentiles. It was to refuse to trust His revelation.

**Yoke.** Peter recalls our Lord's words about these Pharisaical observances

11 we were able to bear? 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 audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me : Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets ; as it is written,

16 After this I will return,

(Matt. xxiii. 4). Paul's words could not be stronger (Gal. v. 1 ; Rom. vii. 7, 8).

12. **Gave audience.** Peter's speech had silenced opposition, and Paul and Barnabas recounted how God had answered the prayers of the Jerusalem Church (iv. 30) in a manner they had never thought of, and had witnessed to their work among the Gentiles by *signs and wonders*.

13. **James**, the brother of our Lord, and author of the Epistle of James. James was not one of the Twelve, and his position in the Church at Jerusalem is somewhat remarkable. He has been called the Bishop of Jerusalem, but there is no evidence that he exercised what are called episcopal functions. It is most likely that he occupied the position in which we find him in deference to the Oriental usage that the eldest male relative of the founder of a community succeeds to his place at his death. This hypothesis is further confirmed when we remember that James was succeeded by Simeon, son of Clopas, also a near kinsman, who ruled the community at Pella, whither the Christians of Jerusalem had fled after the destruction of the city. If so, the pre-eminence of James was not sanctioned but rather forbidden by our Lord, being founded on family relations, which have no place in the new kingdom (Matt. xii. 50). His speech is based on the facts related by Peter and by the missionary Apostles. (1) He agrees with Peter, and then proceeds to state the lesson taught by these events. (2) God has a chosen or elect people among the Gentiles, and meant from the very first that the Gentiles should be included in His Church. (3) There is nothing new in this, for God has told us in the prophets that the Gentiles would seek Him (Amos ix. 11, 12). (4) God has done what He promised, and in a way which He all along knew, although we made a mistake about it. We expected that the Gentiles would be gathered in by becoming Jews. God meant that they should be fellow-heirs, and has at last shown us His meaning. (5) Therefore we Jews must not needlessly harass our Gentile brethren, to whom are the promises as well as to us.

14. **Simeon hath**, etc. *Symeon* (the older Jewish form of Simon) *hath rehearsed how first God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people*, etc. Cornelius and his household ; they had been called out from among the heathen to be God's chosen, as truly as Israel was ; and the chosen people were no longer to be Jews only, but all whom the Lord should so call.

16. **After this.** *After these things.* The quotation is from the Septuagint version of Amos ix. 11, 12, somewhat altered. The Septuagint is : " In that

And will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down;

And I will build again the ruins thereof,

And I will set it up :

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord,

And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,

18 Saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them which  
20 from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from*  
21 blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas ; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas,  
23 and Silas, chief men among the brethren : and they wrote

day I will set up the tabernacle of David which hath fallen down, and I will build up the fallen parts thereof, and the ruins thereof will I set up, and I will build it up as the days of eternity, that the residue of men may seek (unto it), and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doth all these things."

**The tabernacle of David.** During the Feast of Tabernacles the people dwelt in frail booths made of tree-branches to remind them that God was their protector: these ruined booths were repaired for each festival season when the covenant was renewed.

17. **The residue of men**, etc. The Septuagint version is so different from the Hebrew that it is more an exposition than a translation, and St. James gives a still further exposition. The Hebrew speaks about a restored tabernacle, and the people restored with it, in possession of Edom and all nations; the Septuagint speaks of all nations seeking the restored tabernacle. In the text, the nations seek the Lord; and in this way the tabernacle is restored.

**Saith the Lord, who**, etc. *Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world*; or better, as on the margin of the R. V. : *Saith the Lord, who doeth these things which were known from the beginning of the world*. The reception of Gentiles into the Christian Church is God's deed; it is startling to us, but it was known to God's prophets, and was part of His revealed plan of redemption.

19. **My sentence is.** James concludes with a motion which became the deliverance of the Assembly.

20. **We write unto them.** The words denote formal decision sent by special messenger to the Gentile Christians, for the Jews heard the injunctions of the Mosaic Law every Sabbath day in the synagogues.

22. **The whole Church.** The decision was unanimous.

23. **They wrote letters.** This is the earliest synodical letter in the Christian Church, and was "not only the charter of Gentile freedom, but the

*letters* by them after this manner ; The apostles, and elders, and brethren, *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the  
 24 Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia : 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* com-  
 25 mandment : it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved

assertion of the supremacy of the gospel" (Lightfoot). It contains (1) kindly greetings to Gentile brethren ; (2) a strong repudiation of the Pharisaical Jews who had gone from Jerusalem to Antioch and interfered with Gentile liberties there, and the statement that a deputation who really represent the views of the Jerusalem Church are sent ; (3) a full recognition of the authority of Barnabas and Paul by the Apostles of the circumcision ; (4) a declaration that circumcision is not necessary to salvation ; and (5) four prohibitions which enjoin abstinence from certain practices in which heathens indulged. These prohibitions were concessions demanded from the Gentile Christians for the purpose of preserving peace, unity, and social intercourse between Jews and Gentiles, and also of protecting Christian converts from the results of heathen associations and habits. If the Gentile Christians ate blood and things strangled, things abhorrent to the Jewish taste, all social intercourse would be impossible, so they are forbidden. Meats offered to idols was the flesh of animals sacrificed, eaten at sacrificial feasts, or sent to market for sale, and that there was practical danger in eating such meat we can see from Paul's advice to the Corinthians (1 Cor. viii.). The fourth prohibition is of the gross sin of fornication, at first sight very unlike the other three. Some suggest that the word *porneia* means not fornication, but the infringement of any of the marriage laws of Lev. xvii. If so, then these four prohibitions were the concessions demanded from proselytes of the gate, and the decree of the Council is a compromise. It should be noted, however, that there must have been some connection between heathen pollutions and sacrificial feasts, as the two things are often put together in the New Testament (Rev. ii. 14, 20). Those who are acquainted with the licentiousness of pagan worship—our Indian missionaries and their converts, for example—are probably better able to understand why the two things are put together than we can be.

**Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.** The letter was not sent to all Churches, and St. Paul does not mention the decrees when writing to Churches in Europe, Corinth, Rome, etc.

24. **Certain which went out from us.** This is the repudiation of the men who came down from Jerusalem and created the difficulties to begin with.

**To whom we gave, etc.** *To whom we gave no commandment at all*, and yet they had claimed to speak for James ; and did so in later times also (Gal. ii. 12).

25. **Having come to one accord,** not by a mere majority, but *unanimously*. **To send chosen men ;** *to choose out men and send them*, viz. Silas or Silvanus, and Judas or Barsabas.

**Our beloved Barnabas and Paul** (compare 2 Pet. iii. 15). There was to be no repudiation of the Apostles to the Gentiles ; they were to be honoured with all honour ; but the old official ranking was preserved. It was Barnabas and Paul, not Paul and Barnabas. The dangers of their missionary work are fully recognised, *men who have hazarded their lives* (xiii. 50, xiv. 2, 5, 19) ;

26 Barnabas and Paul; men that have hazarded their lives for  
 27 the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore  
 Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by  
 28 mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us,  
 to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary  
 29 things. 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  
 30 well. So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch ;  
 and when they had gathered the multitude together, they

the words testify the complete confidence of the Church at Jerusalem in the fidelity of Paul and Barnabas.

27. By mouth, *by word of mouth.*

28. For it seemed good. *Edoxen*, the word from which *dogma* comes.

To the Holy Ghost. "The mention of the Holy Spirit is the most primitive Christian thing imaginable" (Ewald). The whole Church lived under the shadow of Pentecost; the possession of the Holy Spirit was what made men Christians; they lived and thought and spoke under the guidance of the Spirit, just as we should do now, if we had their simple faith. Paul had gone up *by revelation*; they spoke of the Holy Ghost.

These necessary things, *these things which are in some degree necessary, i.e.* necessary for the times in which they lived, and the circumstances and conditions of social intercourse between Jew and Gentile; not necessary for salvation, and therefore binding at all times and everywhere.

29. That ye abstain from. Compare the statements in verses 20 and 29:—

Ver. 20. That they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood.

Ver. 29. That ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.

The prohibitions are put more precisely in the formal deliverance than in the speech, and the three declarations about food are placed together. The phrase *pollutions of idols* is explained to mean *food which has been offered in sacrifice on idol altars.*

Ye shall do well, *not ye shall do what is right, but it shall be well with you*, because peace and unity between Jewish and Gentile Christians shall follow; this is meant to be consolation (ver. 31).

30. They. Paul, Barnabas, Titus, and the others from Antioch, with the true deputation from Jerusalem, Silas and Judas.

Were dismissed, sent away formally, an authorized embassy from the mother Church at Jerusalem to the disciple community at Antioch.

Had gathered the multitude together. This phrase is one of many which shows the thoroughly democratic and anti-sacerdotal character of the apostolic Christianity. They did not report to the rulers of the Church, nor to the presbytery, but held what we should call a congregational meeting.

The Epistle. This was the beginning of New Testament Scripture, the first of the Epistles; it was addressed to Christians in Antioch, in Syria, and Cilicia, as later Epistles were addressed to the Galatians, to the Romans, etc. It was the *Magna Charta* of Gentile Christianity.

31 delivered the epistle: *which* when they had read, they  
 32 rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being  
 prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many  
 33 words, and confirmed *them*. And after they had tarried *there* a  
 space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the  
 34 apostles. Notwithstanding, it pleased Silas to abide there still.  
 35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and  
 preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

31. For the consolation, for the comfort; compare the *comfort* with *dissension* of verse 2. They had now got an authoritative decision on a point which had troubled the Church so much that its future was threatened; and they had also seen Gentile Christianity formally welcomed within the Church. Both were sources of consolation or comfort. But are we to infer that all this rejoicing arose from the fact that circumcision was declared to be unnecessary, that the Jerusalem Church had resolved to dispense with the obedience of Gentile Christians to an Old Testament commandment? True Christians cannot rejoice at getting rid in their own case of one of God's commands, in being told that they need not do as much for God as their neighbours. The consolation must have arisen from the confirmation of Paul's teaching of the spiritual meaning of the Mosaic Law, and of the consequent widening of the Christian relation to God, and of the enlargement of Christian duty. Circumcision, cutting the flesh, consecrated or marked the body of every Jew as holy to the Lord; but Paul taught in the spirit of his Master, that the stamp of ownership on the body was of little worth if this outward act was not ratified by an inward and spiritual surrender of body, soul, and spirit to the Lord; and in consequence that when the spiritual surrender had been made there was no need for the bodily marking which was its sign. The Christian rejoiced not in the abrogation but in the fulfilling or making full the Law of Moses, by bringing out all those spiritual obligations which underlay and were often buried out of sight by the formal and external precepts. Of course we require, while time lasts, external signs of inward spiritual truths; but the lesson taught at Jerusalem and at Antioch remains for the Church, that when an external sign, instead of leading to Christ, interposes itself between Christ and the disciple, it does harm; and the Church must see that nothing does come between Christ and the believer during any period of her history.

32. Being prophets themselves. See note on xiii. 1. Judas and Silas were evidently men filled with the Holy Ghost and in possession of those gifts of instruction and strengthening which belonged to the New Testament prophetic order.

Exhorted, comforted, or consoled; their discourses were of the same character as the Epistle from the Church at Jerusalem, and had the same effect.

33. Were let go in peace, were dismissed with a blessing or prayer for their peace. The phrase does not mean that they were *let go quietly*, but that there was a formal meeting at which the messengers were specially commended to the care of God.

Unto the Apostles, unto those that had sent them forth.

34. Notwithstanding, etc. This verse is not in the best MSS., and should be omitted from the text. It was probably a marginal note to explain ver. 40.

35. With many others also. There were many prophets and teachers in Antioch (xiii. 1).



36 And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go  
 again and visit our brethren in every city where we have  
 37 preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do. And  
 Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname  
 38 was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with  
 them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not  
 39 with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp  
 between them, that they departed asunder one from the other :  
 40 and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus ; and  
 Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the  
 41 brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria  
 and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

### III.—PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY, XV. 36—XVIII. 23.

#### 1. *Through Syria and Cilicia to Lycaonia with Silas*, xv. 36-41.

36. **Let us go again.** Paul's Epistles tell us how he yearned over the Churches he had planted and the disciples he had made (1 Thess. iii. 10; Rom. i. 9; Eph. i. 16; Phil. i. 3), and how his heart was filled with *the care of all the Churches* (2 Cor. xi. 28).

37. **Barnabas determined, Barnabas was minded.** John Mark was his cousin (Col. iv. 10), and he probably wished to give the young man another chance to show what was really in him. Our sympathies are with Barnabas here. Note, however, that when the division of labour took place, Barnabas took Mark over the ground where he had *not* failed, in the previous journey ; while Paul took Silas to those cities where John Mark had not been.

38. **Thought it not good.** Our Lord had said that he who had put his hand to the plough and had turned back was not fit for the kingdom of God ; and Paul evidently thought that John Mark had done what Jesus so strongly reprobated. Paul was wrong, however ; John Mark certainly failed him once, and perhaps brought discredit on the disciple company by so doing ; but Barnabas did right to try him again, and Paul in the end came to see that his fellow-Apostle had been in the right, and afterwards received the services of the man whom he here distrusted. Mark was at Babylon with Peter (1 Pet. v. 13), and then at Rome with Paul (Col. iv. 10), and about to leave it for Asia Minor. The last glimpse of him is given by Paul, when the Apostle asks Timothy to come to Rome and bring Mark with him, who, he says, is "useful to me for ministering" (2 Tim. iv. 11).

39. **The contention was so sharp.** *There arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder.* The words imply a short, severe dispute, not a prolonged one. Apostolic failings show us that it is only Christ's example that is without a blot. The people of Antioch seem to have sided with Paul. Barnabas was allowed to go to Cyprus ; but Paul's journey was specially commended to the Lord in prayer.

41. **Through Syria and Cilicia.** Districts in which the Judaizers had been strong, and where the presence of Silas, one of the delegates from Jerusalem, would help to bring peace and conviction (xvi. 5). It was to the Christians in these districts, moreover, that the decree and the letter from the Church at

CHAP. XVI. I. Then came he to Derbe and Lystra : and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed ; but his father *was* a Greek : which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him ; and took and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters : for they knew all that his father was a Greek. And as they went

Jerusalem had been specially addressed. Paul and Silas went from Antioch to Derbe, passing from the sunny plains of Cilicia to the bleak tableland of Lycaonia by one of the passes through the Taurus range, probably through a celebrated pass called the *Cilician Gates*.

2. *Paul and Timothy*, xvi. 1-5.

XVI. I. **Timotheus**, one of Paul's earliest converts (1 Tim. i. 2), son of a Jewess and a Greek (2 Tim. i. 5), who had been trained by his mother and grandmother in the Old Testament Scriptures (2 Tim. iii. 15). He had been called to the Christian service by the converts at Lystra (1 Tim. i. 18), had been ordained by the presbytery or "elders" there (1 Tim. iv. 14), and was now invited by Paul to share in his missionary work. Paul's work took him among Jews as well as Gentiles, and Jews would have looked upon Timothy as an apostate had he not been circumcised, and Paul, to avoid offence, circumcised the young man. He afterwards worked with Paul (Rom. xvi. 21), was his messenger to the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. iv. 17) and to the Church at Thessalonica (1 Thess. iii. 2-6). He was at Rome with Paul (Phil. i. 1, ii. 19; Col. i. 1; Philem. 1). He suffered for the truth (Heb. xiii. 23).

2. **Well reported of.** The phrase is the same as is used to describe Cornelius (x. 22) and Ananias (xxii. 12). Timothy had been silently and unconsciously preparing himself for his work in the world by his work at Lystra and Iconium. Five years had probably elapsed since Paul had preached in these cities, the Christian Churches which he had formed had grown, the elderships had ruled, and the whole communities had been consolidated and were able to express collective opinions.

3. **Have to go forth with him.** Silas had taken the place of Barnabas, but Paul liked youth, and needed a young man to take the place of John Mark. It was an Apostle's duty to train a second generation for Christ, and he felt compelled to have the young with him.

**Circumcised him.** A child born of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father was reckoned Jewish, and therefore a subject for circumcision. The Jews were, however, divided on the question ; the more bigoted held that no legal marriage could take place between a Jew and a Gentile, and refused to circumcise. Paul therefore said two things by this deed of his. He first of all declared against the cruelty of fanatical Judaism when he circumcised the offspring of a Jewish woman and a Gentile man ; and, in the second place, he gave practical illustration of his understanding that the decrees of Jerusalem were intended for Gentiles only, and did not raise the question of the relation of Jews to the Mosaic Law.

4. **Delivered them the decrees.** The deliverances of the Assembly at Jerusalem, acknowledging the apostolic authority of Paul and Barnabas, deny-

through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at  
 5 Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the  
 6 faith, and increased in number daily. Now when they had  
 gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were  
 7 forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after  
 they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia :

ing that circumcision was necessary for salvation, and stating the concessions demanded from the Gentile converts.

5. **Established in the faith**, etc. "The two results which must accompany every true mission—edification first, evangelization second."

3. *Paul enters Europe*, xvi. 6-12.

6. **Phrygia**. For places mentioned in these verses, see Map, p. 40.

**Were forbidden of the Holy Ghost**. Proconsular Asia, with its great cities and large numbers of Jews, was no doubt a most attractive field of work to Paul, but in some way, whether by inward promptings, or visions, or the utterances of comrades or converts who had the prophetic gift (xxi. 4), there was almost a daily conflict between human plans and Divine guidance. A study of the system of Roman roads in Asia Minor shows us that all the principal highways converged on Ephesus in apostolic times (after the transfer of the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople the routes changed), and the ordinary routes were a constant temptation to go down into proconsular Asia.

**Phrygia** was not a Roman province in apostolic times, and it is somewhat difficult to define exactly its extent. The word denotes vaguely the western part of the central region, mostly tableland, of the peninsula, and is always used in an indefinite sense in the Acts (compare Acts ii. 10 and xviii. 23). The cities of Iconium and Colosse belonged to Phrygia. The region contains numbers of Jews (Acts ii. 10, xiii. 14, xiv. 1, 19), who had been first settled there by Antiochus the Great. The gospel may have been introduced into the region by Jews who had been at Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts ii. 10).

**Galatia** was a Roman province, and included Lycaonia, Isauria, the south-eastern region of Phrygia, and part of Pisidia, but the name is ambiguous ; and probably in the Acts of the Apostles it is used not to mean the Roman province, but a limited area which was in possession of a colony of Gauls, who, after the invasion of Greece in the third century before Christ, forced their way through Thrace, crossed the Hellespont, and finally settled in the central portion of Asia Minor. They remained for nearly two centuries a ruling race, not mixing much with the conquered inhabitants. They were subdued by the Romans, who set about their usual task of fusing together the different peoples of the region. In apostolic times the people were a mixed race of Gauls, Phrygians, and Greeks, with a distinct preponderance of the Gaulish or Celtic blood, but worshipping Phrygian deities, and practising the Phrygian religious rites. It was probably in this journey that the Galatian Churches were founded by Paul (Gal. iv. 19).

**Asia** is always used definitely for proconsular Asia, which included the old districts of Mysia, Lydia, and Caria. Its capital was Ephesus, and it contained the seven Churches of the Apocalypse.

7. **Mysia** was the northern part of proconsular Asia. The Spirit hindered

8 but the Spirit suffered them not. And they, passing by Mysia,  
 9 came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the  
 night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him,  
 10 saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after  
 he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go  
 into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called  
 11 us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore, loosing  
 from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia,

the Apostles from preaching there, and they thought of going north-eastwards to Bithynia, but they were again hindered, and compelled to go right through Mysia to the coast to the seaport of Troas.

**Bithynia** was one of the Roman divisions of Asia Minor, lying on the western half of the north side. Its coast-line included part of the shore of the Sea of Marmora and almost half of the southern shore of the Black Sea. St. Peter mentions Christians in this province (1 Pet. i. 1).

**The Spirit suffered them not**, *the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not*; for the Holy Ghost stands in the same relation to the Son as to the Father, and proceeds from the Father and from the Son. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, and His coming fulfils Christ's promise when He said, *Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.* Notice how the Spirit led Paul away from the scene of his former labours towards Europe. He had been brought to the borderland of Mysia and Asia. He had been warned not to preach in Asia, he had taken this as a sign to continue in the peninsula and to return to Galatia by Bithynia; he was checked again; he had now only one way to travel, westwards to the seacoast; so he and his companions went along the southern border of Mysia, and *passing by* the region came to Troas.

9. **A vision.** Paul and his company must have come to Troas in the hope of getting Divine guidance. They received it in *this vision*, which at last explained the uncertainties of the journey. (Compare ii. 17, ix. 10, x. 3, 17, 19, xi. 5, xii. 9, xviii. 9).

10. **We.** Luke introduces himself into the narrative by this *we*; he was a physician (Col. iv. 14), and a Gentile (Col. iv. 11 and 14). It is possible that the means whereby the Apostle was forbidden or hindered from preaching in Asia was a severe sickness (Gal. iv. 13). If so, we can see why Paul and Luke came together, and can conjecture how Paul won him to be a witness for Christ. Luke accompanied Paul into Macedonia, and was with him at Samothracia, Neapolis, and Philippi. When Paul left Philippi for Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Thessalonica, Luke appears to have been left behind (Acts xvii. 1, "Now, when *they* had passed . . ."). When the Apostle returned to Philippi on his third missionary journey, Luke was still there, and apparently left the city with him (Acts xx. 5, 6).

**We endeavoured, we sought.** No mission work was done at Troas, the Apostles endeavoured at once to get a ship to take them to Macedonia, and being successful, set out at once for Europe.

11. **Therefore loosing.** *Setting sail therefore.* Luke describes the journey with his usual clearness. They had the wind in their favour, and they were able to take a straight course.

**Samothrace**, an island off the coast of Thrace, colonized by men of Samos.

**Neapolis**, a seaport town, belonging to the province of Thessaly at that time. The Apostles did not wait there, but hurried on to Macedonia,

12 and the next *day* to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony:  
 13 and we were in that city abiding certain days. And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things  
 15 which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and

12. **Philippi**, rebuilt by and named after the father of Alexander the Great. It was not the capital of any of the four divisions of Roman Macedonia, but was a large and important town.

**Chief city**, etc., *which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony*. Neapolis, where they landed, was in Thrace.

**A colony**, in the Roman sense, was a military settlement of Roman soldiers and citizens to overawe and subdue a recently conquered district. It was a miniature Rome (21) transplanted to a distant region to uphold the dominion of the empire. It was under Roman municipal law, but governed by military officers, prætors and lictors (magistrates and sergeants, 22, 35, 36).

#### 4. *At Philippi*, xvi. 13-40.

##### (a) *Lydia, the seller of purple*, 13-15.

13. **Where prayer was wont to be made.** *Where we supposed there was a place of prayer.* The Jews had commonly places of prayer (*proseuchai* or oratories) in towns where they were not allowed to have synagogues or were few in number. These were enclosures open to the sky, and usually near a river or on the seashore for the ceremonial washings, "by the rivers of Babylon," on the banks of the Tiber, etc.

**To the women.** Claudius had banished the Jews from Rome, and therefore from colonies (xviii. 2), and so there were only Jewish women and women proselytes, who would welcome a wandering Rabbi.

14. **Of the city of Thyatira**, in the Roman province of proconsular Asia, in the valley of the Lycus, and noted for its dyeing works. Recent inscriptions have proved the existence of a guild or corporation of dyers. The purple Lydia sold was either the dye or cloth dyed a purple colour. Thyatira contained one of the seven Churches addressed in the Apocalypse.

**Which worshipped God.** She was a Jewish proselyte.

**Whose heart the Lord opened.** An unconverted soul is shut up, its doors barred against the entrance of the truth. God alone can open it. The phrase implies that Lydia was experiencing and did not resist those strivings of the Spirit which called her to receive the words of the Apostle; she **attended** or rather *gave heed to the things* which were spoken by Paul.

15. **And when she was baptized and her household.** The household may have included children, it must have included female slaves or freed women, and most likely many of them were proselytes. This baptism of the household has been often brought forward as a proof for infant baptism; but the baptism of infants rests on broad scriptural ground, and does not need the very precarious support of texts like this,

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 she constrained us.

- 16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought  
 17 her masters much gain by soothsaying: the same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.  
 18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord. Not implying doubt, but earnest entreaty: they had judged her faithful, for they had baptized her. The Lord through Paul had already acknowledged her faith.

Come into my house. "Christianity is heart-enlargement;" as if she said: Let there be a Church in my house; let me have constant fellowship with those who have taught me to know Christ Jesus. Compare John i. 38.

Constrained us, not that they refused her, but that her entreaties were urgent, she was so full of gratitude.

16. As we went to prayer. *As we were going to the place of prayer*, to the *proscuche* where they continued to preach to those who came to listen.

(b) *The soothsayer and her masters, 16-23.*

16. A certain damsel. The Apostle was in Europe, not far from the most celebrated seats of Greek worship. At Delphi a priestess of Apollo, the Pythoness she was called, was supposed to be inspired to foretell the future. This girl was a wandering pythoness. The Greek words say that *she had a python*, which is translated a *spirit of divination*. She was a slave, troubled by some kind of hysteria, and instead of being cared for and cured, her masters found that they could make money by interpreting her incoherent sayings. What led her in her maddened misery to cry after the Apostles it is impossible to say, but often stray yearnings, leading to such crying out as is recorded, do pass through such minds as hers.

17. Followed Paul and us, and cried; or better, *kept crying*. The poor girl's possessed nature made her act as the demoniacs had done to our Lord (Mark i. 25; Luke iv. 41). The Apostles had a fascination over her, and she could not resist the impulse to cry out day after day as they passed.

Most high God, a name of God frequently found in the Old Testament, and often used in instances where Jew and Gentile meet in worship or in invocation, as in Gen. xiv. 18, where Melchizedek is called *the priest of the most high God*, and in Balaam's prophecy (Num. xxiv. 16). It was a name for God commonly used in exorcism, and therefore familiar to those possessed or suffering from supposed possession: hence it was frequently uttered by demoniacs. Compare Mark v. 7; Luke viii. 28.

18. Being grieved, *being sore troubled, being thoroughly worn out by annoyance*. He had patiently endured the scene repeated day after day, but at last felt compelled to speak out. He was troubled to see the poor girl suffering, and felt constrained to deliver her; troubled to see the cruelty of her masters, who made the demoniac possession or the hysterical malady of an unfortunate

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was  
gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the  
20 market-place unto the rulers, and brought them to the magis-  
trates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble  
21 our city, and teach customs, which are not lawful for us to  
22 receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude  
rose up together against them; and the magistrates rent off

woman a source of gain to themselves; troubled beyond all at the thought of Satan rendering any service to the cause of Christ, and compelled to prevent the people from thinking that an evil spirit could be an ally of the gospel. He acted as his Master had done, and refused all such help. Compare Mark i. 25, 34, iii. 11, 12; Matt. viii. 28-34. "The devil can have no part or lot in the Christian service; but the Church of Christ is slow to see and understand this." "She will lay the foundations of her tabernacles and temples upon money which is devil-won and devil-rusted" (Parker).

**To the spirit.** Either the Evil One who was troubling her in soul or body, or that she was possessed with a demon like the demoniacs of the Gospels.

**19. Gains.** The Jews had persecuted because the Apostles offended their prejudices; this is the first case of purely heathen persecution, and it arises from love of money—the masters' gain had gone with the spirit of divination. Men still make money out of misery, and are offended when their gains cease, and continually we find men protesting against the removal of abuses ruinous to their fellows, because such removal would diminish their incomes.

**Into the market-place, or *agora*,** which in all Greek cities was the centre of social life and the great place of public resort. As Philippi was a Roman colony, the *agora* would be the *forum* where the magistrate sat to dispense justice.

**The rulers, *strategoï*,** military officers, the prætors, who ruled in a colony.

**20. Being Jews.** Compare verse 21. *Being Romans.* Philippi was a Roman colony, and therefore Rome in miniature. Claudius had not long before banished all Jews from Rome, and this decree probably included their expulsion from colonies; no people were more despised and hated by the Romans than the Jews, and to be a Jew was almost enough for matter of accusation; but these Jews had, their accusers said, offended against Roman law, for, in spite of edicts to the contrary, they were introducing strange religious customs and usages in opposition to the native and legally recognised religion.

**21. And teach customs, and set forth,** or *and make proclamation of.* Rome was singularly tolerant in all matters of religion: the government always respected the religions of the people they conquered; but it sternly prohibited Romans abjuring their own religion for another, and it persecuted all new faiths which did not represent forms of worship which had been legally recognised.

**22. Rent off, etc.** *Rent their garments off them* (off Paul and Silas), and *commanded to beat them with rods.* A Roman punishment executed by the lictors, who always carried an axe tied up in a bundle of rods, for the Greek word used denotes that the beating was the special Roman form of punishment—beaten with the lictors' rods. This must have been one of the *three beatings* which St. Paul mentions (2 Cor. xi. 25). *Thrice was I beaten with rods.*

23 their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely : 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  
26 unto God : and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken : and immediately all the doors were  
27 opened, and every one's bands were loosed. 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

23. When they had laid, etc. The punishment was inflicted after a tumult, and no time was given the Apostles to state that they were Romans ; or perhaps they refused to plead their privileges at a time when the popular fury might have spent itself on such of their converts as had no protection. "We are not to use all our safeguards on every occasion : we must listen to the Divine command" (Bengel). Paul asserted his privilege afterwards for the completion of his victory over the persecution.

(c) *The prisoners and the jailer, 23-40.*

24. The inner prison, a dark, foul den, probably underground. The stocks was a wooden frame with five holes for feet, arms, and neck. In this case the feet only were enclosed. They could not kneel, but they spent the night *praying and singing hymns*, and the other prisoners *listened eagerly*. "The leg feels not the stocks when the mind is in heaven. Though the body is held fast, all things lie open in the spirit." (Tertullian).

25. And at midnight, etc. Worn by stripes, loss of blood, hunger, and the stocks, they could still pray and sing praises : they were suffering for Christ's sake, and they could glory in tribulations. The "possessed" girl had called them *bondmen* of God.

The prisoners heard them, *were listening to them*. The word implies a certain eagerness of attention. They sang the gospel, and men who would not have listened to a sermon, strained their ears to catch the words of the hymns. God heard them too, and answered almost at once.

26. Great earthquake. The place and the time were noted for violent earthquakes. This one was felt down to the *foundations*, the walls were so shaken that the doors were broken open, and the staples of the chains fell out of the walls.

27. The jailer being roused out of sleep, neither groans nor hymn-singing had kept him from sleeping ; his soul could only be awakened by terror.

Killed himself. Jailers were selected from the lowest, sometimes from the criminal class, and death was the punishment for the neglect of duty. Compare xii. 19, xxvii. 42. "Despair is stronger than all sins."

28. Do thyself no harm. Paul, looking out from the darkness, could see the jailer stationed, as he must have been, where he could observe at a glance



29 harm; for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and  
 sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and  
 30 Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do  
 31 to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus  
 32 Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they  
 spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in  
 33 his house. And he took them the same hour of the night,  
 and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his,  
 34 straightway. And when he had brought them into his house,

whether or not the doors were secure. The Apostle did not fear death; but he trembled at the thought of a man committing suicide. "Christianity reveals the future life and takes away the fear of death, but it has most effectually restrained man from self-destruction."

**For we are all here.** The earthquake had loosened the staples of chains and door bolts, but the chains were still fastened to the prisoners and prevented quick escape; perhaps, also, the prisoners were stunned with the earthquake, perhaps they were encouraged by the example of the Apostles.

29. **Sprang in, leapt down,** into the underground cell of the inner prison, his mind dazed with sudden terror, with respite from death by his own hand, with rush of new, strange feelings, eager to make speedy atonement for recent misdeeds.

30. **Sirs, lords,** no longer criminals, but favourites of the dread Higher Powers.

**What must I do to be saved?** He knew the charge against them, the speech of the demoniac girl, who in this way was a preacher for Christ. He had been on the threshold of eternity. Who is now the prisoner—Paul or the jailer? He brought them out of the inner prison, and the Apostles brought him out of darkness into light. He had called them lords, they tell him that there is one Lord whose salvation they make known.

31. **Believe on the Lord Jesus.** Faith on the Christ, personal trust on a personal Redeemer—that is what saves a Lydia who already worshipped God, and a ruffian who would have killed himself. "Believe that the Lord Jesus who sent us to Philippi died for *your* sins, rose again for *your* justification, lives and is making intercession for *you*"—is the gospel which saved both souls.

**Thou and thy house,** for the promise is unto you and to your children.

32. **They spake unto him the word of the Lord.** They had sung the gospel to the prisoners, and they preached it to the jailer's family; first a prison, then a jailer's house became a church of Christ.

33. **And he took them,** the words imply *took them away from one place to another place.* See how faith begets works. Yesterday troubled him, and he must rub that out. "Christianity always drives men back on their yesterdays. The Christian can never do enough to show the reality and inspiration of his repentance" (Parker).

**Washed their stripes . . . was baptized.** A double washing; he cleansed their wounds, they showed him how his sins were washed in the blood of Christ. As in the case of Lydia, the household is baptized.

34. **Set meat before them, etc.** "Here is a man converted, and he instantly seeks to do all that lies in his power to make up for the past. Wonderful industry touched with infinite pathos this!" (Parker). Christianity

he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

- 35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants,  
 36 saying, Let those men go. And the keeper of the prison told  
 this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go :  
 37 now therefore depart, and go in peace. But Paul said unto  
 them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being  
 Romans, and have cast *us* into prison ; and now do they  
 thrust us out privily ? nay verily ; but let them come them-  
 38 selves and fetch us out. And the serjeants told these words  
 unto the magistrates : and they feared, when they heard that  
 39 they were Romans. And they came and besought them, and  
 brought *them* out, and desired *them* to depart out of the city.  
 40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of*  
 Lydia : and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted  
 them, and departed.

CHAP. XVII. 1. Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a

must be allowed to illustrate itself, to prove the reality of conversion, to cover over the past yesterday by a to-day of new obedience. It was a love-feast in the jailer's house.

And rejoiced, etc. *And rejoiced greatly with all his house, having believed in God.* Contrast the jailer's joy with the dread of the magistrates (38).

35. **The magistrates sent the serjeants, the prætors sent the lictors** who had beaten the Apostles with rods. There had been no inquiry, no regular trial, and the prætors were evidently somewhat uneasy ; they wished to get rid of the whole matter, but wrong-doing is not so easily got rid of.

36. **And the keeper of the prison, etc.** *And the jailer reported the words to Paul, saying, The prætors have sent to let you go : now therefore come forth (they were still in prison), and go in peace.*

37. **Being Romans.** Paul repeats with some sarcasm what the Philippian mob said when they asked his punishment (21). "To bind a Roman citizen is a misdeed, to scourge him is a crime, to put him to death is almost a parricide" (Cicero). The prætors had committed a crime punishable under Roman law by death and confiscation of property.

39. **To depart out of the city.** They were willing to go, but not secretly ; Paul could not desert the converts nor bring scandal on the name of Christ by a secret departure, and they departed leisurely. They went to the house of Lydia, saw the disciples assembled there to greet them, and exhorted the converts to maintain unwavering their Christian profession. Luke was probably left behind to serve the infant Church at Philippi, for the "we" of verse 10 becomes "they" in verse 40.

5. *Thessalonica to Athens, xvii. 1-15.*

1. **When they had passed through.** Compare Map, p. 40, for Paul's journey and for the position of the cities mentioned. Paul travelled along the great Roman road from Philippi to Amphipolis, 33 miles ; from Amphipolis

2 synagogue of the Jews : and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of  
 3 the Scriptures ; opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead ; and that this

polis to Apollonia, 30 miles ; from Apollonia to Thessalonica, 37 miles ; from Thessalonica to Berea, about 50 miles ; thence to the coast to take ship for Athens.

**Amphipolis**, a great Roman military station in the time of Paul, a place of great natural strength almost surrounded by the windings of the river Strymon.

**Apollonia**, not to be confounded with a more celebrated city of the same name in Illyria. The Apostles travelled through these cities without preaching.

**Thessalonica** was an important commercial city at the head of the Thermaic Gulf and on the great Roman road. Its earlier name was Therma, but it had been re-named in honour of a sister of Alexander the Great. It contained a large number of Jews. It is still an important town, *Saloniki*, the second city of Turkey in Europe, and still contains a large Christian and Jewish population. During the Middle Ages it was regarded as one of the great bulwarks of Christendom in the East. It was finally captured by the Turks in 1430 A.D.

A **synagogue**, not simply a *proseuche* or praying place, showing that there were many Jews in the city.

2. **As his manner was.** Paul's invariable custom was to preach first to the Jews and Jewish proselytes. He did this by going to the synagogue, remaining there during the service, and accepting the invitation usually given to address the congregation. Compare his conduct at Salamis (xiii. 5), at Antioch in Pisidia (xiii. 14, 15), at Iconium (xiv. 1), etc. He must have made a great impression, for he was allowed to preach on three successive Sabbaths. The matter of his sermons may be found in the Epistles to the Thessalonians, where he continually refers to what he had said (1 Thess. i. 5, ii. 1, 2, 5, 10, 11, iii. 3, 4, iv. 1, 6, v. 2 ; 2 Thess. ii. 15). His manner is also described in the Epistles. He spoke "not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance" (1 Thess. i. 5), and with great gentleness, "even as a nurse cherisheth her children" (1 Thess. ii. 7).

**Three sabbath days.** St. Paul tells us in his Epistles to the Thessalonians that he worked for his daily bread at Thessalonica, resolved to be dependent on the charity of no one, and able to rebuke all idlers (1 Thess. ii. 9 ; 2 Thess. iii. 8 ; 1 Thess. iv. 11 ; 2 Thess. iii. 6-15), toiling night and day. He would have less time, therefore, to speak on the other days of the week ; but he must have preached elsewhere than in the synagogue, for he addressed the heathen, and had converts whom he had turned to God from their idols (1 Thess. i. 9).

3. **Opening and alleging.** *Making plain what was misunderstood, and setting forth* from Psalms and Prophets (1) that the Christ, Messiah, was to die, was to rise again, and *then* to reign, having won the power to pardon by His death ; (2) that Jesus had died, had risen again, and therefore was the Christ. *To allege*, means here not to assert, but to set forth, to exhibit in argument.

**That Christ, etc.** *That it behoved the Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead ; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ.*

- 4 said Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.
- 5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the
- 6 people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;
- 7 whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cesar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus.
- 8 And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city, when

4. **Consorted with.** *Threw in their lot with.* Formed a Christian community in which were some Jews, a great multitude of proselytes, many of the ladies of the city, who, like those of other cities, were under Jewish influence, and many heathens.

5. **But the Jews stirred up the idle fellows, runaway slaves, poor freedmen, the dangerous classes who in those slaveholding days abounded in large cities, and were always ripe for mischief and rioting.** They assaulted the house where Paul lodged, dragged (*haled*, Acts viii. 3) Jason and others before the magistrates.

**Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, certain vile fellows of the rabble, *agoraios*** means a man who has no regular occupation, but haunts the *agora* or market-place in hope of picking up chance employment.

**To the people.** Thessalonica had been made a free city by Augustus, and was entirely independent. *The people*, as in all ancient Greek cities, were the supreme authority. Hence the Apostles were to be dragged before the popular assembly.

**Jason**, probably a believing Jew whose name was Joseph; Jason was the common Greek equivalent for Joseph.

6. **The rulers of the city.** The word Luke uses, which is translated rulers, is *politarchoi*, which is not found in classical Greek. Inscriptions on the ruins of Thessalonica have recently shown us that *politarch* was the local name for the seven magistrates chosen by the people to rule over the city. The use of the word is one of the many instances of Luke's minute accuracy.

**Have turned the world upside down.** The world here means the Roman Empire. The phrase is an exaggeration, but it is nevertheless evidence of the spread of Christianity and of the dread of its opponents. It is a tribute to the power of the Apostles, and a just estimate of what was in the gospel of Christ.

7. **Another king.** They accuse the Apostles of inciting to treason. The Epistle to the Thessalonians tells us that Paul's preaching was about *the kingdom of God* (1 Thess. ii. 12; 2 Thess. i. 5), and this disturbed both the rulers or politarchs, as they were called in Thessalonica, and the people, who feared that such speeches coming to the ears of the emperor might make him take away their privileges as a *free city*.

8. **They troubled the people.** The trouble arose (1) from fear at the out-

- 9 they heard these things. 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. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those
- 11 things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.
- 12 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came
- 13 thither also, and stirred up the people. And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul, to go as it were to the sea:
- 14 but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. And they that conducted Paul brought him into Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

break of the mob; (2) from fear that Rome would hear of the insurrectionary teaching said to have been introduced by the Apostles.

9. **Taken security of Jason**, not bail for Paul and Silas, but security that the Christians would not provoke a further outbreak.

10. **Sent away Paul and Silas**. Paul was loath to leave and anxious to return; he twice tried to revisit Thessalonica before or during his stay in Corinth (1 Thess. ii. 18).

**Berea**, now *Verria*, was an important commercial city containing a large Jewish population. It was the town of Sopater, one of Paul's travelling companions in his third missionary journey (Acts xx. 4; Rom. xvi. 21).

11. **More noble**, the word means *well-born*; but evidently refers here to nobility of character.

**Searched the Scriptures daily**. They claimed the right of exercising private judgment and of testing the Apostle's arguments by the Scriptures he appealed to. The result was, many Jews converted in Berea. Truth bears investigation.

12. **Also of honourable women**, etc. Compare note on verse 4.

13. **And stirred up the people**. *Stirring up and troubling the multitudes*. Probably the same charges of sedition were made with the same results,—a popular uproar, the mob moving like a disturbed sea, and anxiety lest Rome should punish the city for permitting sedition to be preached.

14. **Sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea**. *Sent forth Paul to go as far as to the sea*. They conducted him probably to Dium, the nearest seaport town, where they found a ship for him and accompanied him to Athens.

15. **Silas and Timothy that they should come to him**. We learn from 1 Thess. iii. 1-3 that Timothy went to Athens, but that he returned immediately to Thessalonica to comfort the brethren there.

- 16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.
- 17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them
- 18 that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, 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
- 19 them Jesus, and the resurrection. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this
- 20 new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest

6. *At Athens—The living God preached, xvii. 16–34.*

16. Was stirred. *Was provoked.* A *paroxysm* (the word comes from the Greek verb used in the text) seized him, so that he could not wait.

Wholly given to idolatry. *Full of idols.* It was said that there were more idols than men in Athens, and Paul knew what foul sensuous feelings were provoked by this multitude of images.

17. Disputed. *Reasoned* (1) in the synagogue, where he tried to convince (a) the Jews and (b) the Jewish proselytes, of Jesus and the resurrection, and of their missionary duties in presence of the abounding heathenism; (2) in the market-place or *agora*, a beautiful open space with colonnades and fountains, full of gossiping idlers (verse 21), and strangers come from all parts of the world to study at Athens.

18. Epicureans and Stoics. Men who thought that there was no God, or that the world was God. Materialists and pantheist fatalists, who thought that man's chief end was to seek what was pleasant and made life smooth, or to maintain an undisturbed calmness of mind in all circumstances; who had no knowledge of the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood among men; the Sadducees and Pharisees of Greek paganism.

Babbler. *Seed-picker.* "The idle gossips of the *agora*, picking up news and eager to retail it, . . . were likened by the quick wit of Athenian humorists to a bird as it hopped and chirped" (Plumptre).

Jesus and the resurrection. Two new gods, they thought. Paul at Athens had to confront religious indifference, which is much harder to overcome than bigotry or brutality.

They took him. The words do not imply any violence. It is the same word which is used to describe how Barnabas introduced Paul to the Twelve at Jerusalem—"He took Paul and brought him to the Apostles."

19. Areopagus, *the Areopagus*, either the Hill of Mars or the Court or Supreme Council of Athens which sat there. Paul was probably brought before the Council, which in these days of Roman dominion concerned itself chiefly with educational matters. One of the members of the Council became a disciple (verse 34). *Mars' Hill* (22) should be the Areopagus.

What is this new doctrine, etc. *What this new doctrine is which is spoken by thee.* The question was slightly sarcastic; they asked to know more fully the ideas of the Apostle.

20. For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears. *For thou bringest certain things to our ears which startle us with their strangeness.* Compare

certain strange things to our ears : we would know therefore  
 21 what these things mean. (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, and said, *Ye* men  
 of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

verse 18. *A setter forth of strange gods.* The most apparent thing in the words of the Athenians is the absence of all moral earnestness, and the scornful curiosity which dominates everything. They were not earnest enough to persecute.

21. For all the Athenians and strangers which were there, etc. *And strangers sojourning there had leisure for nothing else but,* etc. Athens in the time of St. Paul was not the city it had been during the golden period of Greek civilisation. Corinth was the Roman capital of Achaia, and was the great commercial city of Greece. But Athens was still the centre of Greek science, art, and philosophy—the great seat of learning for the Roman world ; yet even its art and its schools of learning were living on past reputation. No great thinkers lived, no fresh philosophical thinking remained : the teachers traded in learning, and philosophy had become mere logic-chopping. Men lived in words, careless of real things. The change had not come rapidly. Four centuries earlier, Demosthenes had told his townsmen that they preferred hearing and retailing news to fighting for their liberties. They had become worse in Paul's time, and the whole occupation of Athenians and students who came to finish their education there was to gratify a superficial intellectual curiosity.

22. *And said.* This sermon at Athens was addressed to philosophers who thought that they had risen above the religion of the ignorant multitude, and who had not reached a knowledge of the true God, but had only attained to an indifference about all religion. Paul caught the accent of the place, and began as Demosthenes used to do, *Men of Athens.* The Athenians are in all things more fearful of the gods than others (so the philosophers thought), but they manifest a vague yearning to know some higher divinity, for Paul had seen among the objects of their worship an altar to an unknown God (23). He has come to tell them of this divinity, not of *strange gods* (18). This is no abstract divinity, but (a) the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, of all things seen and unseen (24, 25). No temple can contain Him, for He is omnipresent ; He needs neither food-offering nor drink-offering, for He has created and sustains everything. (b) He is the Preserver of all, and His wise foresight has guided the history of the universe and of the nations of mankind. He has made all nations of one blood wherever they dwell, has overruled their rise and fall, *having determined their appointed seasons, and fixed the boundaries of their territories.* He has implanted in man longings after the Divine, and these higher impulses bring us near Him, as His creation and providence make Him near us (27). The principle of life comes from Him ; it is His creative power and presence that moves us to love, to reverence, to all passionate expression. Our inmost and highest being throbs responsive to Him ; *we are His offspring* (28). There is in man something which impels him towards God, but we can turn from this high destiny and these Divine impulses, and seek for Godhead in the lower rather than in the higher parts of our nature, and fashion idols which not merely hide God from us but deify

- 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  
 24 you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in  
 25 temples made with hands ; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all  
 26 life, and breath, and all things ; and hath made of one blood

our ignoble passions (29). We are not to make the Godhead in our image, "after man's device ;" we are made in God's image ; our moral nature makes us kin with Him ; conscience teaches us moral responsibility, and (c) reveals God our Judge. God has *overlooked* in His mercy our failure to know this, but now He has sent His Son in human form and testified that the man Jesus is the Saviour who is God, by raising Him from the dead, to awaken men to the fact of sin and of judgment for sin awaiting us unless we repent (30, 31).

**Superstitious, fearful of the gods.** The word means something between superstitious and devout. The *deisidaimon* was a well-known type of character, and is described by Theophrastus as a man who believes in omens, consults wizards, "will give up a journey if he sees a weasel cross the road, and goes with his wife and children to be initiated into the Orphic mysteries."

23. **As I passed by, etc.** *For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription—TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What ye therefore worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you.* Investigation has shown that others besides Paul noticed altars in Athens with this strange inscription. Pausanias tells us that in Athens there were "altars to gods styled *unknown* and to heroes." Philostratus says that in Athens altars were raised for unknown gods. There must have been more than one altar in Athens with the inscription which Paul quotes. We are told that on occasion of a plague at Athens, sheep and goats were let loose in the Areopagus, and were sacrificed on the spot where they lay down, *To the god concerned*, and that in this way altars were raised to unknown gods. Paul tells them that he is ready to make known this unknown god.

**Him declare I unto you ; better, This set I forth unto you,** for the verb is the same as in verse 18, "A setter forth of strange gods." It was a crime to introduce the worship of strange gods, the crime Socrates suffered for. Paul says that he was not going to set forth strange gods, but to make known a god who was familiar, and yet by their confession unknown.

24. **Dwelleth not in temples made with hands.** Did Paul remember Stephen's phrase, *Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands* (vii. 48) ?

25. **Is worshipped with, neither is served by,** as if he were a master who was dependent on his steward's service.

**Life and breath.** Life and continuance of life. Compare verse 28, "In Him we live and move."

26. **And hath made of one blood.** Omit blood. *And hath made of one.* All men have one common origin, and have one fatherhood (Mal. ii. 10), and one earth their home, over whose face they have been diffused, with



all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the  
 27 bounds of their habitation ; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he  
 28 be not far from every one of us : for in him we live, and move, and have our being ; as certain also of your own poets  
 29 have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that  
 30 the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God  
 place of habitation allotted, and times of rise and fall predetermined. All the phrases and thoughts contained are strung together by the idea of all-pervading unity of originating cause and controlling power.

And hath determined the times before appointed, *having determined their appointed seasons.*

27. **That they should seek.** This is the Divine purpose in the creation, disposition, and superintendence of men. Men are to seek after the God revealed in His works of creation and providence ; the argument for the existence of God from design in the universe and in history.

If haply they might feel after him. Groping in the dark with the doubt whether after all what was sought after could be found.

Though he be not far, etc. The delicate movement of thought in this speech is very interesting. The nations groping in the dark, yet the God they are trying to touch near, able to meet the hands feeling after Him at any moment, perhaps about to do it now. Then Paul turns away again to lead his audience by another path of reasoning to the same touching-point.

28. **As certain also of your own poets—**

Either (1) Aratus of Tarsus, a fellow-citizen of St. Paul,

“ With him, with Zeus are filled

All paths we tread, and all the marts of men :

Filled too the sea, and every creek and bay ·

And all in all things need we help of Zeus,

*For we too are his offspring.”*

Or (2) Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus*:—

“ Thee

'Tis meet that mortals call with one accord,

*For we thine offspring are,* and we alone

Of all that live and move upon this earth

Receive the gift of imitative speech.” (Plumptre.)

29. **Forasmuch then.** The inference is pressed home at once. He has breathed something Divine into us. Since therefore we are God's offspring and have life and breath, it is absurd to believe the Godhead to be in dumb stone or silver, for it is unquestionable that our life is given to us by the highest life. Judge the Father by the child. The attack on pagan worship is as delicate as it is penetrating. Man is of too lofty lineage to accept the degraded and degrading deities of the popular mythology for his deities, and the delicacy of the reproach is increased by the use of the plural, *we ought not.*

30. **And the times of this ignorance God winked at.** He has at last

winked at ; but now commandeth all men every where to  
 31 repent : because he hath appointed a day, in the which he  
 will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he  
 ordained ; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in  
 32 that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they  
 heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked : and others  
 33 said, We will hear thee again of this *matter*. So Paul departed  
 34 from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him,  
 and believed : among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite,  
 and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

CHAP. XVIII. 1. After these things Paul departed from Athens,  
 2 and came to Corinth ; and found a certain Jew, named Aquila,

brought his hearers to the point where they may touch the God they have  
 been groping after. Translate : *Having, however, overlooked the times of  
 ignorance, God now, etc.* God does not impute to men errors which they  
 had committed in ignorance ; but now that He has made Himself known,  
 ignorance can no longer be pleaded. With knowledge comes responsibility,  
 and with responsibility liability to judgment. (Compare Rom. iii. 25 ; Luke  
 xii. 48.) "In the word overlooked are treasures of mercy for those who  
 lived in the times of ignorance" (Alford).

**To repent.** Responsibilities increase with knowledge and with opportunities  
 to know. Paul has brought the Athenians face to face with God. They  
 have now the tremendous responsibility of ignoring revelation. Face to face  
 with God, sin starts into sight, sin ignored by Epicurean and Stoic alike,  
 and yet dimly felt in every pagan rite of expiation. But with sin, pardon  
 through repentance and faith.

31. **He hath appointed a day.** Paul has appealed to the Athenians by  
 proofs drawn from the universe around them and from the soul within ; he  
 has appealed to conscience, with its sudden awakening to sin and to need of  
 pardon, and the *fact* of the resurrection has a new power in it. To the Jew it  
 witnessed primarily that the suffering Jesus was the victorious Messiah ; but  
 to the Athenian, with conscience at last awakened, it declared a coming Judge  
 and a coming judgment.

**Whereof he hath given assurance.** The resurrection of Jesus is God's  
 pledge that His revelation is true and worthy to be believed. It is the point  
 to which faith can attach itself.

32. **Mocked,** by interrupting word or gesture. They rejected God's pledge  
 or sign. Their pride of intellect stumbled at that which is the chief motive  
 to faith. Some were openly contemptuous, others politely indifferent, a few  
 believed.

33. **Paul went out from among them.** Philosophic indifference was more  
 chilling than open sin or determined fanaticism. He went to Corinth, that  
 seat of money-getting and licentiousness, determined to preach no more  
 philosophical sermons, but simply "Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. ii. 2),  
 and found, as our Lord had said, that publicans and harlots had entrance to  
 the kingdom denied to those who esteemed themselves to be wise.

7. *At Corinth—The crucified Christ preached, xviii. 1-17.*

XVIII. 2. Aquila . . . Priscilla, or Prisca (2 Tim. iv. 19), Roman Jews

born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla ; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart  
3 from Rome : ) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought : for by  
4 their occupation they were tent-makers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and  
5 the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the

banished by the edict of Claudius, 49 A.D., probably converted by Roman Jews who had been in Jerusalem at Pentecost (ii. 10), were with Paul at Ephesus when he wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi. 19), were at Rome on Paul's second visit to Corinth (Rom. xvi. 3), seemed to have returned to Ephesus (2 Tim. iv. 19).

Because that Claudius had commanded. The Jews were banished from Rome several times, but this persecution is probably that mentioned by Suetonius (*Claud.* 25), who says : "Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome on account of their continual tumults instigated by Chrestus." It is generally admitted that *Chrestus* is a Roman mistake for *Christus*, and that this expulsion of the Jews, which was as sudden as it was thorough, was connected with the presence of Christianity in Rome. The Roman Jews must have heard about Christ and Christians. Twenty-three years had passed since Pentecost, when strangers from Rome, Jews and proselytes, had been at Jerusalem (ii. 10) ; the Roman freedmen had a synagogue in Jerusalem, and were active in disputing with Stephen ; Roman Christians, Andronicus and Junias (or Junianus), whom Paul mentions in his Epistle, were in Christ before him. We can easily believe that the reception of Christianity and its advance among the Jews at Rome excited tumults like those at Thessalonica, Ephesus, etc., and that the Romans, hearing the name of Christ mentioned continually, banished both Christian and non-Christian Jews, and thought that the tumults were instigated by an unknown *Chrestus* or *Christus*.

3. And because he was of the same craft . . . were tent-makers. *And because he was of the same trade, he abode with them and they wrought : for by their trade they were tent-makers.* Every Jewish boy was taught a trade, and all Jews belonged to trades. In the great Jewish synagogue of Alexandria, "the people did not sit mixed together, but goldsmiths by themselves and silversmiths by themselves, and iron-workers by themselves, and miners by themselves, and weavers by themselves ; and when a poor man came there he recognised the members of his craft and went there." The same custom may have prevailed at Corinth, and Paul may in this way have fraternized with Aquila and Priscilla.

They were tent-makers, *i.e.* they manufactured the coarse goats'-hair cloth of which tents were made. This weaving was the common employment and staple trade of Cilicia (hence cloth of goats' hair was called *Cilicium* ; compare *cilice*, French for hair-cloth).

4. Every Sabbath, for he worked hard for a living during the week.

Persuaded the Jews and the Greeks, *and won over Jews and Greeks.* Greeks, not proselytes, but Greeks who had some interest in the Jewish religion and came to the synagogue.

5. Pressed in the spirit. *Was constrained by the word.* The word is used by Jesus of Himself, *How am I straitened till it be accomplished* (Luke xii. 50),

- 6 Jews *that* Jesus *was* Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads ; I *am* clean : from  
 7 henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the  
 8 synagogue. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house : and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.  
 9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be  
 10 not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for

and seems to imply a new feeling of intensity awakened in Paul by the presence of his two fellow-labourers.

6. **Blasphemed**, 1 Cor. xii. 3. **Shook his raiment**, *shook out his raiment*.

**Unto the Gentiles**, *i.e.* in Corinth, for Paul followed his usual practice afterwards at Ephesus, and went first to the synagogue.

7. **And entered a certain man's house**. Paul with his usual decision of character at once left off attending the synagogue, and held his meetings in a Gentile house next door to the synagogue. He was profoundly moved, and immediately gave practical proof of his solemn renunciation of the Jews.

**Justus, one that worshipped God**, a Gentile, but a proselyte (xiii. 43), who opened his house for Christian service.

8. **Chief ruler**. Crispus was one of the session or council of ruling elders who presided over the synagogue in Corinth; Sosthenes (17) was another. Paul's decided conduct made others equally decided. Crispus became a believer, and was baptized by Paul himself (1 Cor. i. 14), with all his family.

**Many of the Corinthians**, both Jews and Gentiles. Among the converts were Gaius or Caius, who gave his house as a meeting-place for the brethren, and was Paul's host when the Apostle visited Corinth a second time (Rom. xvi. 23); Stephanas and his household (1 Cor. xvi. 15),—all baptized by Paul himself (1 Cor. i. 14, 15); Fortunatus, Achaicus, Chloe, Quartus, Erastus the city chamberlain (Rom. xvi. 23), and Epænetus (Rom. xvi. 5). Compare the *many* and the *much people* at Corinth with the *certain men* at Athens.

9. **In a vision**. Paul was beginning to feel the reaction. He had been deeply moved, had preached with more than usual power and directness, had taken the bold step of holding public meetings for Jews and Gentiles in the house of a Gentile next door to the synagogue; and now the excitement was beginning to tell upon him, and he saw sure evidence of coming trouble. God comforted him, as He had done in similar circumstances, by a vision. Compare xvi. 10, xxii. 17. "He passed from the strife of tongues into the presence of the Eternal Friend" (Plumptre).

**Be not afraid**, for even Paul had his moods of depression, and felt keenly trials and want of success. Compare 1 Kings xix. 4-14; Jer. i. 6-8, xv. 15-21.

10. **I am with thee**. Compare Matt. xxviii. 20.

**I have much people in this city**. Paul had doubts evidently about his

11 I have much people in this city. And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him  
13 to the judgment-seat, saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men  
14 to worship God contrary to the law. And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If  
15 it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O *ye* Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be a question of words and names, and *of* your law, look ye *to it*;  
16 for I will be no judge of such *matters*. And he drave them

converts: Corinth was a notoriously sensual city, and the poison of lust gets into the blood and cannot be easily got rid of. Paul had to see painful scandals and lapsing, he tells us so in his Epistles; and yet God's work was being done in Corinth, and souls were being won for Christ. Men come home and tell us that in their candid opinion pagan converts to Christianity are not much better than their neighbours who are not converted, and argue that missions are a mistake. God saw the foulness of Corinthian life, and the sins of Corinthian Christians, and yet could tell Paul that His work was being done in Corinth. "One of the most gracious surprises in store for the Church is that there will be more people in God's pure home—heaven—than it may have entered into the most generous human heart to conceive or venture to anticipate" (Parker).

12. And when Gallio was deputy of Achaia. *But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia.* Corinth was the great Greek city of the Roman period. It was the commercial and political capital of Southern Greece or Achaia, and was the residence of the Roman proconsul. Situated on a narrow isthmus, it had two ports, one, Lechæum, on the Corinthian Gulf on the western side; and the other, Cenchrea, on the Saronic Gulf, the harbour for the traffic with the East. The Isthmian games held in the city drew great crowds of people from all parts of Greece. Paul draws many of his illustrations of Christian life from those games in his Epistles to the Corinthians (1 Cor. ix. 24-27, etc.). Achaia had been a senatorial province under Augustus, under Tiberius it was imperial, under Claudius it became again senatorial. The governor of a senatorial province was called a proconsul, and the use of the word is a testimony to Luke's accuracy. The proconsul Gallio was the brother of the famous Seneca. He was noted for his bright affectionate nature.

Made insurrection, *rose up against.* They took the opportunity of the arrival of a new and inexperienced governor.

13. Contrary to the law. The charge was that Paul was teaching a religion not recognised as a legal form of worship within the Roman Empire, and had therefore made himself liable to punishment.

14. Wrong or wicked lewdness (*villainy*). *A matter of crime or fraud* to be dealt with under criminal or civil law. The humane deputy refused to examine into the complaint. Notice the Roman contempt for religious disputes, and the Roman sense of what is just.

16. Drave them, etc. The magistrate (proconsul) sat to hear cases in the

- 17 from the judgment-seat. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment-seat: and Gallio cared for none of those things.
- 18 And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn *his*
- 19 head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into
- 20 the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented
- 21 not; but bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.
- 22 And when he had landed at Cesarea, and gone up, and

*agora* or market-place, with his lictors (notes on xvi. 12, 22, 35) carrying their axes and bundles of rods standing beside him. Gallio ordered the lictors to clear away the Jews, and the Greek mob anticipated them (ver. 17) somewhat roughly.

8. *From Corinth to Antioch, by Ephesus and Jerusalem, xviii. 18-22.*

18. *Into Syria. For Syria.* He went by Cenchrea, Ephesus, and Cæsarea.

For he had a vow. Paul, while he would not bind others to the observance of the Mosaic Law, obeyed it himself. The vow taken (probably in thankfulness for delivery from danger) is described in Num. vi. 1-21. It was lawful for a man to crop his hair during the continuance of the vow, but in that case the hair was preserved and taken to Jerusalem. Cenchrea was the eastern harbour of Corinth.

19. *And he came.* *And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there.* Aquila and Priscilla travelled probably on business. We find them now at Rome, now at Corinth, now at Ephesus. They were most likely people of some wealth, for at Ephesus it was in their house that the disciples worshipped, and poor people would not have had a house large enough (1 Cor. xvi. 19).

20. *When they asked him, etc.* *And when they asked him to abide a longer time.* The Ephesian Jews seemed at first more favourable to the gospel than any, save those at Berea. The request was an earnest of the fruit afterwards gathered in that great city.

21. *But bade them farewell, etc.* *But taking his leave of them, and saying, I will return again unto you, if God will, he set sail from Ephesus.* The phrase translated *bade them farewell* is the same as in ver. 18. The words, *I must by all means keep this feast that cometh at Jerusalem*, ought to be omitted, as they form no part of the original text. Paul was going to Jerusalem to a feast, the journey was part of his vow to be there at a feast. The feast he meant to keep was most probably that of Pentecost, for there was no other till the Feast of Tabernacles, when travelling, whether by sea, or by land, was difficult and dangerous.

22. *And gone up, and saluted the church.* This is all the record of the visit to Jerusalem. How Paul yearned over his fellow-countrymen, the whole

- 23 saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. 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
- 25 Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently

book of the Acts testifies; how he longed to preach in Jerusalem, every sympathetic reader must see; how he had hoped to tell his tale of work for the Master, every Christian worker must understand,—but it was not to be. Courteous exchange of civilities, instead of brotherly talk and worship. Officialism, even apostolic, dislikes unconventional success, work done not according to its rules.

He went down to Antioch, and got there the sympathy which soothed him and braced him for renewal of work.

This ends Paul's second missionary journey. He had written at Corinth the First and the Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, and had been in Philippi and Corinth, cities to the Churches in which he afterwards wrote letters. These letters show side-lights on this second journey, and ought to be read in connection with this portion of the Acts of the Apostles.

23. He departed. This verse begins Paul's third journey, in which he went over first of all the route he had taken at the beginning of his second journey. Luke brings in the account of Apollos to explain Paul's finding the twelve disciples of John the Baptist in Corinth.

#### IV.—APOLLOS, xviii. 24–28.

24. Apollos was an Alexandrian Jew. We are told that (1) he knew the Old Testament thoroughly; (2) that he knew that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah; (3) that he was of fervent or zealous spirit; (4) that he was eloquent and could persuade others; (5) that he preached perseveringly the things concerning Jesus; (6) that he knew about Jesus only through the work of John the Baptist; (7) that Priscilla and Aquila taught him the whole gospel of Christ; (8) that he went from Ephesus to Achaia and preached Christ at Corinth.

**Mighty in the Scriptures.** Alexandria possessed famous Jewish schools in which the Old Testament was studied and expounded; Apollos had been trained there.

25. **And being fervent, etc.** *And being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus.* These things were—that John baptized in preparation for the coming of the kingdom; that he had pointed out the Messiah, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world; that he had baptized the Messiah; and that this Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth. He saw in Jesus the founder of a glorified Judaism. He knew only the baptism of John, and consequently did not know of the baptism by water in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, of the baptism by the Holy Spirit and the descent at Pentecost, of the atoning death and the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ.

the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.  
 26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom  
 when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto  
*them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more per-  
 27 fectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the  
 brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who,  
 when he was come, helped them much which had believed  
 28 through grace: for he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that*  
 publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

CHAP. XIX. 1. And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at  
 Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came  
 2 to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them,  
 Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And  
 they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether  
 3 there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto  
 what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's

26. *Whom when, etc.* *But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, . . . and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully.* God's way of fulfilling His Old Testament promises by the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

27. *And when he was disposed, etc.* *And when he wished to pass over into Achaia.* He had been trained in Alexandria, a second Athens, and Greece was the natural sphere of his work; he laboured chiefly at Corinth, and came to be regarded there as an apostle of equal authority with Paul. Strong party feeling arose in the Church there, which he did his best to suppress (1 Cor. i. 12; 1 Cor. xvi. 12).

*The brethren wrote, etc.* *The brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples.* They sent a letter of commendation (2 Cor. iii. 1-3) introducing him to the Corinthian Christians.

*Who when he was come, etc.* *And when he was come he helped much through grace them which had believed.* God's grace was with him, the Divine letter of commendation.

28. *Mightily convinced, etc.* *For he mightily confuted the Jews, showing publicly by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.*

#### V.—PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY, xviii. 23, xix. 1-xxi. 14.

##### 1. *At Ephesus, xix. 1-41.*

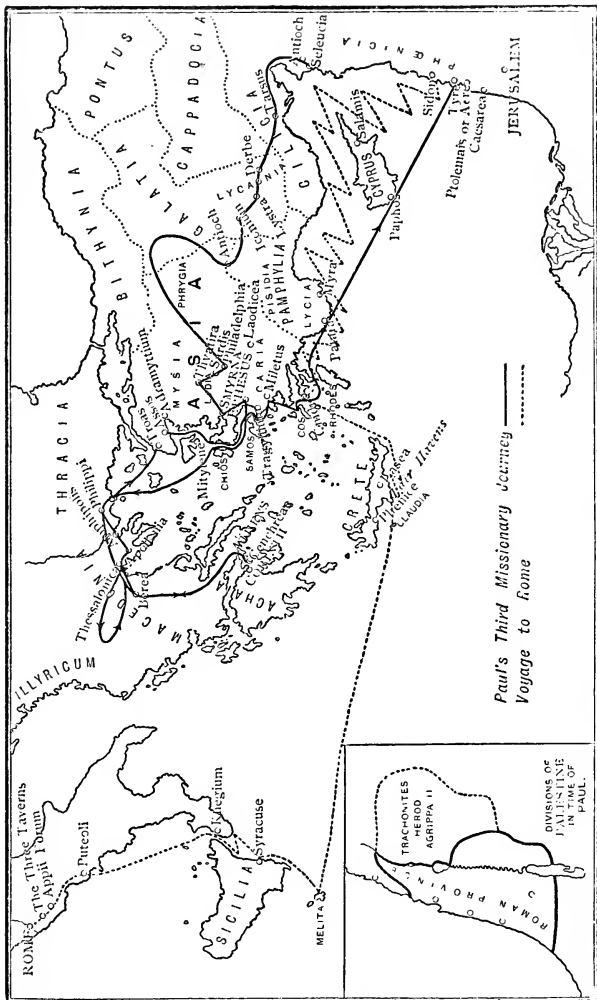
##### (a) *Paul completing the work of Apollos, 1-12.*

XIX. 1. *Upper coasts, upper country*, the central tableland of Lycaonia, Phrygia, and Galatia.

*To Ephesus.* Compare xviii. 21.

2. *He said, etc.* This verse is obscured by mistranslation. It should read, *And he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given.* They had never heard of the gift at Pentecost; they must have heard of the Holy Ghost (Matt. iii. 11; John i. 33).





4 baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, 5 on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized 6 in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they 7 spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were 8 about twelve. And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when 9 divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that

4. **Baptism of repentance**, Matt. iii. 2. These disciples *knew* (1) that John had spoken of One who was to come; (2) had called men to repentance; and (3) had sealed the calling with baptism (Matt. iii. 11). They did *not know* (1) the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost, and afterwards (2) the formation of the Church and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, (3) the baptism for the remission of sins in the name of Jesus (Acts ii. 38).

Saying unto the people. "The demand for faith makes the difference between the preaching of Christ and the preaching of John. The latter said, 'Prepare by repentance for the coming King;' Christ says (and John also spake of this), 'Believe on Me, for I am He that should come'" (Lumby). Paul pointed out to them that the gospel of Christ was the completion of the gospel of John, and that baptism in the name of Jesus was required to complete John's baptism of repentance. This is the latest mention of John the Baptist in the New Testament. He at last wholly gives place to Christ.

5. **When they heard this**, etc. *And when they heard this they were baptized into the name of Jesus*. What they heard was that Jesus was the completion of John, that John pointed to a Messiah who was Jesus. Theologians have debated whether the baptism which followed conviction justifies the rebaptism of Christians; but the text says nothing for or against the practice. These men had never had that faith on Je-us which a sacrament of the New Testament requires, and had never received Christian baptism.

6. **The Holy Ghost**. A Pentecostal outpouring foretelling the great work for Christ about to be done in Ephesus (compare ii. 1-13, iv. 31, viii. 17, etc.).

7. **The men were about twelve**. Luke did not know, had not been told, or did not remember the precise number. Compare with Paul's forgetfulness, I Cor. i. 16. Our theories of inspiration must include facts like these; the Bible is God's Word, and yet can say "about twelve."

8. **Into the synagogue** as his manner was. He spoke in the synagogue for three months, so long as he saw that he was doing good.

9. **But when divers**, etc. *But when divers (some) were becoming hardened, and refused to be persuaded, speaking evil of the Way*. They showed their hardness of heart by reviling Christ, His teaching, His disciples, and Christianity (the Way; compare ix. 2).

**Separated the disciples**. Formed a Christian Church separate from the synagogue, and meeting in the lecture-room of Tyrannus. Paul had done the same thing at Corinth (xviii. 7).

way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one  
 10 Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years ; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the  
 11 Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. And God wrought  
 12 special miracles by the hands of Paul : so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul  
 14 preacheth. And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit

10. Asia is proconsular Asia. See Map, p. 93. Paul must have made wide circuits from Ephesus, and probably the seven Churches of the Apocalypse were founded during this period. The gospel made so much progress that it lessened the number of pilgrims to the shrine of Diana.

11. Special miracles. Note, it is God that worked the miracles through Paul. The Greek tense indicates that this working of miracles went on continuously for some length of time.

12. So that from his body, etc. *Inasmuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons (girdles), and the diseases departed from them.* Compare Matt. ix. 20, 21 ; Acts v. 15. It is not said that Paul gave away parts of his dress, the *sudaria* used to wipe the sweat from the workman's face and the *semicircula* or short workman's apron, in order to work miracles by them. The text rather implies that the people manifested their faith in the same manner as did the woman with the issue of blood, who came in the press behind and touched the hem of Christ's garment ; and God answered their faith as our Lord answered the woman's faith, by allowing her to steal a cure. For God accepts faith, if it be real, even when made imperfect by ignorance or superstition.

(b) *The seven sons of Scaeva, 13-20.*

13. But certain, etc. *But certain also of the strolling Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them,* etc. In that sceptical and therefore superstitious age professional exorcists abounded. Many of these professional exorcists were disreputable Jews like Simon in Samaria and Elymas in Cyprus (viii. 9, xiii. 6). Roman satirists like Juvenal note and condemn their practices. It was a common practice for these vagabond Jews to charm with the name of Jehovah, and after seeing Paul's miracles they used the name of Jesus instead.

14. Chief of the priests, a chief priest—*i.e.* at the head of one of the twenty-four courses of the house of Levi.

Which did so. They looked on Paul as one of their profession, but of a higher order, and supposed that he had a more potent charm in the name of Jesus than they had, and they resolved to adopt it.

15. The evil spirit answered. The demon who had taken possession of the man. They tried their new method on a fierce demoniac and failed

answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who  
 16 are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on  
 them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so  
 17 that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And  
 this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at  
 Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the  
 18 Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came,  
 19 and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also  
 which used curious arts brought their books together, and  
 burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of  
 20 them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. So mightily  
 grew the word of God and prevailed.

21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit,  
 when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to  
 Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see

utterly. In the answer two different Greek words have been translated by the one word "know." The sense can only be brought out by paraphrasing the exclamation: The Jesus whom you invoke is One whose authority I acknowledge; and the Paul whom you name I recognise to be the servant or messenger of God; but what sort of men are ye, who have been empowered to act as you do by neither?

17. Was known to all the Jews, etc. *Was known to all, both Jews and Greeks.*

Fear fell. The supernatural occurrences had a double effect:—(1) All men felt that it was a dangerous thing to use lightly the name of Jesus, and they were overawed. (2) Believers praised and thanked the Saviour.

18. Showed their deeds, *declaring their evil practices* of witchcraft, sorcery, exorcism, which were inconsistent with Jewish law and Christian conscience.

19. Many also. *And not a few of them who practised magical arts.* Ephesus was noted for its magicians or wizards, and the "Ephesian spells," small slips of parchment enclosed in silk bags, and covered with mysterious characters, were well known all over the East. The more potent and rare *spells* or charms were written out in books which passed from one exorcist to another, and were sold for large sums.

Fifty thousand pieces, etc. *A piece of silver* was a drachma, and was the prevalent rate of payment for a day's work of a peasant or common artisan. The books burned were worth about £6250.

20. So mightily grew, etc. The gospel was diffused abroad and was powerful to produce great effects. The fear and the power and the praise all helped it; and above all the spirit of sacrifice helped it. When men come forward and sacrifice some bit of self in order to be Christ's, the Word of God will grow and prevail.

21. After these things were ended. The spirit of sacrifice had created the Ephesian Church. It could now stand alone, Paul thought, and the care of other Churches pressed him to go elsewhere—to Macedonia, Achaia, and Jerusalem, then Rome. He tells us of the plan he had in 1 Cor. xvi. 1-3, 8, 9. He wished to visit his Gentile Churches, collect contributions for the central organization at Jerusalem, with probably the thought that in this way

22 Rome. So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself  
 23 stayed in Asia for a season. And the same time there arose  
 24 no small stir about that way. For a certain *man* named  
 Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana,  
 25 brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; whom he called  
 together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs,

the mother Church might be brought into more sympathetic union with her Gentile daughters. The opportunities at Ephesus were, however, too great to be neglected, and he stayed there for some time (1 Cor. xvi. 8-9).

**I must also see Rome.** Paul had long desired to preach the gospel at Rome (Rom. i. 13, xv. 23): we shall see the desire growing in intensity.

(c) "*Great is Diana of the Ephesians,*" 21-41.

22. **Sent into Macedonia.** For there was much cause for anxiety about the Churches there and in Corinth. Social impurity was destroying their Christian life (1 Cor. v. 9). Compare 2 Tim. iv. 20.

23. **And the same time, etc.** *And about that time there arose no small stir about the way.* The crisis did not come all at once. It took time to come to a head. The pilgrimages had been failing for some time, and the trade in silver shrines had been diminishing. No doubt the burning of the books of magical charms had been more influential than anything else, but still it took some time ere Demetrius and his fellows came to connect their losses in trade with "the Way," as Christianity was called. Fanaticism can flare up into persecution at once; but it takes some time to make a man a persecutor, who takes to that occupation because religion hurts trade. He has to make his calculations.

24. **Shrines.** Models in silver, either of the great temple of Diana at Ephesus, one of the seven wonders of the world, or of the statue of the goddess. These models were sold to the countless number of pilgrims who thronged the temple from all parts of Asia Minor, and were taken home to be used as charms or objects of worship.

**Gain, no little business,** employment by which money is made. It is the same word which is used to denote the profit made out of the demoniac girl by her masters (xvi. 16, 19), and the craft or trade out of which money is made (ver. 25).

**Craftsmen . . . workmen.** *Artists* (designers or modellers) . . . *artisans.* Silversmith in this verse means the *master-workman*. Three grades of workers are mentioned.

25. **Whom he called together, etc.** *Whom he assembled with the artisans of like occupation.* This was a meeting of the trades employed in the manufacture of the silver shrines of Diana of Ephesus. In apostolic times, trades-unions or guilds were found among almost every kind of workmen and in every part of the Roman Empire. Inscriptions have been recovered showing that there were trades-unions among the craftsmen of Geneva, among litter-bearers in Wallachia, and among shoemakers in market towns in Spain. These associations were not encouraged by the authorities, but they flourished. The text shows how easily the workmen of a trade could be summoned to discuss anything relating to the trade, and how formidable a disturbance they could organize.

26 ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. 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  
 27 hands: 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  
 28 destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and  
 29 cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians. And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught

26. **That not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia.** Ephesus had been one of the early Greek colonies, later the capital of Ionia, and in St. Paul's day it was by far the largest and busiest of all the cities of proconsular Asia. All the roads in Asia Minor centred in Ephesus, and from its position it was almost as much a meeting-place of Eastern and Western thought as was Alexandria. Its religion was Oriental. Its goddess, called Artemis or Diana, had a Greek name, but was the representative of an old Phrygian nature-worship. The goddess was an inartistic, many-breasted figure, the body carved with strange figures of animals, flowers, and fruits. The temple built by Alexander the Great was the most magnificent religious edifice in the world. It was kept by a corporation of priests and priestesses, who were supported by the rents of vast estates. For centuries Ephesus was a great centre of pilgrimage, and pilgrims came from all parts of Asia Minor to visit the famous shrine. The first great blow which this worship received was given by St. Paul's two years' stay in Ephesus, and the story told in this chapter is the history of the beginning of a decline from which the worship of Diana of Ephesus never recovered. The speech of Demetrius perhaps exaggerates the effect of Paul's work, but it should be remembered that the gospel took firm hold of proconsular Asia from a very early period. Paul's Epistles tell us of Churches in Ephesus, Laodicea, and Colosse, and the Apocalypse adds Churches in Pergamos, Smyrna, Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia. Half a century later, Pliny asserted that in this region the temples were deserted, the worship was neglected, and the sacrificial victims were unsold.

**This Paul**, contemptuously of the small swarthy Jew who was at the bottom of all the disturbance to trade.

**They be no gods which are made with hands.** Here Demetrius asserts by implication that he and his trade could actually make gods. Compare xvii. 29.

27. **So that not only**, etc. *And not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth, should be deposed from her magnificence.* Trade is injured and religion is in danger, is what Demetrius says. Self-interest and superstition combined to make a riot, and the city was full of tumult.

29. **The whole city was filled with confusion.** The silver shrine workers raised other trades, and it was seen at once how much money would be lost to the city if the pilgrimages ceased. Besides, there is reason to believe that this outcry was made just after the usual pilgrimage month (May) was ended,

Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions  
 30 in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. And  
 when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the dis-  
 31 ciples suffered him not. And certain of the chiefs of Asia,  
 which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he  
 32 would not adventure himself into the theatre. Some there-  
 fore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was  
 confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were  
 33 come together. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude,  
 the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander 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  
 35 Ephesians. And when the town-clerk had appeased the  
 people, he said, *Ye* men of Ephesus, what man is there that  
 knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a wor-  
 shipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which  
 36 fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot

when the lodging-house keepers, the shopkeepers, etc., were all lamenting that fewer pilgrims than usual had come to Ephesus.

**Aristarchus** was from Thessalonica (xx. 4); he was one of St. Paul's companions in his voyage to Rome (xxvii. 2), and is mentioned in the Epistles to the Colossians (iv. 10) and to Philemon (ver. 24). Nothing further is known of **Gaius**.

**Into the theatre**, a favourite place for public meeting. It had a wide open area, and could hold 25,000 people.

**31. Chief of Asia.** Translate—*And certain also of the chief officers of Asia (Asiarchs), being his friends.* The *Asiarchs*, wealthy citizens of the various cities of proconsular Asia who were annually elected to preside over the games and religious festivals. That some of these men were friends of Paul shows what a hold his preaching had taken on the people of Ephesus.

**32. Was confused.** *Was in confusion*; a great mob of people, full of panic and noise, and not knowing what it was all about.

**33. They drew Alexander, etc.** Verses 33, 34 imply that the Jews were anxious to appease the multitude by showing that they had no connection with the Christians, that they put forward Alexander to say so, that the sight of his Jewish face excited the mob and brought on the Jews what they wished to avoid. It has been suggested that Alexander here mentioned was Alexander the coppersmith (2 Tim. iv. 14), that he had a trade connection with Demetrius the master modeller in silver, that the Jews were in league with Demetrius to excite the people against the Christians, by charging them with being robbers of temples.

**35. Town-clerk.** Ephesus was a "free" city, governed by a popular assembly and by magistrates. The chief magistrate was called *grammateus*, which is translated *town-clerk*, but ought to be *provost* or *mayor*.

**Had appeased the people, had quieted** by his presence.

**36. Cannot be spoken against.** *Cannot be gainsaid.* The reasoning of

be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing  
 37 rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, which are  
 neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your  
 38 goddess. Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which  
 are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open,  
 39 and there are deputies: let them implead one another. But  
 if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be  
 40 determined in a lawful assembly. For we are in danger to be  
 called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause  
 41 whereby we may give an account of this concourse. And  
 when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

CHAP. XX. 1. And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto  
*him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and departed for to go

the chief magistrate was: Everybody knows that the city of Ephesus worships Diana, and that her image fell down from heaven; these are facts which cannot be altered by speech, nor made the surer by rioting; Gaius and Aristarchus are not criminals, *robbers of temples, and blasphemers of our goddess*: if Demetrius wishes to make a charge against any man, the *law courts* are open and the Roman *proconsuls* are ready to judge in every province; if the people wish investigation on any matter, *let it be settled in the regular assembly* of citizens which the chief magistrate can convene; rioting such as this, for which no reasonable excuse can be given, may make Rome take from us our privileges as a free city.

2. *Through Macedonia to Troas, xx. 1-6.*

1. Paul called unto him, etc. *Paul having sent for the disciples, and exhorted them, took leave of them.* The word translated "embraced" is the same as that rendered "had taken our leave" in xxi. 6. It was a farewell meeting and address.

Into Macedonia, etc. The order of events seems to have been: (1) Timothy and Erastus were sent to look after church discipline at Corinth (xix. 22). Stephanas and others came from Corinth and returned with the First Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi. 17). (2) Paul meant to visit Corinth (1 Cor. iv. 18, 19); instead he went to Macedonia by Troas (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13). (3) He waited at Troas for news from Corinth, and his anxiety told on his health (2 Cor. ii. 12, i. 8, iv. 10, 11, xii. 7). (4) In spite of illness he pressed on to Macedonia (2 Cor. ii. 13), where he met Titus, who brought him bad news of the state of the Corinthian Church (2 Cor. x. 10, etc.). (5) He wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians and sent it by Titus, and resolved to wait some time longer before going to Corinth, for he wished to take a contribution from the Corinthians to Jerusalem (2 Cor. ix. 5). (6) In Macedonia he probably visited Berea, Thessalonica, and Philippi, with perhaps a journey to Illyricum (Rom. xv. 19). (7) He went to Greece (Corinth and Cenchrea). (8) He proposed sailing for Syria with the contributions of the various Churches, and with delegates who carried the money, Sopater from Berea, Aristarchus (see note on xix. 29) and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timotheus from Lystra, Tychicus and Trophimus from Ephesus (xxi. 29). (9) The Jews of Corinth conspired to



- 2 into Macedonia. And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, 3 and *there* abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to 4 return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of

murder Paul on his embarkation, so his friends went by ship, and he eluded the conspirators by going by land to Philippi. (10) At Philippi he enjoyed the Passover feast (which at a distance from Jerusalem did not include the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb). (11) Then took ship for Troas, having Luke, who all this time had been at Philippi, for his companion (*we* sailed).

2. **And had given much exhortation.** "We may form some idea of the topics which would be embraced by such exhortation, if we read the two Epistles to the Thessalonians which had been written to that Church since Paul's former visit to Macedonia" (Lumby). If so, the exhortation would include encouragement to stand firm in persecution; warning that while the day of the Lord might be near at hand, yet God had not revealed when it was to come, and that Christians, while they ought always to be ready, should not neglect their everyday occupations; that religion was not prolonged excitement, but steady commonplace work for the Master; and a vindication of the Apostle's work against Jewish and Judaizing opponents.

3. **And there abode three months, etc.** *And when he had spent three months there, and a plot was laid against him by the Jews as he was about, etc.* The preceding sentence should end with "came into Greece." Paul spent three months there, probably most of the time at Corinth. The stay was brief because he was anxious to return to Jerusalem (ver. 16), and the Jewish plot did not occasion his departure, but happened at the same time. The effect of the conspiracy was to change his route, not to hasten or hinder his departure. During these three months Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans while he was the guest of Gaius (Rom. xvi. 23), who had been an early convert at Corinth, and one whom Paul had himself baptized (1 Cor. i. 14), and sent it by the hands of Phœbe, an office-bearer in the Church at Cenchrea, whom he recommends to the Roman Christians (Rom. xvi. 1). The Epistle to the Romans agrees with the Acts in stating that Paul was on the point of starting for Jerusalem (xv. 25), was taking with him contributions to the Church there (xv. 25, 26), and intended after he had visited Jerusalem to come to Rome.

**When the Jews, etc.** The language of the Authorized Version is too specific: all that is said is that the Jews conspired against him; but it may be inferred that the conspiracy was to lie in wait to kill, as it made Paul change his route (the word is the same as in Acts ix. 24).

**As he was about to sail into Syria, etc.** *As he was about to set sail (embark) for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia.* The words denote a sudden change of route at the last moment.

4. **Into Asia, as far as Asia;** but it is better to omit the phrase altogether, as it is not found in the best manuscripts.

**Sopater of Berea** (add as in the R. V.), *the son of Pyrrhus*, cannot be identified with Sosipater of Rom. xvi. 21; but the names are identical.

**Aristarchus.** Compare note on xix. 29.

**Secundus** is not mentioned elsewhere.

5 Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. These going before tarried  
6 for us at Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the  
days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in  
five days; where we abode seven days.

7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples  
came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them,  
ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech  
8 until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper

Gaius or *Caius* of Derbe, a Lycaonian, and therefore not Paul's host at Corinth (xix. 29).

Timothy. Compare chapter xvi.

Tychicus, often mentioned by Paul, a beloved brother and faithful minister or servant (Eph. vi. 21), who was with the Apostle at Rome, who was sent to the Churches at Ephesus and at Colosse (Col. iv. 7), and who was with Paul when he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 12), and when he wrote to Titus (iii. 12).

Trophimus was an Ephesian (xxi. 29), and was with Paul in his later journeys (2 Tim. iv. 20).

5. *These going before*, etc., *i.e.*, all the seven persons mentioned. Translate—*But these had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas.* They probably went by the same route through Macedonia, but Paul lingered on the road, possibly going to Philippi to meet Luke (who was again to be Paul's companion), and to spend the Passover season there. Timothy, Luke, and Paul were once more together at Troas, where the heavenly vision had made them decide upon mission work in Europe.

### 3. *At Troas—A Christian Sabbath*, xx. 7-12.

7. *First day of the week.* The seventh day ended at six o'clock in the evening; the Christian congregation met in an upper room on the third floor (9) in the late evening, for many of them were slaves and had no day of rest. A large number of dim lamps lighted the room, and made it close and warm. The windows with wooden or lattice doors were open, and in one of them sat a young man Eutychus. It was the usual weekly service on the Lord's day (1 Cor. xvi. 2; Rev. i. 10), the day on which Jesus had risen from the dead, and on which the Holy Spirit had descended. After reading, singing, and prayers, Paul rose to speak. He gave a long continuous address, but probably interrupted by questions and answers, going on until midnight. Then Eutychus fell; the people rushed down into the court-yard, Paul with them; the lad was taken up dead. Paul threw himself on the body (1 Kings xvii. 21), and said that there was life in him; then they returned to the room, and in the very early morning the Lord's Supper was dispensed (*had broken bread*); then the brethren partook of a love-feast (*and eaten*); and after long conversation Paul left to go on board his ship. The passage is very interesting, because it shows a Christian Sabbath service in apostolic times; only the day began at the close of the Jewish Sabbath, *i.e.* at 6 o'clock in the evening, and the service was during the night, probably because that was the only time when slaves could attend.

When the disciples, etc. *When we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart, etc.*

8. *And there were many lights.* The scene is described with the vividness

9 chamber, where they were gathered together. 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  
 10 was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him,  
 and, embracing *him*, said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life  
 11 is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had  
 broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till  
 12 break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young  
 man alive, and were not a little comforted.

of an eye-witness. It recalls the upper chamber in Jerusalem, a low, long room with only the flat roof above it. "It will be no excuse for our absenting ourselves from religious assemblies, that the place of them is not so decent or commodious as we would have it to be" (Matt. Henry).

9. **And there sat in the window.** It will be recollected that there were no windows of glass; and that the window here mentioned was a wooden lattice or door, which on this occasion was set open on account of the heat. Such windows commonly reached almost to the level of the floor, and projected out from the wall over the interior court or over the street.

**Being fallen into a deep sleep, etc.** *Borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep.* Again the vividness of an eye-witness. Eutychus struggled against his sleep, he may have been a slave (his name was a common slave name) at work all day; but when Paul went on and on, he was at last fairly overcome and fell down.

**Was taken up dead.** The words do not necessarily imply that Eutychus was actually killed, but it is most probable that he was slain and that Paul restored him to life. Note again the vividness of the description, and the activity of Paul.

10. **And Paul went down.** Access to upper rooms was commonly by an outside stair. We can imagine the sudden alarm, the rush down the stair, the lad lying lifeless, the Apostle bending over him, taking him in his arms with fervent prayer, the rush of recovered life, the lad left in the cool night air with attendants, the quiet, subdued return to the upper chamber, and the service resumed.

11. **And had broken the bread.** In the communion service of the early Church the bread was not made in thin circular cakes or wafers as in the Roman Catholic Church, nor was it cut into small squares as in some of the Reformed Churches: a loaf was brought in—a long roll of bread—and each piece was broken off and given to the communicant. The Apostle lays stress on the actual breaking ("the bread" or rather "the loaf which we break," 1 Cor. x. 16); in our Scottish Presbyterian communion service, each member breaks the bread before handing it to his neighbour, and we thus preserve the original usage of *breaking the bread*, and at the same time set forth the spiritual priesthood of all believers; for every communicant breaks the bread.

**And eaten.** This may refer to the tasting and eating the bread in the communion service, or it may mean, and more probably does, that an *agape* or love-feast followed the communion service.

**And talked a long while;** better, *and had talked with them a long while;*

13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there  
 14 intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, mind-  
 15 ing himself to go afoot. And when he met with us at Assos,  
 we took him in, and came to Mitylene. 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  
 16 the next *day* we came to Miletus. For Paul had determined  
 to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in  
 Asia: for he hastened, if it were possible for him, to be at  
 Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

for this was not a continuation of the earlier discourse or exhortation, but a familiar conversation upon solemn subjects such as usually accompanied the *love-feast*.

4. *At Miletus—Address to the elders of Ephesus*, xx. 13–38.

13. **And we went before to ship, etc.** *But we going before to the ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so he had appointed, intending himself to go by land.* Assos was in Mysia on the north shore of the Gulf of Hadramyttium. It is about 20 miles from Troas by road, and about 30 by sea. The companions of Paul took ship at Troas and went round Cape Lectum to Assos, while Paul took the shorter road by land through groves of oak, according to his plan of the journey. Some phrases in verses 15–17 seem to imply that the ship was entirely at Paul's disposal, but it is more likely to suppose that he had chosen one whose course gave him the opportunities he required.

14. **Mitylene**, the beautiful capital of Lesbos, at the east end of the island. The modern name of the town is Castro, and the whole island is now called Metilium.

15. **And we sailed, etc.** *And sailing from thence we came the following day over against Chios.* Chios, another beautiful island about five miles distant from the mainland, with a roadstead, in which the Apostle and his companions spent the night in their vessel. It is now called Scio.

**And the next day, etc.** *And the next day we touched at Samos.* Samos is another island south of Chios. Its nearest point is about six miles from the mainland, opposite Ephesus. The ship went between Samos and the mainland, and Paul could see Ephesus as he sailed past it.

**Tarried at Trogyllium.** These words are omitted in the best MSS., and the verse reads, *And the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after we came to Miletus.* Trogyllium is on the mainland opposite the south-east corner of Samos; it was the natural resting-place for a coasting vessel that had only touched and not stopped at Samos.

**Miletus** had been a famous seaport in earlier days, but was in Paul's time overshadowed by Ephesus. It was 28 miles south of Ephesus by land, and lay near the mouth of the Meander. It was one day's sail from Trogyllium.

16. **Because he would not spend, etc.** *For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem, etc.*

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders  
 18 of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons. Serving

17. **The elders of the church.** Compare notes on vi. 3-6, xiv. 23. Had the ship been entirely at Paul's disposal he would most likely have asked the elders at Ephesus to meet him at Trogyllium, which is very near Ephesus. Had he gone to Ephesus, he would probably have been compelled to stay long in that favourite place of missionary work (I Cor. xvi. 6); he could not do so, but he yearned to have some communication with the brethren.

18. **He said unto them.** It is almost impossible to analyze this speech, it is so full of personality, of tremulous, sweet persuasion. (1) *What was behind him and them—Paul's work in Ephesus and their conversion.* Paul appealed to his past life among them in all its ever-changing variety of circumstance (18); he had spent it the humble slave of the Lord, his heart sympathetic to tears, his life threatened by violence (19); he had spoken what the Church at Ephesus and what each particular man needed to hear, and had not shrunk from saying it, however unpalatable, and however dangerous the consequences to himself; he had done so in public preaching, in house-to-house visitation and in personal dealing (20); he had called into being guilty memories craving forgiveness and needing deliverance, and he had laid the hands of the helpless sinners in the hand of the Saviour (21). (2) *What was before Paul.* He did not know, he was possessed by the Spirit and compelled to go to Jerusalem. Wherever he had gone bonds and afflictions had met him, and he felt sure that wherever he was to go the same lot awaited him; probably death at Jerusalem would be his fate; it mattered not, while life lasted he would be a witness for Jesus, if death came it would end a life of earnest service in the Master's cause (22-24); he spoke as he had spoken, a dying man to dying men; whatever was before him he could not be altogether separate from them; he had preached the whole gospel to them, made it and therefore himself part of their lives, and he was lameless if they did not adhere to the truth (25-27). (3) *What was before them?* A double duty of watchfulness; they had to watch themselves, and to watch their fellow-Christians whom the Holy Spirit had given in charge to them when He made them office-bearers: it was theirs to nourish the Church for which Jesus, not a man, but God, had died, and this death of Christ demanded from them a service faithful to the death. The service would not be an easy one; false teachers would arise, even among the circle of office-bearers; therefore let them remember how he had laboured among them—stern words coming from a bruised, sympathetic heart (30-31). (4) *The benediction and how to profit by it.* He commends them to God, who has sent forth His gracious word of salvation, which is able to make mature Christians out of raw converts, and to secure that they will never fall away from the household of faith (32); if they would earn the blessing they must work willingly for Christ, as Paul had worked among them and shown them how to work, not taking nor desiring to take money or goods from those he benefited, supporting himself and others too by his own hand labour (33-35).

**Ye know, etc.** *Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time.* A strong personal appeal, which is not made emphatic enough in the Authorized Version. He

19 the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews :  
 20 *and* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house  
 21 to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus  
 22 Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there :  
 23 save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that  
 24 bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I

appeals to their personal knowledge of what he had been from the time he had set foot in Asia to the day he had left Ephesus, the capital of the province which was in constant communication with all its parts.

19. **Serving the Lord with all humility of mind.** Acting as the servant or slave of God (Rom. i. 1 ; Gal. i. 10 ; Phil. i. 1 ; Tit. i. 1). *Tapcinophrosyne*, translated here *humility*, and in Phil. ii. 3 *lowliness of mind*, is the opposite of "setting one's mind on high things" (Rom. xii. 16). Compare Phil. ii. 3 ; Col. iii. 12 ; and 1 Pet. v. 5.

And with many tears, *and with tears*, showing intense solicitude for their salvation.

And temptations, which befell me, etc. *And with trials, which befell me, by the plots of the Jews.* Many critics find in this statement evidence that the riot headed by Demetrius and his craftsmen was really owing to a plot of the Jews, and find collusion between Demetrius and Alexander the Jew. Compare notes on xix. 23-33.

20. **How I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you.** *How that I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable* for salvation. Compare 1 Cor. x. 33.

21. **Testifying, etc.** *Testifying to Jews and to Greeks.* "The sum of those things that are profitable, the sum of Divine wisdom is repentance and faith" (Bengel). Some find a cross reference of pairs of words here, and make repentance refer to the Greeks and faith to the Jews : the one are asked to repent of their sins, and an appeal is made to their conscience ; the others are asked to accept the Messiah, and an appeal is made to them through the Old Testament Scriptures, but there is no need to suppose such reference. Repentance is required of Jews as well as of Greeks (Acts ii. 38) ; and the Greeks needed a Saviour as well as the Jews.

22. **Bound in the spirit.** The phrase means that he felt an inward compulsion, an irresistible drawing towards Jerusalem, which controlled his choice and compelled his journey : a necessity was laid upon him (1 Cor. ix. 16) ; it does not imply any foreknowledge of the fate that awaited him in Jerusalem.

23. **The Holy Ghost witnesseth, etc.** *The Holy Ghost testifieth unto me in every city.* Luke has recorded some of these testifyings (xiii. 2, xxi. 4, xxi. 11) ; but there must have been many a warning unrecorded. Compare ix. 16.

24. **But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself.** The words *neither count I* are omitted in the best MSS. ; but

might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of

either these words or others are plainly required. Better to translate it thus : *But I take account of nothing, nor do I hold my life dear unto me.* The race will last as long as life lasts, and he must not faint in the middle whatever sufferings are in store. It is the voice of a man approaching the end of his career. Compare it with a declaration made long afterwards, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. iv. 6-8; compare Phil. ii. 17).

The ministry which I have received. Compare 2 Cor. iv. 1, v. 18; 1 Tim. i. 12.

To testify the gospel of the grace of God is the service or ministry to be rendered by Paul; to make known, as he could from inward spiritual experience, that salvation which is God's free gift.

25. And now. The Apostle resumes the train of thought in verse 22.

Shall see my face no more. It is impossible to say whether Paul ever did go back to Ephesus. If he was released from his Roman prison, he probably did revisit Ephesus; and the historical probabilities are in favour of his release. But Paul is speaking under the influence of a subduing sadness, which made him think his end was near.

26. Wherefore I take you to record. Your conscience will bear me witness; he challenges them to prove him unfaithful.

27. The whole counsel of God. "He who suppresses what he ought to declare, is not pure from the blood of his hearers" (Bengel). Paul had found great comfort in the Ephesian Church, more power to declare the "mystery of the gospel" (Eph. iii. 4).

28. Over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, in which . . . made you bishops. The office-bearers in the Apostolic Church are variously called elders, pastors, bishops, leaders, presidents—all these names denoting the one office. The Holy Ghost had influenced their appointment (xiii. 2, xiv. 23); and given them the gifts qualifying them for their office (1 Cor. xii. 8).

To feed the church of God. The word translated *feed* means *to shepherd*, and implies more the idea of government and guidance than of instruction.

The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Great discussion has arisen over this sentence: (1) whether the phrase should be church of God, or church of the Lord?—the weight of evidence is in favour of "Church of God;" (2) this being so, notice (a) that in this verse Jesus Christ is called God definitely and plainly, and (b) in such a sense that the blood of the God-man is called the blood of God. The thought contains the idea of redemption which Paul insists on in his Epistle to the Ephesians (i. 14; compare 1 Cor. vi. 20 and 1 Pet. ii. 9).

29 God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter  
 30 in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away  
 31 disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that, by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one  
 32 night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them  
 33 which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or  
 34 gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were  
 35 with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and  
 37 prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on  
 38 Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the

29. **Shall grievous wolves enter in.** The reference is to teachers of dangerous doctrines, whether Judaizers or heathen theosophists such as the Gnostics.

30. **Also of your own selves, etc.** *And from among yourselves shall men arise . . . to draw away the disciples from the faith.* Compare 2 Tim. ii. 17, Rev. ii. 2, for the fulfilment of this warning prediction.

31. **Therefore watch, etc.** *Wherefore watch ye, remembering.* Paul sets himself as an example to the flock.

32. **The word of his grace, which is able to build you up.** "The figure was a natural one anywhere (1 Cor. iii. 10), but it would gain additional vividness from the stately architecture of Ephesus" (Plumptre). The thought recurs again and again in Eph. ii. 20, 21, iv. 12-16, 29. Paul had done his work and leaves it in the hands of the Master Builder, whose gracious promises (*word of His grace*) are with His Church.

**And give you an inheritance, give you the inheritance;** for the original Old Testament thought of salvation was to obtain a lot or portion of ground in Canaan, and to have secure possession of it, and these ideas have now been expanded into a share of spiritual blessings and security for their continuance.

33. **Apparel.** Portion of the wealth of Eastern nations consisted of costly garments and ornaments. Hence the allusion to the moth and the rust (Matt. vi. 19; Jas. v. 2).

34. **These hands, holding them out, that all might see the marks of toil.** Compare 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12, xi. 9, xviii. 3; Philem. 17.

35. **I have showed you all things.** *In all things I gave you an example.* The words of the Lord Jesus, etc. The only saying of Jesus not found in the Gospels and recorded in the New Testament.

38. **Should see his face no more.** Paul did not contemplate revisiting



words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

CHAP. XXI. 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 2 thence unto Patara : and finding a ship sailing over unto 3 Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into 4 Syria, and landed at Tyre : for there the ship was to unlade 5 her burden. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days : who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way ; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city : and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

Ephesus (Rom. xv. 23, 24) ; but it was plain from the Pastoral Epistles that he revisited proconsular Asia (2 Tim. i. 15) ; Troas (2 Tim. iv. 13) ; Miletus (2 Tim. iv. 20) ; and probably Ephesus (2 Tim. i. 18).

#### 5. *To Cæsarea by Tyre*, xxi. 1-14.

1. **After that we had**, etc. *When we had torn ourselves away from them.*

**Cos** was one of the smaller islands of the Archipelago, about 40 miles from Miletus ; it is now called Stanchio. The wind was favourable, and they came in a *straight course*. Leaving this island they rounded Cape Crio, and turning eastward arrived at

**Rhodes**, a celebrated island at the entrance of the Ægean Sea. It was the last Christian place to resist the advance of the Saracens.

**Patara**, on the mainland, the seaport of Lycia, with a celebrated oracle of Apollo. For the places named, see Map, p. 93. The ship sailed from port to port, probably remaining in the harbour all night. The travellers changed ships at Patara, where they got into one bound for Phenicia.

3. **Now when we had discovered**. *And when we had come in sight of Cyprus*. The word is a nautical term : *when we had sighted*.

**Syria**. The name was given to the whole of the eastern shore of the Mediterranean from Cilicia to Egypt.

4. **Having found**. The word implies that they had to be sought for diligently. A little Christian community in the great seaport city of Tyre. Among these disciples were men whom the Spirit warned of the dangers awaiting Paul at Jerusalem ; but the Spirit drove him in spite of warnings to the dangerous city.

**Who said to Paul**, and these said to Paul. There was no conflict of spiritual guidance. Paul was compelled to go up to Jerusalem, not knowing what should befall him ; the same compulsion urged him when he was told what was to happen to him there, and was warned *not to set foot in Jerusalem*.

5. **Brought us on our way**, the Christian community, men, women, and children, clinging to the Apostle to the last, and fervently praying that he might be brought safely through the coming dangers.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took  
 7 ship; and they returned home again. And when we had  
 finished *our* course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and  
 8 saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. And  
 the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and  
 came unto Cesarea; and we entered into the house of Philip  
 the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with  
 9 him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which  
 10 did prophesy. And as we tarried *there* many days, there  
 came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus.  
 11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and  
 bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy  
 Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that  
 owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of  
 12 the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and

7. Ptolemais, now Acre, the Accho of Judg. i. 31. There was a Christian community there also, whom Paul, eager always to meet with the brethren, visited.

8. **And the next day, etc.** *And on the morrow we departed*, whether by land or sea is not said. The whole narrative of this voyage is that of an eyewitness. The ship left Troas on the first day of the week; four days were spent in the voyage to Miletus, and probably three there, three days in sailing thence to Patara, two or three days in sailing to Tyre, seven there, and three thence to Cæsarea. Thus Paul got to Cæsarea about ten days before the Feast of Pentecost. The journey had been made very rapidly, for the wind was favourable from Troas, and as the moon was full the voyage from Patara to Tyre was made, not by coasting, but by running across the open sea. (It was full moon at the Passover time, and the ship left Patara one month after Passover.)

Philip the evangelist. Compare vi. 5, viii. 5-13, 26-40.

9. **And the same man, etc.** *Now this man had four daughters, virgins, which did preach.* "These daughters, instead of resting at home, took upon them the hard duty of publishing the message of the gospel" (Lumby). In the Apostolic Church women were admitted into the service of ministry of the Church. Phœbe was a deacon of the Church at Cenchrea (Rom. xvi. 1), and Philip's daughters were regular preachers (compare note on prophets, p. 41). Paul prohibited women preaching at Corinth (1 Cor. xiv. 34), and at Ephesus (1 Tim. ii. 12); but this prohibition was local, doubtless for reasons well understood in these two cities, and cannot be looked on as a rule for all times and places.

10. **Agabus.** A disciple of the same name, who had prophetic gifts, was at Antioch and foretold the famine.

11. **Bound his own hands and feet.** The prophets of the Old Testament frequently used symbolic actions. Compare Isa. xx. 3, 4; Jer. xiii. 1-11, xxvii. 2. The prediction was precise.

12. **Both we and they.** Paul's travelling companions for the first time felt their courage fail, and besought him with tears to relinquish his purpose.

they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.  
 13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break  
 mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also  
 14 to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And  
 when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will  
 15 of the Lord be done. And after those days we took up our  
 16 carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. There went with us  
 also *certain* of the disciples of Cesarea, and brought with them  
 one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should  
 17 lodge. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren  
 18 received us gladly. And the *day* following Paul went in with  
 19 us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when  
 he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God

13. Then Paul answered, etc. *What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart?* They could not alter his determination; he was under a higher guidance than theirs, and was ready if God willed it to die at Jerusalem (compare Mark x. 32); but they could add to his burden by their lamentations.

PART III.—PAUL AT ROME, AND THE EVENTS WHICH BROUGHT HIM THERE, XXI. 15—XXVIII. 10.

I.—AT JERUSALEM, XXI. 15—XXIII. 30.

1. *Doubtful friends—The beginning of the end*, XXI. 15—26.

15. Took up our carriages, *packed up*. Carriage meant what a man carried, not as now what carried him.

16. Mnason, Greek form of Manasseh, a Cypriote Jew like Barnabas, who had a house in Jerusalem, and who could lodge Paul and his company during the crowded season of Pentecost. He had been among the first disciples. For *old* read *early disciple*.

17. The brethren. Mnason's friends in his house. Three sets of Christians at Jerusalem are mentioned: (1) *The brethren* whom Paul met privately at the house of Mnason (17); (2) *the elders* or office-bearers of the Jerusalem Church, present at the official reception (18); (3) *the multitude* or whole number of Jewish Christians, both belonging to Jerusalem and present there at the Feast of Pentecost (22).

19. He declared, etc. *He rehearsed one by one the things which God had done*, etc. This was the official reception; it was felt to be specially important, for *all* the elders were present; and to it Paul would bring his travelling companions, the fruit of these missionary journeys. He gave a minute account of his missions, telling of idols forsaken, lives amended, and of the Holy Ghost given over and over again to the Gentiles, as before to the household of Cornelius; he would introduce Trophimus with the others to present the generous gifts of the Gentile Churches, and to make it plain that the Apostle had not forgotten to teach Christian charity and reverence for the Jerusalem Church. The result was that Paul, as before (xv. 6–29), in spite of ill reports and perhaps prejudiced minds, won his audience over, and all the elders glorified God. But what would the multitude think?

20 had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are  
 21 which believe; and they are all zealous of the law; 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  
 22 after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.  
 23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men

20. **How many, etc.** *How many thousands there are among the Jews of them which have believed.*

**Zealous of the law.** *Zealots for the law.* This does not mean that all these believing Jews insisted on Gentile believers being circumcised or keeping the law; they were not necessarily Judaizers. Compare verse 21.

21. **They are informed of thee.** *They have been informed concerning thee.* The phrase indicates that enemies of Paul had been assiduously poisoning the minds of Jews in Jerusalem against him. The charge against Paul was, that he had told the Jews who lived among the Gentiles *not* to circumcise their children, and *not* to keep the ceremonial law of the Old Testament. (1) Even if the charge had been true, it was a malicious half truth, for Paul had preached Christ, and that was more than advising the Jews to sink down to the condition of Gentiles, which is what his enemies said. (2) The charge was false. He had never taught Jews that when they became Christians they were not to circumcise their children. He himself had circumcised Timothy (xvi. 3); he had taken the Nazarite vow while in Achaia (xviii. 18); he had come up for the Feast of Pentecost; "he taught that every man, circumcised or uncircumcised, should accept his position with its attendant obligations (1 Cor. vii. 18-20)" (Plumptre). (3) But there is no doubt that Paul, the true follower of Stephen, had really taught that circumcision, the seal of a covenant which was superseded in Jesus Christ (Rom. iv. 11), had become of none effect in the relations between man and God (Eph. ii. 14; 1 Cor. vii. 19; Gal. v. 6, vi. 15); and these fanatical Jews saw what the end of such teaching was sure to be. "Fanaticism is sometimes clear-sighted in its bitterness." Compare Introduction, pp. 25, 31-34.

22. **What is it therefore? The multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.** Omit the words, "The multitude must needs come together for," and read: *What is it therefore? They will certainly hear that thou art come.* There was no thought of calling a meeting of all Jewish Christians.

23. **Do therefore, etc.** He could have no opportunity of meeting the whole *multitude* of the Jews who believed, and the presbytery advises him to do something which the whole community would certainly hear about, and which would show them and all men that Paul did reverence the Mosaic Law and kept its precepts.

**We have four men, etc.** The presbytery suggest that Paul should show the Jews his reverence for and obedience to the Mosaic Law by taking at this Pentecost, as he had done at his previous Pentecost visit, the Nazarite vow, and showing himself as a Nazarite. The ceremonies involved took a longer

24 which have a vow on them; 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* 25 thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written *and* concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from 26 blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul

time than Paul had at his disposal, but the Law permitted a man to share the vow if he could find companions who had gone through the prescribed ceremonies, and who permitted him to join their company. This permission was commonly granted if the new-comer paid all the fees required from the whole company (fee to the Levite for cutting the hair, and fees for sacrifices), and finished the vow along with the others. Four Jewish Christians were performing the vow, and would admit Paul to their company, provided he paid their expenses, or was "at charges for them." Paul consented, paid the charges, and when the last seven days of the vow began, he went with them to live in the temple, giving the usual notice to the priest that he had joined in regular fashion, was a sharer with the four men, and that his vow would end with theirs—*declaring the fulfilment of the days of purification*. Nazarites retired to the temple during the last period of seven days, because they could be sure there against any accidental legal defilement.

24. **Purify thyself with them.** Take the Nazarite vow for the rest of the period along with the four men.

**Be at charges with them.** *Be at charges for them*, pay all their expenses during the thirty days of the fulfilment of the vow.

**That they may shave their heads**, which was done at the completion of the vow and after all the temple dues and other expenses had been paid.

**That all may know**, etc. *And all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee, but that thou walkest orderly, keeping the Law.* All men could see and therefore know that Paul did not despise Jewish customs for Jews, although he and the other Apostles would not impose them on the Gentiles.

25. **As touching the Gentiles**, etc. *But as touching the Gentiles which believe, we wrote giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication.* The sentence should begin with *But*, as if in answer to some protest from Paul about the liberty of the Gentile converts. The words *that they observe no such thing* are to be omitted. The verb translated *we wrote* is not a usual word, but is the word used in xv. 20, and the whole structure of the verse implies that everything settled at the conference is to remain exactly as it was. There is, it should be remarked, an apparent tacit extension of a decree imposed on Gentile Christians within definite Churches to *all* Gentile believers; but the structure of the sentence involves such exact reference to that decree, that we may conclude that Paul got the assurance that Gentile liberty was not to be touched in any way.

26. **Then Paul took the men**, perhaps with some misgivings, but also with the thought that he must not preach Christ in envy and strife (Phil. i. 15-18),

took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

- 27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews  
 28 which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred  
 up all the people, and laid hands on him, crying out, Men  
 of Israel, help : This is the man that teacheth all *men* every-  
 where against the people, and the law, and this place : and  
 further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted  
 29 this holy place. (For they had seen before with him in the

that the law of love compelled him to respect the conscientious convictions of others (1 Cor. ix. 19-23), and that his conduct, who was a Jew, could not compromise Gentile freedom.

To signify the accomplishment, *i.e.* Paul told the officiating priests that he was under Nazarite vow, that he was to keep it in fellowship with the four men, and that the period of his vow would end with theirs, when *the offering was offered for every one of them.*

## 2. The riot and Paul's apprehension, xxi. 27-36.

27. **Jews which were of Asia.** *The Jews from Asia*, who had come up to the Feast of Pentecost, who had heard Paul preaching at Ephesus (28), or in some other city of proconsular Asia, who had persecuted him in their own district, and who had stirred up the people in Jerusalem against him, before his arrival, with their false reports (21).

**In the temple.** Probably in the court of the women, *i.e.* in the court beyond which women were not allowed to go, along the inner wall of which there were small chambers in which the Nazarites used to live while fulfilling the last seven days of their vow. This court was separated by a wall from the court of the Gentiles, and in the wall were huge folding doors, which the Levites shut when Paul had been dragged out (30). On the outer side of the wall were inscriptions forbidding Gentiles to enter by the doors. One recently discovered and deciphered runs : *No man of alien race is to enter within the balustrade and fence that goes round the temple, and if any one is taken in the act, let him know that he has himself to blame for the penalty of death that follows.*

28. **This is the man.** They seized him with the marks of his Nazarite vow upon him (xxiv. 18), shouting the accusation against him which they had already spread among the people (21), that he wished to make Jews mere uncircumcised Gentiles, that he derided the Law of Moses, and further that he had blasphemed against the temple (the accusation against our Lord, Mark xiv. 58, and against Stephen, in which Paul himself had once joined, Acts vi. 13). They added, either maliciously, or because their heated imagination made them believe it, that he had actually profaned the temple by bringing an Ephesian Greek into the holy place.

**And further brought, etc.** *And moreover he brought Greeks . . . and hath defiled this holy place, or made common this holy place.*

29. **For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus.** *For they had before seen with him, etc.* "We should be anxious, but not over anxious

city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul  
 30 had brought into the temple.) And all the city was moved,  
 and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew  
 him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.  
 31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the  
 chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar:  
 32 who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down  
 unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the  
 33 soldiers, they left beating of Paul. Then the chief captain  
 came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound  
 with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he

to keep up our intercourse with the saints, however little it may please the wicked. Paul did not introduce Trophimus into the temple; yet he did not avoid him through fear of the Jews. Bigots often err in their suppositions" (Bengel).

30. **And the people ran together, etc.** *And there was a rush of the people, and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple, lest he should lay hold on the altar for safety, and also that the temple might not be polluted by bloodshed.*

**And forthwith the doors were closed.** The doors of the second court were at once closed after the excited mob had dragged Paul through them; for it was the duty of the Levitical guards to prevent all disturbance within the temple.

31. **The chief captain.** Herod the Great built a strong fortress, the castle of Antonia (named after Mark Antony), on a rock on the north-west corner of the temple area. It overlooked the temple, and was connected by two flights of stairs with the outermost courts of the temple on the northern and western sides. The Romans, like Herod, always kept this castle strongly garrisoned with troops to overawe Jerusalem. At festival seasons, when Jerusalem was thronged with excitable crowds, the garrison consisted of a *cohort* or *band* of 1000 men, commanded by a prefect or chiliarch, called here *chief captain*, who had orders to quell every attempt at rioting. The British Government use the same precautions at the religious festival seasons in the celebrated sacred cities of India, and to this day Turkish troops keep the peace at the holy seasons when pilgrims throng Jerusalem. When the guard from the tower overlooking the temple courts saw the rush of people, a man dragged out of the court of the women and being beaten to death by an infuriated mob, he reported to the prefect, who, mustering the soldiers, marched down the stairs, the disciplined troops making way among the crowd. The officer seized Paul, chained each of his arms to a soldier, and then, with the prisoner secure in the midst, the little army tramped back upstairs into the castle, the mob infuriated, shouting and flinging themselves on the soldiers, vainly trying to get at their victim. Note how accurately the position of the castle, high above the temple courts, is described by various phrases, xxi. 31 (came=went up), 32, 35, 40, xxii. 30, xxiii. 10, 15, 20.

33. **Took him.** The words imply a formal arrest, *laid hold on him*.  
**With two chains** (compare xii. 6), as a desperate man and a criminal on whom the mob was taking vengeance. Perhaps one who had deceived their patriotic expectations (xxiii. 29).

- 34 had done. 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  
36 borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, 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  
38 speak Greek ? Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilder-  
39 ness four thousand men that were murderers ? 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

34. **And some cried, etc.** *And some shouted one thing and some another, among the crowd.* Most of them knew neither the man's name, nor what he had done. Compare the scene at Ephesus (xix. 32), and note that the verb used is the same as in Luke xxiii. 21 and in Acts xii. 22.

36. **Away with him.** The same shout which had been heard thirty years before, when the mob of Jerusalem yelled round Pilate's judgment-hall (Luke xxiii. 18 ; John xix. 15).

3. *Paul's speech to the crowd and what followed, xxi. 37-xxii. 29.*

37. **Who said, Canst, etc.** *Who said, Dost thou know Greek ?* The prefect had seized Paul as the best means of quelling the riot ; he fancied his prisoner a Jewish desperado, and was surprised to find him a cultured man.

38. **That Egyptian.** *Art thou not then that Egyptian ?* The Egyptian is mentioned by Josephus, who says with his usual exaggeration that he had 30,000 followers. The insurgents had been recently met and routed by Felix the procurator of Judea.

**Madest an uproar, etc.** *Who a short while ago stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Sicarii (dagger men).* They went about with daggers hidden in their sleeves, and were members of a secret patriotic league who vowed to free their country by assassination of traitors and tyrants. The prefect hoped to get promotion by capturing such a leader of desperadoes.

39. **Suffer me to speak.** *Give me leave to speak.* Paul yearned to speak to his people, and in Jerusalem. That infuriated mo' were possessed by the same ignorant zeal for God which had once filled him when he led the attack on Stephen. Could he not make them what he had become by telling them how Jesus had revealed Himself to him ? Now he had a chance. The prefect gave permission, the chains were taken off him, and, standing on the top of the stairs surrounded by Roman soldiers, and the great court at his feet full of infuriated Jews, he told his own spiritual experience, praying that the Spirit would aid him, as Peter had been helped on a former Pentecost, to win 3000 Jews for Christ. He had tried before and failed (Acts ix. 29), and he was to fail again. It is pathetic to see what depression came over him at each failure, and how he had to be strengthened for other work by a comforting vision from the Lord (Acts xxii. 17, xxiii. 11).



40 speak unto the people. And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

CHAP. XXII. 1. Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence  
 2 *which I make* now unto you. (And when they heard that he  
 3 spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more  
 3 silence : and he saith,) I am verily a man *which am* a Jew,  
 born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at  
 the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect  
 manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God,

40. **And when he had given him licence.** *And when he had given him leave.* The prefect must have been impressed at finding instead of an *assassin* a man of culture, and granted the unusual request. Perhaps he hoped to find some explanation of the tumult and for the attempt at murder.

**In the Hebrew tongue,** in the Aramaic dialect of Palestine, the language of the common people ; the language that our Lord reverted to when He was greatly moved (Mark v. 41, xiv. 36, xv. 34).

XXII. 1. **Men, brethren, and fathers.** *Brethren* (his kinsmen addressed in their common mother tongue) *and fathers* (the members of the Sanhedrin). He begins as Stephen had begun, and in the Aramaic, while the Jews evidently expected him to speak Greek.

3. **I am verily, etc.** This defence is no intellectual defence of Christianity. It is a simple statement of personal experience, in which the speaker dwells on all the many things which gave him community of life and feeling with those he was addressing. He was one of them, their brother, his life, and thoughts, and deeds the very counterpart of theirs, even their murderous frenzy had once seized on him ; but something, a miraculous power, had crossed his path and changed his life. "Brethren and fathers, after this what could I do, what could I have been, what could you in my place have done or been, but what I have done and am?" That was his plea. "Having gone down into the city, and into the wilderness, and over the sea ; having been beaten, and stoned, and imprisoned, and having had heaped upon him all obloquy, the Apostle ends where he had begun, by telling not the story of another man, but the simple experience of his own soul" (Parker). (a) He was a Jew of the Dispersion, like hundreds among his audience ; he belonged to Jerusalem, like hundreds more, for from childhood he had lived and studied there, old fellow-students perhaps were in the crowd. His master was Rabbi Gamaliel, dead only five years before, of whom scribes in the audience had said that when he died "the glory of the Law had ceased ;" he had been instructed by him *according to the strict manner of the Law of our fathers, being a zealot for God*, as they were this day (verse 3 ; compare Phil. iii. 5, 6). (b) He had done as they were doing, and had gone further than they had yet gone. He had persecuted Christians to the death, bound them and imprisoned them. The high priest, the Sanhedrin and senate (*all the estate of the elders*), could testify, for it was in their official records, that he had had their commission to their brethren (unbelieving Jews, yet kinsmen) to persecute in Damascus, and bring thence to Jerusalem for punishment by imprisonment, by scourging, brutal violence, death by stoning, all Christians he could find (ix. 2,

4 as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and  
 5 women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders : from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.  
 6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone

xxvi. 10, 11). He was one of themselves in birth, upbringing, zeal, frenzy, when suddenly (verses 4, 5)—(c) on Damascus road, the Shekinah, or cloud of God's presence, appeared with the noonday light as its darker background, and he saw and heard in the midst of it, in Jehovah's place, Jesus of Nazareth whom he was persecuting (verses 6-11). (d) He had been instructed in the faith of Christ, not by a Gentile, but by Ananias, a man who kept the Law so thoroughly that the Jews of Damascus could not but think well of him, and this devout Jew had been the messenger of the *God of their fathers* to tell him that he must preach Christ (verses 12-16). (e) He had come to Jerusalem, and after unsuccessful service he had gone like a devout Jew to the temple, had come to this very place to pray for guidance, and had got it in one of those courts ; and there it was, in the temple from Jehovah, that he had received the command to go to the Gentiles (verses 17-21). What else could he, a devout Jew, have done but what he had done ?

**I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia.** *I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia.* Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, was famous for its schools of learning, which rivalled those of Athens and Alexandria ; it was greatly favoured by the Roman government, which freed the inhabitants from taxation, and permitted them to govern themselves.

**Gamaliel** was the grandson of the famous Rabbi Hillel, and so esteemed as a scribe, that it was said—*When Gamaliel died, the glory of the Law ceased.* Compare note on v. 34.

**And taught, etc.** *And instructed according to the strict manner of the Law of our fathers, and being a zealot.* Compare Phil. iii. 5, 6 : "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews ; as touching the Law a Pharisee ; as touching zeal, persecuting the Church." Paul gives evidence in his Epistles of his minute acquaintance with the Jews' laws, customs, and usages.

4. **Unto the death.** Stephen's death is the only one mentioned ; but from this verse and from xxvi. 10, "When they were put to death, I gave my voice against them," we see that many believers were slain in the persecution in which Saul took part.

5. **The high priest, etc.** The high priest who had commissioned Paul was not in office at this time, but the documents of his predecessor were in his possession, and the facts were known to all the authorities of the Jewish people.

**The brethren, i.e.** the Jews in Damascus.

**To bring them, etc.** *To bring them also which were there to Jerusalem in bonds.*

6. **A great light, the Shekinah, the brightness of God's presence, which made the noonday light pale before it.**

7 from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto  
 8 the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why  
 8 persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord?  
 And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou  
 9 persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the  
 light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him  
 10 that spake to me. 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  
 11 for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of  
 that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me,  
 12 I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man  
 according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews  
 13 which dwelt *there*, came unto me, and stood, and said unto  
 me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I  
 14 looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers  
 hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will and see  
 that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.  
 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast

10. Which are appointed thee to do. Compare ix. 15, xxvi. 16-18.

11. Could not see for the glory of that light. It was above the brightness of the eastern noonday sun, and it blinded Paul; indeed, the glare of that light never quite left the Apostle, for his eyes never recovered their old strength.

Ananias, a devout man according to the law, etc. "The historian (ix. 10) calls Ananias a disciple; but the Apostle, 'a devout man according to the Law, having a good report of all the Jews who dwelt there.' Such a description was admirably suited to his immediate object, to conciliate his audience in every lawful way. How consistent it was with the other account appears in xxi. 20, in the words of James: Thou seest, brethren, how many thousands of Jews there are who believe, and they are all zealous for the Law" (*Birks*).

13. And stood, *standing by me*. Think of Paul sitting blind, and Ananias standing there before him.

14. The God of our fathers. Another conciliatory phrase.

Hath chosen, *hath appointed*, hath set apart for special service.

Know his will, not God's will to save men, but His will about what Paul was to do and suffer in His service. Paul very often uses the phrase *will of God*. Compare especially Eph. i. 1-11.

That Just One. *The Righteous One*. Compare Acts iii. 14, vii. 52, with 1 John ii. 1.

15. For thou shalt be a witness, as the other Apostles had been called to be witnesses; the word is *martyr*, used in its earlier sense of *witnessing for*. Compare v. 20, and Rev. xvii. 6. The word was afterwards used to mean one who had suffered death for Christ's sake.

Unto all men. Paul refrains from using the word "Gentiles" as long as possible.

16 seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be  
 baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the  
 17 Lord. And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to  
 Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a  
 18 trance; and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get  
 thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy  
 19 testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that  
 I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed  
 20 on thee: and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed,  
 I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and  
 21 kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto  
 me, Depart: for 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, Away with such a *fellow* from

16. **Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized.** The Holy Ghost had descended on him, sight had been restored, and God had so openly declared his conversion, that baptism could follow at once. The descent of the Holy Spirit was in his case, as in that of Cornelius, the warrant for baptism.

**And wash away thy sins.** Compare ii. 38; I Cor. vi. 11. Submit to baptism in order to be forgiven; for baptism is the sign of repentance and faith, which are the conditions of salvation.

**Calling on the name of the Lord,** calling on His name, *i.e.* on the name of the Righteous One.

17. **When I was come again to Jerusalem.** *When I had returned,* etc. Compare Acts ix. 26, etc., and Gal. i. 17, 18.

**In the temple,** for he had kept to Jewish usages.

18. **Get thee quickly out of Jerusalem.** He was in the city only fifteen days; during that period his presence and preaching had roused against him the Jews of the Dispersion who were in the city, and the disciples had urged him to go away; this vision was Divine warrant for their fears.

19. **Lord, they know.** *Lord, they themselves know.* Paul pled with God to be allowed to remain in Jerusalem to preach to the Jews. He urged that he was a well-known man, formerly a great persecutor, and that most men knew what a persecutor he had been; that the testimony of such a man would have great weight in the place where he was best known; but God overruled this, and had work for Paul elsewhere. The Apostle tells the vision because he was most anxious to make it plain that his own inclination and prayer had been to preach the gospel to his own people; and that it had only been at the urgent command of God that he had gone to the Gentiles.

22. **Unto this word.** The spell of Paul's persuasive pleading had kept them silent and interested, but the whole scene had a fatal resemblance to that which ended Stephen's speech. When Paul made his "noble endeavour to make public reparation for a public sin, by a public confession in the same place where the sin was committed," in his reference to Stephen, the crowd may have been cut to the heart, and may have begun to gnash with their teeth. At the mention of the hated word *Gentiles*, the old frenzy broke out, aggravated by the thought that Paul was out of their reach. Their cries and

23 the earth ; for it is not fit that he should live. And as they  
 cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the  
 24 air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into  
 the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourg-  
 ing ; that he might know wherefore they cried so against  
 25 him. And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto  
 the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge  
 26 a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 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,  
 28 art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain  
 answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And  
 29 Paul said, But I was *free* - born. Then straightway they  
 departed from him which should have examined him : and

gestures are common to all Eastern crowds in the uncontrolled violence of fanatical madness.

For he is not fit to live. They reproach the prefect for having rescued Paul from their hands.

23. **Cast off their clothes**, etc. They threw off their outer robes or coverings to allow room for gesticulation, threw dust at Paul (compare 2 Sam. xvi. 13), and shouted incessantly. When peasants in Persia have a grievance, and wish the governor to redress it, they assemble in hundreds near the gate of his house, and there set up horrid cries, toss their garments, throw dust in the air, and call out their demands.

24. **Should be examined**, *tortured* till he confessed ; so in verse 29. The prefect did not understand Hebrew, and did not know what Paul had said. He only saw that his speech had infuriated the mob again, and that in their opinion he was a criminal worthy of death, and he thought that *something* must be under it all. Matters of Jewish law he would have considered mere trifles.

25. **Bound him**. *And when they had tied him up with the thongs*, fastened him to a pillar with leathern thongs, as slaves were tied up by the wrist to be scourged.

26. **Take heed what thou doest**: *What art thou about to do? for this man is a Roman*. Compare note on xvi. 37, 38. It was easy to find out whether a prisoner was deceiving, when he declared himself to be a Roman citizen, and the punishment for such deception was death, and so both the prefect and the centurion admitted Paul's plea at once.

28. **But I was free born**. *But I am a Roman born*. Probably Paul's father or grandfather had been enfranchised for special services. His birth at Tarsus did not make him a Roman citizen. During the Empire imperial parasites and freedmen were sometimes allowed to sell the title to citizenship, as James IV. sold patents for baronetcies, or as at a later period, posts under Government and commissions in the army were bought and sold.

29. **Which should have examined him**. *Which were about to examine him*.

the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound 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.

CHAP. XXIII. 1. And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience  
2 before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the  
3 mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou* whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?  
4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?  
5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high

Because he had bound him. The binding means, not securing with chains, but tying up to the whipping-post. It was not contrary to law to bind a Roman citizen in order to secure him for trial, and Paul remained in chains, fastened to a soldier, while living in Rome waiting his trial before Cæsar (Acts xxviii. 20); but it was illegal to inflict the indignity of tying to the whipping-post as slaves were used to be tied.

4. *Paul before the Sanhedrin*, xxii. 30-xxiii. 10.

30. On the morrow, etc. *But on the morrow, desiring to know the certainty.* The tribune had discovered that Paul was accused of some religious offence, and so he summoned the Sandhedrin that he might find out what it was, and whether it was a crime for which a Roman citizen could be punished legally.

XXIII. 1. *Earnestly beholding.* *Looking stedfastly*—the look so often mentioned, the look of a man who was never able to see distinctly after the vision on the road to Damascus. He had not been in the hall since he had sat as a member of the court twenty-two years ago.

*Before God in all good conscience.* One man had not lived in all good conscience. The high priest Ananias had been so notoriously cruel and unjust that he had been summoned to Rome for trial, and now he commanded an attendant to smite Paul on the mouth. Paul mentions the two chief elements in all holy living, to live as always in God's presence and for His service, and to act conscientiously. Paul had so lived ever since his conversion up to the time of his arrest.

3. *Thou whited wall.* *Thou wall of mud smeared with lime to look like stone.* Compare Matt. xxiii. 27. The Jews painted their sepulchres white, that they might be conspicuous, and that passers-by might avoid contact and defilement.

*For sittest thou, etc.* *And sittest thou to judge me after the law?* The and brings out the inconsistency between theory and fact, "*And does such a one as thou sit to judge according to law?*"

5. *I wist not, etc.* How could Paul say that he did not know that the

priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees

speaker was the high priest? Some say (1) that Paul's weak eyes did not allow him to distinguish the man who had spoken; (2) that the words, *I twist not*, mean "I did not sufficiently reflect." These explanations suppose that Paul is apologizing for physical defect or for hasty indignant utterance. Those who hold the second hypothesis point out that if Paul in his hasty indignation acted in a manner different from his Master when in like circumstances (John xviii. 22, 23), his answer was Christ-like. Others say (3) that Paul is speaking in grave irony, and that the phrase means, "The high priest breaking the law! God's high priest a tyrant and law-breaker! I see a man in white robes and have heard a voice; but surely it cannot, it ought not to be the voice of the high priest." The third explanation appears to be the best.

6. **I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, etc.** *A son of Pharisees.* He claimed to belong to the party of the Pharisees by descent and by sympathy. Paul never had and never could have had any sympathy with the cold-blooded priestly aristocracy called the Sadducees; but he had been a Pharisee, and he knew well that it was the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, which he had held as a Pharisee, that had made him believe in a risen Saviour. Men who did not believe in the resurrection could never have faith on Jesus the Christ; but the Pharisees might be separated from the Sadducees and so brought to believe. "In order to secure the voice of the majority among his judges, Paul availed himself of a method for promoting the triumph of the truth which has oftener been employed against it—the *divide et impera*, in a good sense; in order to produce a division in the assembly, he addressed himself to the interest for the truth which a great many of his judges acknowledged, and in which they really approached nearer to him than the smaller number of those who denied it" (Neander). The declaration had its effect in uniting the Pharisees present in his favour.

7. **Dissension.** The party cries were at once heard, and the Apostle was prevented from going on with his argument for the resurrection of the dead from the rising again of Jesus.

**Between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.** The distinction between the Pharisee and Sadducee had grown out of national differences dating from the time of the captivity, partly social and partly religious. The Sadducees were the Jewish sacerdotal aristocracy. In time of foreign domination their aim was selfishly to maintain their places of power, and their right to divide among themselves the temple dues, the great source of wealth in Palestine. In time of independence, the primary idea of this aristocracy of priests, nobles, and men of wealth—for the three words were in this case synonymous—was conservatism. They aimed at preserving the temple service and the written regulations of the Mosaic Law. They did so in the spirit of a professional

9 confess both. And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath  
10 spoken to him, let us not fight against God. 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.

11 And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, aristocracy, and not with the enthusiasm of religious leaders. In times of national adversity, they had witnessed, unmoved, national degradation, and retained their posts and emoluments; in times of comparative prosperity, they seemed to teach a cold Epicureanism, which limited man's existence to this present life, and denied a resurrection and future retribution. As a natural consequence, they were not the leaders of the people of Israel. The Jews returned from the captivity, a nation of Puritans, who had learned to stake their national existence on the strict observance of that Mosaic Law which separated them from the heathen. The Pharisees, Separatists or Puritans, became the leaders of the people in the dark days of Persian and Greek rule; and when Roman domination came, they were the unwavering champions of the ceremonial separation, which was an invisible but invincible defence of the separate national existence of the Jewish people. It is easy to see how the gospel with its heart religion found in Sadducees and Pharisees alike its deadly enemies; but it is also plain that a large-hearted Pharisee, like Saul of Tarsus, might come to believe that this gospel after all gave him the fulfilment of his religious aspirations. The Sadducean priest-nobles saw in the preaching of Jesus a plebeian revolt to be crushed; the Pharisees saw in it an overthrow of that ceremonial system which the noblest of them believed to be the present safeguard and the future hope of the chosen people. But the Pharisees believed in the doctrine of the Resurrection, and through that faith Paul himself and many others had been brought to acknowledge the Crucified and Risen Jesus of Nazareth—the Messiah foretold and expected.

9. *The scribes that were of the Pharisees' part, etc. Some of the scribes of the Pharisees' part stood up and strove.*

But if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God. Omit *let us not fight against God*, which is not found in the best MSS. The sentence should read, *And what if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him?* A significant look or gesture expressed what is left unsaid; but the temper of these Pharisees was so like that of Gamaliel (v. 39) that it was natural for a copyist to insert the words. Paul's discourse from the head of the stair was bearing fruit; he had spoken of two visions (xxii. 8, 17), the scribes remember and quote.

10. *The chief captain fearing.* He was responsible for the life of a Roman citizen, who was being struggled for in the tumultuous assembly, one party wishing to protect him, the other to maltreat him.

5. *God speaks, xxiii. 11.*

11. *The Lord stood by him.* Paul had earnestly desired to speak to his own people and in Jerusalem. He had had two opportunities, and twice had



Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty which had made this  
14 conspiracy. And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concern-

to be rescued by Roman soldiers. After the fatigues, excitements, and weary disappointments of the two days, the same Lord who had appeared to him by the way (ix. 5), in the temple (xxii. 17, 18), and at Corinth (xviii. 9), now appeared to comfort him with the promise that he would be able to fulfil one long-cherished desire, and preach the gospel at Rome (Rom. i. 11-13, xv. 23; Acts xix. 21).

**So must thou bear witness also at Rome.** The promise was of further service, new trials and dangers; and yet it comforted Paul, who had been called from the beginning to suffer (Acts ix. 16). He had longed to preach in Rome, and had made plans to go there (xix. 21; Rom. i. 11-13).

#### 6. *Conspiracy of the zealots*, xxiii. 12-30.

12. **When it was day.** The men had been plotting murder at the very time that the Lord Jesus was supporting Paul by His promises. God maketh the wrath of man to praise Him; and these forty men plotting murder were in the end to send Paul to Rome to preach the gospel there.

**Bound themselves under a curse.** Placed themselves under the *Kherem*. The persons on whom it fell were regarded as devoted to God's anger (Josh. vii. 1). The men were doubtless some of the desperate *Sicarii*.

14. **And they came to the chief priests and (the) elders**, *i.e.* to the chief priests and those of the elders who belonged to the party of the Sadducees. The priestly aristocracy were apparently willing to ally themselves with desperate assassins who would rid them of their enemy and take all the danger and opprobrium on their own shoulders. It should be remembered that even Philo, when speaking of what ought to be done to a Jew who forsakes his religion, says: "It is highly proper that all who have a zeal for virtue should have a right to punish with their own hands, without delay, those who are guilty of this crime; not carrying them before a court of judicature, or the council, or, in short, before any magistrate; but that they should indulge the abhorrence of evil, the love of God, which they entertain, by inflicting immediate punishment on such impious apostates, regarding themselves for the time as all things, senators, judges, prætors, serjeants, accusers, witnesses, the laws, the people; so that, and hindered by nothing, they may without fear, and with all promptitude, espouse the cause of piety." This makes it credible that a band of assassins should propose to make the members of the Sanhedrin their accomplices, with no fear that they would reject their aid.

ing him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill  
 16 him. And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in  
 wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.  
 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said,  
 Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath  
 18 a certain thing to tell him. 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  
 19 thee, who hath something to say unto thee. Then the chief  
 captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside  
 privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?  
 20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou  
 wouldest bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as  
 though they would inquire 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 them-  
 selves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till  
 they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for  
 22 a promise from thee. So the chief captain *then* let the young

16. **Paul's sister's son.** This is the only reference to Paul's family and relatives in the Acts. In the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle speaks of *kinsmen* living in Rome (Rom. xvi. 7, 11). His friends here and afterwards at Cæsarea (xxiv. 23) appear to have been able to visit him, which shows that the authorities did not think him to be a criminal.

18. **Paul the prisoner.** The word used implies that the Apostle was still in chains, bound to a soldier for safe keeping. Paul used the term frequently (Eph. iii. 1, iv. 1; Philem. 9).

19. **Went with him, etc.** *And going aside asked him privately.*

21. **With an oath, under a curse,** as in verse 12.

**Now are they ready, looking for a (the) promise from thee.** They waited the expected promise, and made ready an ambuscade by which they hoped to get rid of Paul without the Sanhedrin having any apparent hand in the murder.

22. **And he called unto him.** Claudius Lysias, the prefect, took his measures with military promptitude. He ordered two centurions with 200 legionaries, 200 light-armed troops, skirmishers, and 70 cavalry to escort Paul to Cæsarea. It was a large escort, but there was fear of ambuscades. They started at 9 P.M., and after a 12 hours' march reached Antipatris, 42 miles away from the tumults of Jerusalem. The cavalry went on with Paul to Cæsarea, 26 miles farther, and the foot soldiers returned to the castle of Antonia. The meaning of the word translated "spearmen" can only be guessed at. It occurs only here and in two obscure writers in later Greek literature. It means literally "graspers by the right hand," and has been rendered (1) military victors who had charge of prisoners; (2) spearmen or lancers; (3) a species of light-armed troops, because they are once mentioned in connection with peltasts and archers.

man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou* tell no man that thou  
 23 hast showed these things to me. And he called unto *him*  
 two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers  
 to go to Cesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and  
 24 spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; and  
 provide *them* beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring  
 25 *him* safe unto Felix the governor. And he wrote a letter  
 after this manner :

26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix  
 27 *sendeth* greeting. This man was taken of the Jews, and  
 should have been killed of them : then came I with an army,  
 and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.  
 28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they  
 accused him, I brought him forth into their council :  
 29 whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law,  
 but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or  
 30 of bonds. And when it was told me how that the Jews laid  
 wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave com-  
 mandment to his accusers also to say before thee what *they*  
*had* against him. Farewell.

26. **Claudius Lysias.** Evidently a Greek, who, when he had bought a Roman citizenship, had taken the name Claudius.

**Felix**, brother to Pallas, the favourite of the Emperor Claudius. The brothers had been slaves, then freedmen, in the household of Antonia, the mother of Claudius. The influence of Pallas obtained the procuratorship of Judea for Felix, and shielded him from the consequences of his acts; for he governed, Tacitus says, "with the power of a tyrant in the temper of a slave." He came to Judea in 51 A.D., and remained till 60 A.D. Suetonius says that he married three queens--(1) Drusilla of Mauritania; (2) Drusilla, sister of Agrippa II. (compare Table of Herod family, p. 39); (3) a third princess whose name is not mentioned.

27. **Having understood that he was a Roman, having learned,** etc. Claudius Lysias is careful to conceal that he did not know that Paul was a Roman until he had tied him up for scourging; he makes it appear as if he originally interfered on behalf of a Roman citizen. Meyer considers this deviation from truth to be a convincing proof of the genuineness of the letter.

29. **Accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing worthy of death or of bonds.** Notice the Roman contempt for the religious dispute of a subject race, and the Roman anxiety for justice according to law; the prefect asserts that Paul was innocent of offences great or small.

30. **And when it was told me, etc.** *And when it was shown to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him straightway to thee.* Every officer reporting a prisoner had to state in formal letter the accusation: Lysias had no crime to charge against Paul, but the determined attempts on the part of the Jews to murder the Apostle seemed to call for inquiry.

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul,  
 32 and brought *him* by night to Antipatris. On the morrow  
 they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the  
 33 castle: who, when they came to Cesarea, and delivered the  
 epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.  
 34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what  
 province he was. And when he understood that *he was*  
 35 of Cilicia; I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are  
 also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's  
 judgment-hall.

CHAP. XXIV. I. And after five days Ananias the high priest  
 descended with the elders, and *with a certain orator named*  
 2 Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul. 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

II.—AT CÆSAREA—PAUL A PRISONER, xxiii. 31—xxvi. 32.

I. *Sent to Cæsarea*, xxiii. 31-35.

31. **Antipatris**, formerly Capharsaba (modern name Kefr Sâba), but rebuilt by Herod the Great, and called by him Antipatris in memory of his father Antipater. It lay in a well-watered, well-wooded portion of the valley of Sharon, and was connected with Jerusalem by a well-paved Roman road.

34. **And when the governor had read the letter.** *And when he had read it.* He asked of what province he was, to ascertain whether he had jurisdiction, for the case was one he would in all probability have gladly avoided. Cilicia had been attached during an earlier procuratorship to Syria, and perhaps was so in the time of Felix: at all events the procurator at once decided to hear the case.

35. **Herod's judgment-hall.** *Herod's palace.* The word is *prætorium*. It was either the building in which Felix himself lived, or was quite near to it (xxiv. 23). Paul was under honourable restraint, "a Roman and uncondemned."

2. *Paul's accusers before Felix*, xxiv. 1-9.

XXIV. I. **After five days.** After Paul's leaving Jerusalem.

**Ananias . . . with the elders**, *with certain elders*, of the Sadducean party.

**Tertullus** was probably a Roman advocate, who, like many in those days, went to the provinces to train himself by practising in provincial courts for work at Rome.

**Who informed the governor**, *i.e.* stated formally the charge which the Sadducees had to bring against Paul.

2. **And when he was called forth.** Omit *forth*. We say "when the case was called."

**To accuse him.** The speech contains (1) an introduction flattering Felix, and (2) a general accusation of immorality (a pestilent fellow), combined with three distinct grave charges (*a*) *rebellion* or sedition not confined to Palestine

- 4 all thankfulness. Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of  
 5 thy clemency a few words. For we have found this man a pestilent *fellow*, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the  
 6 Nazarenes: who also hath gone about to profane the temple; whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.  
 7 But the chief captain Lysias came *upon us*, and with great  
 8 violence took *him* away out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse  
 9 him. 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

(the tumults at Thessalonica, xvii. 6, and at Ephesus, xix. 28, would probably be cited). (b) *Heresy*, a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes (xviii. 13). (c) *Sacrilege*, profaning the temple (xxi. 28, 29).

Seeing that by thee we enjoy, etc. *Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and by thy wise foresight* (a word used to denote the care of an emperor, and therefore gross flattery), *evils are corrected for this nation, we acknowledge it in all ways and in all places.* . . . Felix had quelled several insurrections, but always with bloodthirsty severity.

5. **Nazarenes.** This is the first use of the word to denote by way of reproach the followers of Jesus Christ. It had been used of Jesus (Matt. ii. 23). The name is still used by Jews and Mohammedans.

6. **According to our law.** Tertullus represents the riot as a legal seizure and judgment of Paul according to Jewish law. The Revised Version omits the last clause of the 6th and the whole of the 7th verse, and reads, "*who moreover assayed to profane the temple: on whom also we laid hold: from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself,* etc.

8. **By examining of whom,** etc. *From whom thou wilt be able, by examining him, thyself to take knowledge . . . Whom* may be Paul, but more probably is Claudius Lysias. Compare verse 22.

### 3. *Paul's first defence; still a prisoner,* xxiv. 10-27.

10. **Forasmuch as I know,** etc. Paul's defence is as follows:—1st. *Sedition.* (a) Felix had been procurator for seven years, was well acquainted with all the seditions, and from personal knowledge could say that Paul had not been engaged in any of the insurrections (10); (b) he had only been twelve days in Palestine, or at least in Jerusalem, five of which he had spent in Roman custody, and had not had time, even if he had been so disposed, to engage in plots against the government (11); (c) he had come to worship, and had not engaged in discussion, nor *gathered a crowd* in synagogue nor in city (12, 13). 2nd. *Heresy.* He did belong to a *Way which they called a sect* (heresy). He was a *Christian*, one of the Way, but he worshipped

11 cheerfully answer for myself: because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up  
 12 to Jerusalem for to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the  
 13 people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: neither can  
 14 they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which  
 15 are written in the Law and in the Prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.  
 16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience

Jehovah, believed in *all things which are according to the Law, and which are written in the Prophets*, like his accusers, and especially in the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, which was a Jewish doctrine, though the Sadducees might disown it; he had acted conscientiously, and claimed the same toleration for his way of worship as was accorded to the other sects among the Jews; he had come to bring alms to his nation the Jews, not to wound their religious susceptibilities (14-17). 3rd. *Sacrilege*. He denies the charge; he was in the temple, purified, in the very act of performing a portion of Mosaic worship, performing the ceremonies of the Nazarite vow (18). 4th. He asks that those who had seen the offence, if any, the Jews of Asia, should be confronted with him (xxv. 16), or at least that his present accusers should state and prove facts within their own knowledge, and not repeat accusations founded on mere hearsay evidence. Their knowledge of him went no further than that they had heard him declare his belief in the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead.

11. **Twelve days**—(1) arrival in Jerusalem; (2) interview with the elders; (3) beginning of the *seven days* of purification; (4, 5, 6, 7) the seven days almost ended and the arrest; (8) before the Sanhedrin; (9) conspiracy; sent to Cæsarea; (10) brought to Felix; (11, 12) in the prætorium, (13) trial on the fifth day from leaving Jerusalem.

13. **Neither can they prove**, etc. Paul denied *seriatim* the charges brought against him, and challenged serious formal proof.

14. **After the way which they call heresy**. *After the Way which they call a sect*. The word translated heresy is the word translated sect in verse 5.

**Worship I**, etc. *Serve I the God of our fathers*. The word implies more than worship, it includes the active dedication of the whole life.

**Believing all things which are in the Law and in the Prophets**. The phrase *Law and Prophets* means the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, and Paul, in making the assertion, declared that he had not forsaken the religion of his fathers.

15. **And have hope toward God**, etc. *Having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there should be*, etc. Paul re-stated his belief in the resurrection, affirming it to be a cardinal doctrine of the Jewish faith from which he had never swerved. He was a more orthodox Jew than Sadducees who deny the resurrection.

16. **And herein do I exercise myself**. His belief in the resurrection was

- 17 void of offence toward God, and *toward* men. Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.
- 18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult: who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought
- 19 against me. Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil-doing in me, while I stood before the council,
- 20 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.
- 21
- 22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and said,

the field in which he trained himself to live a becoming life in God's presence, with the expectation of judgment before him. The fact of the resurrection was to him a stern solemnity, and modified his whole life and conduct.

17. **Now after many years.** At least three years had elapsed since his last visit to Jerusalem, and it had been a very brief sojourn (xviii. 22).

**To bring alms to my nation.** This is the only mention in the Acts of the sums of money which Paul had been collecting from the Gentile Churches; but the Epistles are full of allusions (Rom. xv. 25, 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4; 2 Cor. viii. 1-4). The allusion is abrupt, and is made evidently to show that a man who had been collecting sums of money to dispense among the poorer brethren was not what the Sadducees represented him to be.

**And offerings.** The sacrifices specially required by the Nazarite vow which Paul had undertaken, for they are connected in the text with the purification mentioned in the next verse.

18. **Whereupon certain Jews, etc.** Translate as follows:—*Amidst which (while engaged in distributing charity and in presenting offerings) they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd, nor yet with tumult; but there were certain Jews from Asia, who ought to have been here.* Paul pauses abruptly after mentioning these Asiatic Jews to ask why they are not present, who were the real beginners of the disturbance, and who now shrank from the consequences.

19. **And object, and to make accusation.**

20. **Or else let these same here say, etc.** *Or else let these men themselves say what wrong-doing they have found.* Paul's statement is that the only occasion on which his words were ever the cause of tumult in Jerusalem, was when he declared his belief in the resurrection. It is interesting to note how Paul comes back again and again to this: even in his legal defences he wishes to drive this wedge in between Pharisees and Sadducees, if by any means he can show the Pharisee how near they are, by their belief in this doctrine, to faith in Jesus.

**Evil-doing, wrong-doing.** The Sadducean accusers no doubt thought it wrong that he had declared his belief in the resurrection, but would they dare to accuse him in public because he held that belief? Paul desired nothing better, for then he would have had the multitude of his nation on his side.

22. **And when Felix, etc.** Read, *But Felix having more exact knowledge concerning the Way* (he had been long enough in Judea to know who the

When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will  
 23 know the uttermost of your matter. 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  
 24 come unto him. And after certain days, when Felix came  
 with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul,  
 25 and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he  
 reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,  
 Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time ; when  
 26 I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. He hoped  
 also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he  
 might loose him : wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and  
 27 communed with him. But after two years Porcius Festus

Christians were and what they believed ; compare his knowledge with the ignorance of Festus, xxv. 19), *deferred them* (adjourned the case), *saying, When Lysias . . . I will determine your matter. And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge and should have indulgence, and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him.*

24. **And after.** Read, *But after certain days Felix came with Drusilla, his wife . . . and sent for Paul.* Drusilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I., and sister of Herod Agrippa II. (xxv. 13) ; compare Table of the Herod Family, p. 39. Felix had induced her, through a magician called Simon, to desert her husband Azizus, king of Emesa, and, taking advantage of the Roman divorce laws, had married her. Drusilla had a son by Felix, and both mother and son perished by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D.

**Sent for Paul.** Felix was superstitious, and probably felt uneasy on hearing Paul's words about the resurrection of the just and the unjust ; and it is evident that Drusilla, with the curiosity of the Herods, wished to see and hear Paul, the Roman citizen and Jewish patriot, who had become a Christian.

25. **As he reasoned.** Paul spoke about—(1) *Righteousness*, upright conduct, and Felix had murdered a high priest, been tyrannical, taken bribes, and been an unjust ruler ; “relying on the influence of his brother at court, the infamous Pallas, this man acted as if he had a licence to commit every crime with impunity” (Tacitus) ; (2) *Temperance* (self-control, including specially continence and chastity), and Felix's unbridled passions were borne witness to by the presence of Drusilla ; the implacable Herodias had caused John the Baptist to be beheaded for acting as Paul was now doing ; (3) *The judgment to come* “upon every soul of man that worketh evil,” and Felix knew himself to be profligate, avaricious, and mean. His conscience was awakened only to be stifled ; he trembled or rather was *terrified* ; but it was the terror of superstitious cowardice, not of spiritual conviction.

26. **He hoped also.** His meanness mastered him, and his other interviews with Paul, full of half threats and half promises, were to extort money for doing an unjust act. He hoped that Paul would pay liberally for his release : he saw that he had numerous friends ; and that he had been able to bring sums of money from abroad to Jerusalem (verse 17).

27. **Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.** *And desiring to gain favour with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds.* The pro-



came into Felix' room : and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

CHAP. XXV. 1. Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cesarea to Jerusalem.  
 2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him  
 3 against Paul, and besought him, and desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in  
 4 the way to kill him. But Festus answered, that Paul should

curator withdrew his former indulgence, and Paul was no longer "at liberty" (verse 23). Nero had recalled Felix in consequence of repeated complaints made by the Jews against his tyranny, avarice, and cruelty. The complainers had a right to follow him to Rome and impeach his conduct before the Emperor, and Felix was no doubt anxious to gain their goodwill. His policy was unsuccessful : accusers followed him to Rome, he lost his province, but the influence of his brother Pallas saved him from further punishment. Felix' action was not uncommon. When Albinus, another tyrannical governor of Judea, heard that Gessius Florus had been appointed to succeed him, he liberated most of the state prisoners to conciliate the Jews.

Paul had been kept in prison—in *libera custodia*—for two years, able to see his friends and to transact business, but confined to the *prætorium*. We know nothing of his history during this period, but we may suppose that Luke was with him, and that the Evangelist and the Apostle had repeated conversations together, and that out of these talks Luke constructed that portion of the Acts of the Apostles which tells about Paul and his missionary labours. Others believe, but with slender grounds, that Paul wrote his Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon while a prisoner at Cæsarea : they were most likely written at Rome.

#### 4. Paul before Festus. The appeal to Cæsar, xxv. 1-12.

XXV. 1. Festus was made procurator by the Emperor Nero in 60 A.D., and died two years afterwards. He was a man of better character than most of the Roman procurators, and "had a straightforward honesty about him, which forms a strong contrast to the mean rascality of his predecessor." Josephus makes it evident that he was one of the best procurators ever sent out to Judea, and had not his death intervened he might have done something to avert the revolt into which the Jewish people were goaded by a succession of tyrannical rulers.

After three days he ascended, *went up*. He rested one day in Cæsarea, and on the third day went up to Jerusalem.

2. Then the high priest. *And the chief priests and principal men among the Jews* (the Sadducees were the aristocratic party) laid formal charges against Paul before the governor, begging that this case might, out of favour to them, get speedy and special consideration. They had still their old plan to murder Paul while on his way to trial (xxiii. 14-21).

3. And they besought him, and desired favour against him, *asking a favour against him*. They laid the formal charges against Paul before Festus, and asked as a boon to themselves, the chief men of the nation, that Paul should be brought to Jerusalem for trial, condemnation, and punishment.

4. That Paul should be, *that Paul was kept in charge at Cæsarea*. Festus

be kept at Cesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly  
 5 *thither*. Let them therefore, said he, which among you are  
 able, go down with *me*, and accuse this man, if there be any  
 6 wickedness in him. And when he had tarried among them  
 more than ten days, he went down unto Cesarea; and the next  
 day, sitting on the judgment-seat, commanded Paul to be  
 7 brought. And when he was come, the Jews which came  
 down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and  
 grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove;  
 8 while he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the  
 Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cesar, have  
 9 I offended any thing at all. But Festus, willing to do the  
 Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to  
 Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?  
 10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat, where I  
 ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as

refused to alter judicial arrangements on private requests, and declared that the case would be taken in regular fashion as Felix had left it.

5. **Let them, etc.** *Let them therefore, saith he, which are of power among you go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man let them accuse him.* Festus invited those Jews, who were invested with such official power as warranted them in saying that they could make public complaint against an accused person in the name of the Jewish people, to come to Cæsarea and state in public and in the usual formal way the charges against Paul which they had made privately to him in Jerusalem.

6. **More than ten days, not more than eight or ten days.** The period includes the whole time Festus spent in Jerusalem.

7. **The Jews, etc.** *The Jews which had come down* (in response to the invitation of Festus) *from Jerusalem, stood round about him* (a multitude of the most influential men in Palestine, against one man), *bringing against him many and grievous charges which they could not prove.* The charges are not mentioned, but what they were is evident from Paul's answer.

8. **While he answered for himself, etc.** *While Paul said in his defence, Neither against the law of the Jews . . . have I sinned at all.* The charges were the three made before Felix—*Heresy, Sacrilege, Sedition* (compare xxiv. 5-21).

9. **But Festus, etc.** *But Festus, desiring to gain favour with the Jews.* His proposal was an informal statement that there was no case against Paul. Paul had not committed any crime that Roman law could take cognisance of. Festus proposed that Paul should go before the Sanhedrin to answer on the charges of *heresy and sacrilege*, and that he, Festus, would see that the prisoner got a fair trial.

10. **I stand, etc.** *I have been and am standing before Cesar's judgment-seat, where I* (as a Roman citizen) *ought to be judged.* The procurator, by his proposal, had shown a bias in favour of his accusers, even in his own court, which did not promise a fair trial in another court where he was not fettered by the forms of Roman procedure.

11 thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed 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 unto Cesar.

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cesar? unto Cesar shalt thou go. And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice

13 came unto Cesarea to salute Festus. And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix;

14 about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, desiring to have judgment

15 against him. 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.

11. **For if, etc.** *If then I am a wrong-doer, and have . . . but if none of those things is true whereof these accuse me, no man may give me up to them as a favour. I appeal unto Cesar.* This right of appeal exercised by Paul was one of the most important privileges of a Roman citizen, for it protected him from capricious or false judgments of local judges. The prisoner did not require to go through any lengthy legal form. He had only to utter the word *Appello*, and proceedings were suspended. The local judge could neither condemn nor acquit him; the case was transferred to the imperial court.

12. **Conferred with the council.** With the legal assessors who were appointed in all provincial courts to advise the procurators on matters of Roman law.

5. *Paul and King Agrippa*, xxv. 13-xxvi. 32.

(a) *Festus and Agrippa*, xxv. 13-27.

13. **King Agrippa and Bernice.** This was Herod Agrippa II., the son of the man who had slain James, and who had died the horrible death in the palace in which the procurator lived. He ruled over a very small portion of his father's territories, the remainder had been made into the Roman province of Judea. See Section Map, p. 93. Bernice, like Drusilla, was Agrippa's sister. Compare Table of Herod Family, p. 39.

15. **To have judgment.** *Asking sentence against him.* The Jews had evidently asked Felix to condemn Paul at once without fair trial; Felix had not assented, and yet he had not acted impartially, and he felt it; Paul had said that no judge could *deliver* him over to his accusers, and Felix repeats the phrase in verse 16. The Jews had evidently made two proposals to Festus, (1) which he tells here, that he should condemn and punish Paul without trial; (2) that he should bring Paul to Jerusalem for trial there, purposing to themselves to have the Apostle assassinated on the road.

16. **It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man.** The procurator is somewhat ostentatious in the presence of the Jewish kinglet, and allows an undercurrent of contempt to run through his speech. The

17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on  
 the morrow I sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the  
 18 man to be brought forth. Against whom, when the accusers  
 stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I  
 19 supposed : but had certain questions against him of their own  
 superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul  
 20 affirmed to be alive. And because I doubted of such manner  
 of questions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem,  
 21 and there be judged of these matters. But when Paul had  
 appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I  
 commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cesar.

appeal to Cæsar, made at a time when he had proposed to transfer a trial of a Roman citizen from the Roman court to a Jewish tribunal, must have made him somewhat uneasy. The haughtiness, contempt, and uneasiness are all apparent in the short statement. He states the law clearly and fairly, having been before reminded by Paul of what it was : the accused is to be brought face to face with his accusers, and allowed his answer or *apologia* to their accusation or *indictment*.

17. They were come hither, *they were come together here.*

18. Of such things as I supposed, *of such evil things as I supposed.*

19. But had certain questions against him of their own superstition or religion. Agrippa had always shown himself zealous for the Jewish ceremonial worship, and Festus does not use a word so contemptuous as *superstition*. The word is the same used by St. Paul of the Athenians (xvii. 22).

And of one Jesus. This remark shows that we have only a short abstract of Paul's speech before the Sanhedrin or of his defence before Felix, for we are not told that he mentioned the name of Jesus ; and yet this name and the fact of Jesus' resurrection had made strongest lodgment in the mind of the Roman procurator.

20. And because I doubted, etc. *And I being perplexed how to inquire concerning these things, asked, . . . But when Paul had appealed to be kept for the decision of the Emperor.* Festus had already determined the outline of his report for the Emperor. It was difficult for him to justify his conduct in not releasing Paul at once, and in putting the government to the expense of an appeal to Cæsar, more especially as he had, to favour the Jews, proposed a new trial in Jerusalem. His defence to the Emperor is to be that the matter concerned the Jewish religion, that that religion being licensed as one of the forms under which it was lawful to worship *Divinitas* within the Roman Empire and under the protection of Roman law, questions relating to it must have place in a Roman court ; that he himself was unable to judge on a new point which had arisen, whether this *New Way* (Christianity) was legal as a form of Judaism, or was unlawful and punishable. Paul's argument before Felix went to show that his faith was the true faith of his fathers rightly completed by faith in Jesus. In later days Roman procurators would have had no difficulty, for Christianity was declared to be unlawful, and Constantine's recognition of our faith only amounted, at first at least, to a declaration that it was a form under which men might legally worship *Divinitas*, the very point which Festus felt himself unable to settle.

22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man  
 23 myself. To-morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him. 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' com-  
 24 mandment Paul was brought forth. And Festus said, King  
 Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see  
 this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have  
 dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and *also* here, crying that  
 25 he ought not to live any longer. 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,  
 27 I might have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me  
 unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the  
 crimes *laid* against him.

CHAP. XXVI. 1. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art per-  
 mitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the  
 hand, and answered for himself :

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall

22. **I would also.** *I was also myself wishing* (Luke xxiii. 2-11). The words imply that Agrippa had heard of Paul, and that he had been anxious for a long time to hear and see him.

23. **Chief captains, the commanders of cohorts.**

24. **Festus said, etc.** This speech of Festus is a clear official statement of the case, but it betrays that the procurator felt that his attempt to conciliate the Jews at the expense of an accused man had brought him into difficulties. His duty was to release Paul when the case had broken down. He had not done so, Paul had appealed, and Festus had now to state to the imperial court why he had not released Paul. He could not do this. He had to write a clear statement of the case to Cæsar, and he felt that it was unreasonable, and might get him into difficulties at Rome, to send a prisoner and not to be able to say what his crime was.

(b) *Paul and Agrippa*, xxvi. 1-32.

XXVI. 2. **I think myself happy.** This speech, like the address to the Jews, is a record of personal experience. After an introduction, in which the Apostle with frank courtesy expresses his pleasure in making a statement to one who knew the Jewish religion, its sects of Pharisees and Sadducees, its expectations of a Messiah, its ceremonial laws, the speech is divided into two by the 8th verse, and in each division Paul contrasts his own past with his present. (1) *a.* His early life was well known; he had been a strict Pharisee (4, 5; compare xxii. 3; Gal. i. 14; Phil. iii. 5, 6); *b.* Now he stands where he is, an accused person, because he believes that the Messiah and His kingdom, which

answer for myself this day before thee touching all the  
 3 things whereof I am accused of the Jews; especially  
*because I know thee to be expert in all customs and ques-*  
 4 *tions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee*  
 5 *to hear me patiently. My manner of life from my youth,*  
 6 *which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem,*  
 7 *know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning,*  
 8 *(if they would testify,) that after the most straitest sect of*  
 9 *our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am*  
 10 *judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our*

all his fellow-Jews are praying may come, has come. Here Agrippa may, by look, gesture, or word, have suggested, A crucified Messiah! and Paul have answered, No, but a risen Redeemer! Is it incredible that God should raise the dead? Hear how I was converted to be and believe what I now am and hold. Then follows—(2) *a.* I was a determined enemy to the Christians, and showed my enmity by persecution, imprisoning, voting death in the Sanhedrin, superintending punishments in synagogues, forcing Christians to abjure their faith, persecuting them in cities beyond Jerusalem, going to Damascus bent on further persecution (9-12); but, *b.* This happened: he tells the story of Jesus' appearance on the road to Damascus, of His commands and promises (13-18); and what could he do but obey? *c.* He became a preacher of Jesus and of His gospel of repentance in Damascus, in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Gentile lands (19, 20). *d.* For this reason, because he said that the Messiah had come, the Jews sought his life, and yet what he preached was what Moses and the prophets had taught;—that the Christ should suffer, should rise again, and having risen should be the Saviour of Jew and Gentile.

In this third account of Paul's conversion notice the new incidents introduced: (1) It was at *midday* (13); (2) the light was *above the brightness of the sun* (13); (3) it enveloped not only Paul but *those who journeyed with him* (13); (4) the *whole company fell to the earth* (14); (5) Jesus spoke in the *Hebrew tongue*; (6) He said, *It is hard for thee to kick against the goad* (14); and (7) a much fuller account of what Jesus said to him, and in particular how He commissioned him to preach to the Gentiles (16, 18). Read the several accounts in the Revised Version.

3. **Especially because I know thee to be expert.** *Especially because thou art expert.* A collection of quotations from rabbinical writings has been made by Sepp, proving that it was a tradition among the Jews that Agrippa II. excelled in his knowledge of the Law.

4. **My manner of life then from my youth up.** The Apostle insists on the fact that the Jews had known him long. He repeats the fact three times, and each time with a new setting: "He states first, *how long* the Jews had known him; secondly, *where* they had known him so long; and thirdly, *what* they had known of him so long and in that place" (Hackett).

5. **If they would testify;** but he has little hope now that they will bear evidence on his behalf.

6. **And now I stand and am judged.** *And now I stand here to be judged for the hope,* etc. His statement is that, as he was known of old as a disciple of the strictest orthodoxy, so it was his belief in the fulfilment of an old national hope that had brought him to the place where he now stood. The

7 fathers : unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving  
*God* day and night, hope to come : for which hope's sake,  
 8 king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be  
 thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise  
 9 the dead? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do  
 many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.  
 10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem : and many of the saints  
 did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the  
 chief priests ; and when they were put to death, I gave my  
 11 voice against *them*. And I punished them oft in every

national ardently-expected hope was guided by a promise made by God to the fathers that a Messianic kingdom would be established, and Paul in preaching Jesus Christ was but telling that the old hope had come true.

7. **Our twelve tribes.** The ten tribes were never lost : the Jews represented the twelve and not the two tribes ; Jewish rabbis could trace their descent to the tribe of Joseph ; Anna the prophetess was of the tribe of Asher (Luke ii. 36) ; while James addressed his Epistle to the twelve tribes in dispersion.

**For which hope's sake.** Paul had made the resurrection of Jesus the basis of his gospel of the Messianic kingdom, and this had enraged the Jews. They would not believe in that special resurrection, but had declared that Jesus was dead when Paul affirmed him to be alive (xxv. 19).

8. **Why should it be thought an incredible thing? Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?** An apostrophe introduced into the speech, and addressed as much to the Jews as to King Agrippa, and which prepares the way for Paul's confession of his own spiritual experience in his conversion from unbelief to faith. If God doth raise the dead, why should you not believe that He has raised Jesus? and if he has raised Jesus, has not the Crucified One become the Christ?

9. **I verily thought with myself.** Even I myself who now stand charged with the faith I now hold as if it were a crime—even I was of the same opinion with you once, and when under this delusion it was my own personal opinion ;—I had the self-delusion that I ought to exert myself to get the confession and invocation of the name of Jesus suppressed. “So great is the power even of the erring conscience” (Bengel). “Paul did not reason himself into Christianity by a chain of arguments, but was brought into the highest degree of assurance in it, immediately from the highest degree of prejudice against it ; by which it appeared, that he was made a Christian and a preacher by a supernatural power ; so that his conversion in such a miraculous way, was not only to himself, but to others also, a convincing proof of the truth of Christianity” (Matt. Henry).

10. **Which thing I also,** with pathetic emphasis full of mournful memories. **Were put to death.** Paul gives here three new facts about the persecution of the Christians which followed the death of Stephen. (1) Christians were put to death ; (2) they were punished, according to Jewish custom, in the presence of the judges who sat in the synagogues (Mark xiii. 9) ; (3) the persecution had extended to other cities besides Jerusalem.

11. **In every synagogue.** Going from one to another, to all the synagogues in Jerusalem and ferreting out Christians. The local Sanhedrin sat in the

synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and, being exceeding mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto  
 12 strange cities. Whereupon, as I went to Damascus with  
 13 authority and commission from the chief priests, at mid-day,  
 O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the  
 brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them  
 14 which journeyed with me. 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?  
 15 *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* And I said,  
 Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou  
 16 persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have

synagogues and were judges under Jewish law; punishment was administered in the presence of the judges, and therefore in the synagogues. Compare Matt. x. 17, xxiii. 34; Mark xiii. 9.

**And compelled them to blaspheme.** *I strove to make them blaspheme, or I went on trying to compel them to blaspheme.* The words indicate repeated attempts, but do not say that the attempts were successful.

**And being exceedingly mad against them.** "The words express with a wonderful vividness, Paul's retrospective analysis of his former state. It was not only that he acted in ignorance (1 Tim. i. 13); he might also plead the temporary insanity of madness."

**Even unto strange cities,** into cities outside of Judea, perhaps in Galilee and Samaria, and of these Luke and Paul single out Damascus, because of the events which followed the attempt to kindle the fires of persecution there.

**12. With the authority and commission.** Paul was, as Bengel remarks, the commissioner of the Jewish magistrates, with the district of Damascus assigned to him.

**13. Above the brightness of the sun.** The light of an Eastern noonday formed a darker background for this brilliancy of the light in which God dwelt.

**14. And when we were all fallen to the earth,** in terror rather than in reverence.

**I heard a voice speaking unto me and saying.** *I heard a voice saying unto me.*

**To kick against the pricks.** This is the passage in which the phrase originally occurs. See note on ix. 5. The words are a common Roman, Greek, and doubtless Jewish, proverb. The ordinary plough had but one handle, and the ploughman held the plough with one hand and had in the other a goad, six or eight feet long, which he carried horizontally, and against which a refractory ox would kick. This is how Jesus looks down from heaven on strong men who fancy that they are doing their own will, having their own way, and carrying everything before them. They are like oxen unbroken to the yoke which all must bear, and are simply punishing themselves.

**15. Who art thou, Lord?** "The readiness with which 'Lord,' an expression of allegiance, comes to the Apostle's lips, lends probability to the notion that God's promptings had been working in his heart before, and that the mad rage against *the Way* was an attempt to stifle them" (Lumby).

**16. But arise, and stand on thy feet, for.** There was no occasion for



appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and  
 17 of those things in the which I will appear unto thee ; deliver-  
 ing thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom  
 18 now I send thee, to open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from  
 darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God,  
 that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance  
 among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.  
 19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the  
 20 heavenly vision : but showed first unto them of Damascus,  
 and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea,

alarm (verse 14) ; he was to be summoned to new and nobler work. " Christ cast Paul down that he might humble him ; now He raises him and commands him to be of good courage " (Calvin).

**A witness, etc.** *A witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee.* These words of Jesus were constantly in Paul's thoughts. He was an Apostle because Jesus had appeared to him, taught him, and commissioned him (1 Cor. ix. 1, xv. 8). Paul had other visions besides the one on Damascus road (Acts xviii. 9, xxiii. 11 ; 2 Cor. xii. 2). Verses 16-18 perhaps condense what Jesus said to Paul (1) as he lay on the ground ; (2) by the mouth of Ananias ; (3) in the vision in the temple.

**17. The Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.** Paul was made Apostle to the Gentiles by Jesus when He first revealed Himself to him.

**18. To open their eyes and to turn them.** *To open their eyes that they may turn.* Notice that the Apostle's work was to convince and to enlighten ; it was the work of those enlightened to repent and turn from sin ; and the result of repentance was to be pardon and salvation through faith in Christ. Compare note on inheritance or lot, p. 107.

**19. Whereupon, i.e.** after having been instructed in such a manner.

**I was not disobedient.** The negative is used to imply the haste with which Paul obeyed. The service required to preach to Jews and Greeks was promptly rendered.

**20. But showed first, etc.** *But declared first, etc.* The sentence implies a long-continued activity, which is better brought out in the Greek, where the verb comes after the list of places in which Paul had acted as God's messenger or Apostle, and had delivered God's message.

**Unto them of Damascus, etc.** Paul rapidly summarizes his whole ministry from his conversion to the time when he was speaking, mentioning the places more interesting to the king. (1) Damascus (ix. 20 ; Gal. i. 17) ; (2) Jerusalem (ix. 29), and all the land of Judea (ix. 30), where we are told that Paul was sent to Tarsus, and had to pass through Judea ; (3) to the Gentiles.

**That they should repent, etc.** The three parts of every gospel message : (1) conviction of sin, with repentance and an honest resolve to turn from sin ; (2) faith or turning to God and trusting unreservedly to Him ; (3) living the life of new obedience wherein good works are the sign of living faith. It may be that Paul put the message of the gospel in a form like that delivered by John the Baptist, in order to attract and arrest a member of the family of the Herods.

and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to  
 21 God, and do works meet for repentance. For these causes  
 the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill  
 22 *me*. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto  
 this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none  
 other things than those which the prophets and Moses did  
 23 say should come; that Christ should suffer, *and* that he  
 should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should  
 show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.  
 24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud  
 voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make

21. The Jews caught me, *seized me*, violently and illegally.

22. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue. *Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand.* Divine or supernatural assistance, for such aid was needed to rescue a man in such desperate straits. There is the implied conviction and warning that the men in whose presence he stood could do no more to him than God permitted them to do.

Witnessing both to small and great, to men of every rank and condition of society, for God's grace is impartial, and his Apostle must offer it without respect of persons.

Which the prophets and Moses, *i.e.* the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures.

23. That Christ should suffer, *etc.* *Whether the Christ is subject to suffering, and whether He first, by the resurrection of the dead, should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.* Paul, speaking in presence of Agrippa, and addressing himself specially to him, approaches the question of the Messiahship of Jesus from the Jewish side and not from the Christian. The great body of the Jews had fixed their thoughts on the glories of the Messiah's reign to such an extent, that they could not think of the possibility of a suffering Saviour. Hence a Christian addressing Jews had first of all to prove that the Christ could suffer, that a suffering Messiah was a possible thing, for a Christ crucified was a constant stumbling-block to the Jews. Paul therefore, speaking to Jews, had to show two things—(1) that the Messiah was divinely destined to suffer, was *subject to suffering*; and (2) that the Messiah having suffered, and being the first-fruits of the resurrection from the dead, will proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles. These two questions had to be proved from Scripture, from Moses and the prophets, ere Paul could proceed to the final proof, that Jesus of Nazareth has suffered, has risen, and has enlightened Jew and Gentile, and therefore fulfils the Old Testament description of the Messiah.

24. And as he thus spake. Paul was proceeding to make good his proof from the Old Testament Scripture in what promised to be a lengthy argument, when he was contemptuously interrupted by Festus, who had got wearied of the whole affair.

Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. *Paul, thou art mad: thy much learning doth turn thee to madness.* The Athenians had ridiculed the idea of the resurrection (xvii. 32), the graver Roman thought that a man of culture and eloquence who ventured his life to preach such a doctrine must be a hair-brained enthusiast, and, with all the

25 thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus ;  
 26 but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. 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  
 27 him ; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa,  
 believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.  
 28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to  
 29 be a Christian. 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  
 31 governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them : and  
 when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves,  
 saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds.  
 32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been  
 set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cesar.

CHAP. XXVII. I. And when it was determined that we should

abruptness of a judge to a prisoner, he told him that he was mad. **Much learning**, for although there is no evidence of learning in what has been recorded of the speech, Paul had doubtless begun, by rapid and varied quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures, to prove his point.

25. **But speak (forth) the words of truth and soberness.** Words of truth as opposed to the hallucinations or fancies of a diseased mind ; soberness, of a sound mind (*sophrosyne*), the opposite of madness (*mania*). "If great and good men who meet with rude and insolent treatment in the defence of the gospel would learn to behave with such moderation, it would be a great accession of strength to the Christian cause" (Doddridge).

26. **Are hidden from him.** Paul appeals to facts which Agrippa knew, to the Old Testament Scriptures, to the life of Jesus, to His crucifixion, to His resurrection. He is going to repeat his argument from the prophets for the king's benefit, but is answered with disdain.

28. **Almost thou persuadest.** *With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian.* As if he said, Do you think you can make me become a Christian by your speech-making? He is like Festus, but has irony instead of bluntness. The Roman was contemptuously ignorant ; the king contemptuously indifferent. Neither were among the Gentiles whom Paul was to turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God.

31. **Were gone aside.** The procurator, the king, and probably the assessors (xxv. 12), conferred together, and were all of opinion that, judged by Roman, and perhaps even judged by Jewish law, Paul ought to be acquitted. But the appeal to Cæsar barred all further procedure, release as well as condemnation.

### III.—THE VOYAGE TO ROME, XXVII. I—XXVIII. IO.

#### I. *Cæsarea to Crete*, XXVII. I—12.

1. **Of Augustus' band.** This phrase has occasioned much difficulty—A

sail into Italy, they delivered Paul, and certain other prisoners,  
 2 unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. And  
 entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning  
 to sail by the coasts of Asia; *one* Aristarchus, a Macedonian  
 3 of Thessalonica, being with us. And the next *day* we touched  
 at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave  
 4 *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself. And  
 when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus,  
 5 because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed  
 over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a*  
 6 *city* of Lycia. And there the centurion found a ship of  
 7 Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. And

*centurion of the Sebaste.* The probable explanation is, *of a cohort of Cæsarea.* Sebaste is the Greek for Cæsarea.

2. **Of Adramyttium, etc.** *And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium* (a town on the coast of Mysia, opposite Lesbos) *which was about to sail to places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea.* This whole chapter ought to be read in the Revised Version. **Aristarchus**, xix. 29, xx. 4; Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24.

3. **Courteously entreated.** Paul had made a favourable impression on the officer, as on others who had to do with him (xviii. 14, xix. 31, 37). Compare xv. 3. The Apostle was still a prisoner going to Rome to appear before the Emperor; he had Luke and Aristarchus with him, and the promise of Christ to rely on (xxiii. 11).

4. **Under Cyprus.** Keeping between the mainland and Cyprus, that the island might break the force of the wind. See Map, p. 93. The course was (1) from Cæsarea to Sidon; (2) from Sidon, tacking in a contrary wind by the east side of Cyprus; (3) through the sea *off the coasts of Cilicia and Pamphylia* to (4) Myra. (5) There they embarked in a large Alexandria grain ship bound for Italy, which had apparently been driven far out of her course; (6) sailed tacking against the wind, making little progress till opposite Cnidus. (7) They then gave up the attempt to beat against the wind, and turned south to get to the south side of Crete to put that island between them and the wind; (8) getting safely into the Fair Havens, where Paul wished them to winter, but which was not a sheltered harbour.

6. **A ship of Alexandria,** bound directly for Italy with a cargo of wheat on board (ver. 38), a large vessel carrying 276 persons. It must have been one of the fleet of grain ships in use to carry Egyptian wheat to Italy. They were vessels of large size, and made regular voyages.

**He put us therein,** the word is a nautical term. Luke continually uses technical terms and with great skill. Mr. Hackett remarks that he uses not less than thirteen different verbs which agree in this, that they mark in some way the progress of the ship, but which differ inasmuch as they indicate its distance from the land, rate of motion, direction of wind, or some such circumstance, and that all are nautical expressions save three.

7. **When we had sailed slowly** (*with difficulty*) **many days.** The prevailing wind was north-west, which was contrary to their course; but it has been shown that even an ancient ship could work slowly along from Myra to Cnidus

when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed  
8 under Crete, over against Salmone; and, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called the Fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul  
10 admonished *them*, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of  
11 the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship,

in the smooth water which lay under the lee of the shore and in the westerly current which set in there. The word translated **slowly** describes this laborious navigation.

**Cnidus** was the name of a peninsula, and of a town on the end of it, which (the peninsula) projected from the Carian coast, having Cos on the north and Rhodes on the south. The town was a well-known seaport, and was devoted to the worship of Venus or Aphrodite.

**Under Crete over against Salmone.** Crete is the modern Candia, and Salmone (modern Capo Salomon) is a promontory at the eastern end of the island. After rounding Salmone, the wind was still against them, but they had again the advantage of a westerly current and the calm water along the coast, sheltered by the hills of the island from the wind.

8. **And hardly passing it, and with difficulty coasting along it.** It means Crete not Salmone, and the same adverb expresses the same struggle with the same difficulties that beset the voyage from Myra to Cnidus.

**The Fair Havens . . . Lasea.** These places are not mentioned in classical writings, but the names have been preserved by popular tradition, and the identity of the places confirmed by archæological research.

9. **Now when much time was spent, i.e.** from the beginning of the voyage from Cæsarea. It should be remembered that in New Testament times voyages were only attempted at special seasons of the year. They had expected to reach Italy before the beginning of the stormy season, and they were still far from their destination with the stormy season begun.

**The fast was already past.** The Jewish day of Atonement, in that year on the 24th of September, and the time of year was proverbially stormy in the Mediterranean.

**Paul admonished.** He knew the Mediterranean well, and had had experience of perils in the sea, three shipwrecks and a night and a day in the deep. He is speaking here not from Divine revelation, but simply from human experience. Compare 22-24, 31.

10. **Sirs, I perceive.** The verb expresses that Paul had been thinking over the whole matter, gone into the probabilities, and had drawn a conclusion in an ordinary common-sense way.

**With hurt and much damage,** better translate *with violence and much loss; violence or outrage* of wind and waves, and as a result, the *loss* of property and perhaps life.

11. **Master, sailing-master or pilot. The more part.** A consultation was held whether they would remain in the harbour, which lay open to many

12 more than those things which were spoken by Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there to winter; which is* an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south-west and north-  
13 west. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that

winds though sheltered from the north-west, or try to get to the safe harbour of Phoenix at the western end of the island.

12. If by any means. The majority who advised the attempt to reach Phoenix were by no means sure that it would be successful.

Phenice, better *Phoenix* (modern Lutro), a harbour in the south of Crete west from the Fair Havens.

Lieth toward the south-west and north-west, *lieth toward the north-east and south-east, or down the south-west wind and down the north-west wind.*

2. *The storm and shipwreck*, xxvii. 13-44.

13. And when the south wind, etc. Their course was:—(1) While in the Fair Havens the stormy north-west wind ceased, a gentle breeze came from the south, they set sail, meaning to steer close by the shore of Crete to the safe harbour of Phoenix (13); but (2) a violent north-east wind came down on the ship from over the hills of Crete, and they could not face it (the Greek is, *look the wind in the face*), and had to go before it (14, 15); (3) they ran under the shelter of Claudia, and there (16) (4) they managed to get their boat, which had been towed after them, on board (*to secure their boat*); then they got strong cables passed several times round the hull to strengthen the ship, and got all the rigging that was not wanted down on deck (not *strake sail* but *lowered the gear*) (16, 17); (5) the ship laboured in the gale, and they threw overboard part of the cargo (18); (6) on the third day, all hands, prisoners, soldiers, and sailors, threw overboard the heavier ship-gear (19); (7) the storm still raged, no sun nor stars could be seen for the clouds, they could not tell where they were, and no regular meals could be had (20); then Paul (8) comforted them by telling them his vision (21-26); (9) on the fourteenth night of the storm, the sailors, probably from the sound of breakers, thought they were getting near the land, sounded, and found the water getting shallower, and then cast out four anchors from the stern to prevent the ship rushing on shore (27-29); (10) the sailors ran to the boat to escape, while they left the others to their fate; Paul interfered; the soldiers cut the ropes, and the boat was swept away in the darkness (31, 32); (11) Paul again encouraged them, and got a regular meal served out to all (33-37); (12) then they lightened the great ship by casting the wheat-cargo into the sea (38); (13) daylight came, and they saw a bay with a beach, consulted whether they could safely run the ship on the shore, and resolved to try (39); (14) they got the mainsail up, got the rudder ready, cast off the anchors, and beached the ship (40); (15) the fore part stuck fast, but the hinder part was broken by the waves, and the 276 men were all huddled together on the fore part, the soldiers still guarding the prisoners (41); (15) as it seemed impossible to guard them further, the soldiers, who were required on penalty of death not to let their prisoners escape, proposed to kill them, but the centurion would not allow it (42, 43); (16) then by swimming on planks, or on rafts of broken ship-timbers, they all got safe to land (43, 44).

they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed  
 14 close by Crete. But not long after there arose against it a  
 15 tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. And when the ship  
 was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her*  
 16 drive. And running under a certain island which is called  
 17 Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: which  
 when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the  
 ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands,  
 18 strake sail, and so were driven. And we being exceedingly  
 tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship;  
 19 and the third *day* we cast out with our own hands the tackling

14. There arose, etc. *There beat down from it (Crete) a tempestuous wind which is called Euraquilo.* The word translated *tempestuous* is *typhonic*, whence our word typhoon. Pliny says that the sudden blasts of the Mediterranean produce a vortex which is called a typhoon.

15. And could not bear up into the wind. *And could not face the wind, or could not look the wind in the eye.*

We let *her* drive. *We gave way to it, and were driven.* All attempts to guide the ship were abandoned, and it was carried helplessly whither the wind drove it.

16. A certain island which is called Clauda or Cauda, now Gozzo; it lies about 23 miles to the south-west of Crete.

We had much work to come by the boat. *We were able with difficulty to secure the boat.* In the ships of the ancients the boat was usually towed behind, and it was a well-known difficulty to get it on board in a storm; and from the use of the word *we*, it appears that the passengers as well as the sailors helped.

17. Which when they had taken up, etc. *And when they had hoisted it up, they used helps undergirding the ship.* The *helps* were strong flat cables called *hypo-zomata*, which were passed round the hull of the ship in four or five turns to support it in a great storm, or otherwise when in danger. All ancient ships carried these cables. In modern times the practice is rare, but it was common enough to require a special word to denote the process, "to frap."

Lest they should fall into the quicksand. *Lest they should be cast on the Syrtis.* The Greater and Lesser Syrtis on the north coast of Africa, the one west of Cyrene, the other nearer Carthage; they were the dread of Mediterranean sailors in Roman times. The verse does not imply that the ship was then near the Syrtis. It is the Greater Syrtis that is here meant.

Strake sail. *Lowered the gear* or heavy upper spars and rigging.

18. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest. *And as we laboured exceedingly with the storm.*

They lightened the ship. *They began to throw the freight overboard.* The phrase is nautical, to denote lightening a labouring ship by throwing overboard part of the cargo. "See what the wealth of this world is; how much soever it is courted as a blessing, the time may come when it will be a burden, not only too heavy to be carried safe of itself, but heavy enough to sink him that has it. Riches are often kept by the owners thereof to their hurt, and parted with to their good" (Matt. Henry).

19. We cast out with our own hands. *They cast out with their own hands.*

- 20 of the ship. 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
- 22 loss. 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 God, whose I
- 24 am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them

It was a work that only sailors could do. The danger resulted from the imperfect naval construction of the times, which made foundering from loosened timbers a peril to which all seafarers were exposed in a storm. Ships which had weathered storms sometimes went down suddenly afterwards, in consequence of damages received during the gale. This must have happened to Paul in one of his voyages, when he was "a day and a night in the deep" (2 Cor. xi. 25).

20. **And when neither sun nor stars, etc.** *And when neither sun nor stars shone upon us for many days.* These ancient ships had no compasses, and the sun and stars were their only guides when they were out of sight of land.

21. **After long abstinence.** *When they had been long without food.* Had no regular meals.

**Paul stood forth.** Paul interfered four times, twice unsuccessfully and twice successfully; twice speaking from his own ordinary experience and native sense, twice to tell his vision which promised them all safety in the end. Compare verses 10, 21-26, 31, 33-35. He, a prisoner, had advised wintering at the Fair Havens, and although his advice was rejected it was discussed (10); in the midst of the storm he alone was calm, able to encourage his companions by his message from God, and to insist that they will not give way to despair, but keep up their strength for what is before them (21-26); he alone seems to have had the presence of mind to prevent the escape of the sailors (31); and on the terrible night when they heard breakers near them, when all were worn out with fatigue and want of food, when all were in despair, he heartened them, got food served, and prepared them all for a final effort when day should come (33-36).

23. **Whom I serve.** Paul was a servant of God, in His hands, and so he was cheerful when others were disturbed; trustful, for he believed God's promise (25); sympathizing, for the Lord Jesus had died for these soldiers and sailors as well as for him, and courageous to confess God (*an angel of the God whose I am* (23) . . . gave thanks to God in presence of them all (35)).

24. **God hath given thee.** *God hath granted thee.* Paul had been praying for himself and for his companions, and he had got his twofold request. He was to stand before Cæsar, and therefore was to be brought safely through present danger, and in answer to his prayers his companions were to be saved for his sake. "It is easier for many bad men to be saved with a few godly ones, than for one good man to perish with many bad. The world resembles this ship" (Bengel). Seek souls and they shall be given thee beyond thine expectation.



25 that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer : for I  
 26 believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit  
 27 we must be cast upon a certain island. But when the  
 fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in  
 Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew  
 28 near to some country ; and sounded, and found *it* twenty  
 fathoms : and when they had gone a little farther, they  
 29 sounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms. Then fearing  
 lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors  
 30 out of the stern, and wished for the day. 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  
 31 cast anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion

25. **Be of good cheer : for I believe God.** Faith made Paul both captain and pilot of the ship ; and as courage is infectious, Paul's words and example infused new courage into their despairing hearts.

26. **When the fourteenth night was come,** from their leaving the Fair Havens.

27. **Adria** was a name given to the wide sweep of the Mediterranean lying between Greece, Italy, and Africa. The name is now confined to the Gulf of Venice.

**The shipmen deemed, etc.** *The sailors surmised that they were drawing near to some country,* probably from the noise of breakers.

28. **And they sounded.** It is said that the rate of decrease is found off the shore of St. Paul's Bay in Malta.

29. **Then fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks.** *And fearing lest haply we should be cast ashore on rocky ground.*

**They cast four anchors out of the stern.** To anchor safely on a lee shore requires an anchorage ground of extraordinary tenacity. It is interesting to know that the anchorage in St. Paul's Bay, Malta, is described in *The Sailing Directions* as follows :—"The harbour of St. Paul is open to easterly and north-east winds. It is, notwithstanding, safe for small ships, the ground generally being very good ; and while the cables hold, there is no danger, as the anchors will never start." The English war-ships were anchored from the stern at the battle of Copenhagen, and it is said that Lord Nelson declared after the battle that he had been led to adopt that unusual plan because he had been reading the 27th chapter of the Acts, which had suggested the idea to him.

30. **And as the shipmen, etc.** Translate : *And as the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea under colour as though they would lay out anchors from the foreship or prow.* They would have been allowed to desert the helpless passengers had not Paul seen their design.

31. **Ye cannot be saved.** God had promised Paul that all should be saved, but man had to do his share to make the promise come true. "Duty is ours, events are God's ; and we do not trust God but tempt Him, when we say we put ourselves under His protection and do not use the means, such as are within our power, for our own preservation" (Matt. Henry).

and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot  
 32 be saved. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat,  
 33 and let her fall off. 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,  
 34 having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take *some*  
 meat; for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair  
 35 fall from the head of any of you. And when he had thus  
 spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of  
 36 them all; and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat. Then  
 were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.  
 37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and  
 38 sixteen souls. And when they had eaten enough, they  
 39 lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea. And  
 when it was day, they knew not the land; but they discovered

33. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them. When daylight came there was hard work before them all, and Paul knew that strength must be supported and husbanded for the severe strain that had to be undergone; a meal eaten together would also hearten them, and they had had no regular food for many days.

That ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. *That ye wait and continue fasting, having,* etc. "Weak and trembling Christians, that give way to doubts and fears about their spiritual state, continue fasting from the Lord's Supper, and fasting from Divine consolations, and then complain they cannot go on in their spiritual work and warfare . . . if they would feed and feast, as they ought, upon the provision Christ has made for them, they would be strengthened, and it would be for their souls' health and salvation" (Matt. Henry).

34. Take some meat: for this is for your health. *Take some food: for this is for your safety.* Paul promises them that they shall all be saved alive, but they must work for their lives, and to work they must be hearty and strong. What a leader of men Paul appears! A captive going to judgment, he naturally becomes the heart and soul of the company when they have abandoned themselves to listless despair.

35. He took bread, and gave thanks. These words used on another occasion would imply that Paul dispensed the Lord's Supper; here they seem to mean that Luke and others felt the common meal, in all the circumstances of terror and hope, made a thanksgiving service by Paul's prayer. He ate in presence of them all, to put heart into the despairing crew who had just been prevented deserting the ship.

38. When they had eaten enough. *When they were filled with food.* They at once began to work, sailors, soldiers, and prisoners, to lighten the ship by throwing the cargo overboard.

39. They discovered a certain creek with a shore. They perceived a *certain bay with a beach*, such a sandy beach as would suit them to run the ship ashore; for the coast, it is evident from the narrative, was for the most part unsafe for such an attempt.

Into the which they were minded, etc. Translate: *And they took counsel*

a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, 40 if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands, and hoised up the main-sail to 41 the wind, and made toward shore. And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground: and the fore part stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part 42 was broken with the violence of the waves. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim 43 out and escape. 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 44 get to land: and the rest, some on boards, and some *on broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

*whether they could drive the ship upon it (or they could bring the ship safe to shore). And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the fore-sail to the wind, they made for the beach. But lighting on a place . . .*

40. Loosed the rudder-bands. Ancient ships had two rudders, great broad-bladed oars, which were fastened to the sides of the stern by ropes in such way that they could be easily worked. The rudders had been got on deck and secured while the anchors were out; now they were made ready again for use.

The main-sail. The Greek word was used to denote the largest sail, which corresponded to the modern fore-sail.

41. Where two seas met. The land from the ship appeared continuous, but part of it was an island separated from the land by a narrow channel with a strong current. This current meeting the opposing water, had made a shoal on which the fore part of the ship stuck, while the hind part was in deep water and exposed to the force of the current. In these circumstances the ship parted, the whole crew and passengers having had warning, and crowding the fore part, which was fast on the shoal or mudbank. They were thus still at a considerable distance from the land.

42. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners. If any of the prisoners escaped, the soldiers in charge paid for their negligence with their lives; each prisoner was chained to the soldier who was responsible for him. Compare xii. 19, xvi. 27.

43. But the centurion, etc. *But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose.* He had been kindly disposed towards Paul from the first (verse 3), and the events of the voyage had bound him still more closely to the Apostle. "As God had saved all in the ship for Paul's sake, so here the centurion saves all the prisoners for his sake; such a diffusive good is a good man."

And commanded, etc. *And commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves overboard and get first to the land.* A wise provision, for then they would be ready to help those who, unable to swim, floated themselves ashore on planks and on other things from the ship.

CHAP. XXVIII. I. And when they were escaped, then they knew  
 2 that the island was called Melita. And the barbarous people  
 showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received  
 us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the  
 3 cold. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and  
 laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and  
 4 fastened on his hand. 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  
 5 escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. And  
 6 he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. How-  
 beit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down

3. *In Malta, xxviii. 1-10.*

XXVIII. I. **Melita.** Malta is now universally accepted as the scene of Paul's shipwreck. "On the north coast of Malta there is a promontory called Koura Point, which a ship drifting, as the one in which Paul was did, would just pass. The shore is too low to be seen at night, but the spot is well known for its breakers. Immediately after passing it, the depth is actually 20 fathoms, and a little farther 15 fathoms. . . . A pebbly beach lies just where Paul's companions saw it (xxvii. 39); and the narrow channel between the little island of Salmonetta and the mainland has exactly the appearance of 'a place where two seas meet' (41). The identification is complete at every point. The bay between Koura Point and Salmonetta is still called *St. Paul's Bay*" (Stock).

2. **Barbarous people.** They probably spoke a dialect of old Phœnician or Punic, and were therefore *barbarians* to Romans and Greeks.

3. **Bundle of sticks.** An armful of brushwood. Paul is never idle; always first when there is work to do.

**There came a viper, etc.** *A viper came out by reason of the heat.* It had been torpid.

4. **This man is a murderer.** They could see that he was a prisoner, under the charge of soldiers, and they rushed to the conclusion that though he had escaped the waves, God had reserved him for a more terrible fate.

**Saw the venomous beast, saw the beast;** there is no word corresponding to venomous in the original. The text does not say that the viper bit Paul, and it is apparent that the Apostle shook off the animal in an unconcerned manner. To have escaped biting in such a case was almost as much a miracle as to have been bitten and not suffered from the bite.

**Yet vengeance suffereth not to live.** *Yet justice hath not suffered to live.* They looked on the death as certain, and speak of it in the past tense.

**And he shook off.** *Howbeit he shook off.* The words do not tell us whether Paul was bitten or not; he escaped all danger.

6. **Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen or fallen down dead suddenly.** *But they expected that he would have swollen* (inflamed), etc. Sudden collapse and death are characteristic of the bites of some serpents.

"Trembling she stood, and on the sudden dropped,"

is the description given by Shakespeare of the effects of the asp-bite on Cleopatra.

dead suddenly : but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius ; who received us, and  
8 lodged us three days courteously. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux : to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on  
9 him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed :  
10 who also honoured us with many honours ; 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,

**But after they had looked a great while, etc.** *But when they were (or had been) long in expectation, and beheld nothing amiss come to him.* They gazed long, with the expectation in the gaze that death was to take place every moment.

**That he was a god.** Compare the thoughts of the people of Lycaonia, Acts xiv. 11-15.

7. **In the same quarters, etc.** *Now in the neighbourhood of that place were lands belonging to the governor of the island, named Publius.* The town nearest to St. Paul's Bay is Alta Vecchia. Publius is called *Protos*, which is translated in the Authorized Version by *chief man*, and in the Revised Version by *governor*. The term must have been a local one ; it is not found in ancient literature ; but it has been found on inscriptions in Malta. These inscriptions have led scholars to the opinion that *Protos* was the Maltese term for *prefect*, and that Luke with his usual accuracy has preserved it. Other inscriptions discovered later, make it doubtful whether the *Protos* was the chief magistrate, or one who after having been magistrate had been thought worthy of an honorary title and rank corresponding to the Roman *Patronus*.

8. **Sick of a fever, etc.** *Sick of fevers and dysentery, or of agueish fever and dysentery.* The plural *fevers* was used technically to express those fevers which came in fits of fever one after another.

**Prayed and laid his hands on him.** Compare Jas. v. 14, 15, and Mark xvi. 18.

9. **Others also, the rest also ;** all who were in sickness during their three months' stay.

**Came and were healed.** *Kept coming.* The Maltese had hospitably received the shipwrecked strangers, and God rewarded them with healing (Heb. xiii. 2, 3).

10. **Honoured us with many honours . . . such things as were necessary.** Christ had commanded his Apostles to take no money for such services as Paul had rendered ; and the gratitude of the people was restrained to providing the necessary outfit for the shipwrecked company.

#### IV.—AT ROME, XXVIII. II-31.

##### I. *Arrival at Rome, xxviii. 11-16.*

11. **A ship of Alexandria.** Another of the Alexandrian grain ships ; this

which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and  
 12 Pollux. 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  
 14 next day to Puteoli: where we found brethren, and were  
 desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went  
 15 toward Rome. 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 delivered the  
 prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered  
 to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

one had Castor and Pollux, *the Twin Brothers*, sailor divinities, for its figure-head.

12. **Syracuse.** The most flourishing town in Sicily. The wind became unfavourable. See Map, p. 93.

13. **Fetched a compass,** *tacked to and fro*, the wind being unfavourable. This seems to be the best translation of a somewhat difficult word.

Rhegium was an Italian seaport (Rheggio) opposite the north-east point of Sicily.

Puteoli (Pozzuoli), 8 miles south-west from Naples, was the principal harbour south of Rome in St. Paul's days. It was the port at which the Egyptian grain ships usually unloaded.

14. **Where we found the brethren.** The Christian Church had been spreading all over the empire in places where its planting is unrecorded in the book of Acts; these brethren forwarded the news to Rome, and the Roman Christians came out to meet the Apostle, who, now that he was near Rome and had gone through so many dangers, felt a little sinking of the heart. The meeting refreshed him (Acts xviii. 5; 2 Cor. ii. 13, vii. 6; Rom. i. 11, 12, xv. 32). Appii Forum was 43 miles, and the Three Taverns was 33 miles from Rome.

16. **The centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard.** These words ought to be omitted, as they are not in the oldest MSS. The verse therefore will read: *And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.*

**The captain of the guard.** *The captain of the Prætorian guard.* Whether the clause be authentic or not, it states what must have been done. It was one of the duties of the Prefect of the Prætorium, or chief of the imperial body-guard, to receive and take charge of all prisoners from the provinces. The office was filled at this time by Burrus, the friend and colleague of Seneca, and a man of high and noble character. The command of the Prætorian guards had been divided originally between two prefects, but in the reign of Claudius the sole command was given to Burrus Afranius, who retained it till 62 A.D. at least. If Burrus, and not a subordinate officer, be meant by the captain of the guard, then the use of the word in the singular is another instance of Luke's wonderful accuracy in details.

Paul was suffered to dwell by himself. Roman law permitted this in-

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men *and* brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into  
18 the hands of the Romans: who, when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, because there was no cause of  
19 death in me. But when the Jews spake against *it*, I was constrained to appeal unto Cesar; not that I had aught to  
20 accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that for  
diligence to prisoners not suspected of very serious offences. Paul first retired to a friend's house (verse 23), and then rented an apartment for himself (verse 30).

With the soldier who guarded him, to whom he was fastened by a chain. Different soldiers relieved each other of this duty; and Paul tells us that he gradually became known to the greater number of the imperial body-guard (Phil. i. 12, 13).

2. *Intercourse with the Jews, xxviii. 17-29.*

17. **Called the chief of the Jews.** Paul wished to explain his own position to his countrymen in order to preach Christ to them. He said (1) that although a prisoner, under appeal to the emperor, he had done nothing unpatriotic or irreligious tested by Jewish standards; (2) that the Romans after examination had declared that he was innocent, and would have let him go, but for the Jews of Jerusalem; (3) that he had appealed to Cæsar, not to accuse the conduct of his countrymen, but only to save his own life; (4) that he was a prisoner because he accepted Jesus as the Messiah of his nation, and regarded His rising again from the dead as evidence both of the doctrine of the resurrection and of the Messiahship of Christ.

18. **Would have let me go.** Compare xxv. 9, xxvi. 32. The speech of Paul is of course given in very brief outline, and we have only a summary of the recital of what happened to him in the courts of justice.

19. **When the Jews spake against it.** The Apostle describes with great mildness and courtesy the opposition of his fellow-countrymen. He uses throughout the address conciliatory words and phrases, *brethren, the people, our fathers, the hope of Israel, not that I have ought to accuse my nation of.*

**Not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.** Paul had no wish to be an instrument in the hands of Roman tyranny; he was a patriotic Jew; he knew the hardships his people had suffered in Rome, whence they had been banished several times, and to which they had only recently been allowed to return. His appeal was not to involve any complaint against the Jewish nation.

20. **Hope of Israel.** "The hope for which he suffered was twofold: (1) the expectation of the Messiah as bringing in a kingdom of heaven, which was cherished by every Israelite; (2) the hope of a resurrection from the dead, which he proclaimed as attested by *the* resurrection, which proved (Rom. i. 3, 4) that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God" (Plumptre).

**Bound with this chain.** Prisoners on appeal from the provinces were kept in the Prætorium. Paul was allowed to live *in custodia libera*, not in

21 the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, nor any of the brethren that came showed  
22 or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.

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  
24 till evening. And some believed the things which were  
25 spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not

prison but in a hired apartment of his own, probably within the Prætorium. He was always chained to a soldier, and this was galling both to mind and body (Eph. iii. 1, iv. 1; Phil. i. 13, 16; Col. iv. 18; Philem. 1, 9, 10).

21. **Neither any of the brethren, nor did any of the brethren** (Jews not Christians) *come hither and report or speak any harm of thee.* This is quite easily understood when we remember that Paul had been sent off almost immediately after his appeal and at the latest part of the travelling season. The Jews at Jerusalem had not had time to inform their brethren in Rome about Paul.

22. **This sect.** The word *sect* is the same as *heresy*. It means simply *party*; and when the Jews of Rome apply the word to the Christians, it means that they looked upon them as a division of Judaism, like the Sadducees, Pharisees, or Essenes. The Roman Jews must have known something about Christianity; Roman Jews were at the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit, and had carried back the gospel to Rome; there was a Christian Church at Rome, and Jewish Christians among the disciples. Why then were the Roman Jews so reserved and conciliatory? The commonly-received answer is, that they lived in Rome in a state of great insecurity. They had but recently been allowed to return from banishment. Some think (compare p. 99) that the decree of banishment had been occasioned by tumults caused by the unbelieving Jews attacking their Christian fellow-countrymen. They saw Paul respected by imperial officers; they felt themselves obliged to be very careful to avoid all show of disturbance.

23. **Had appointed him a day.** They fixed the day, Paul making the suggestion, doubtless.

**To his lodging,** not to his own hired house (verse 30), but to a house where he stayed as guest.

**To whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God.** *To whom he expounded the matter, testifying the kingdom of God.* Paul had told them that for the sake of the Messianic hope of Israel he was bound with the chain that held him; he now expounded that this hope was from the Old Testament, and showed how at each stage it was fulfilled in the kingdom of Jesus the Christ. He spoke what Festus and Agrippa had refused to hear (xxvi. 22-28); and his audience, or at least part of it, was sympathetic, for they remained long time with him.

24. **Some believed.** *Some were persuaded* by Paul persuading them.

25. **Well spake the Holy Ghost, etc.,** Isa. vi. 9. The passage had been



among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet  
26 unto our fathers, saying,

Go unto this people, and say,  
Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand ;  
And seeing ye shall see, and not perceive :  
27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross,  
And their ears are dull of hearing,  
And their eyes have they closed ;  
Lest they should see with *their* eyes,  
And hear with *their* ears,  
And understand with *their* heart,  
And should be converted,  
And I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and  
30 had great reasoning among themselves. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all  
31 that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

quoted by Christ against the Jews. Matt. xiii. 14; Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10.

28. **They will hear it, they will also hear.** They will hear as well as you. Paul does not end with a threat. He has fulfilled the command to begin at Jerusalem; he has preached to the Jews first in Rome, the centre of the world, and now the Gentiles must also hear the message.

29. **And when, etc.** This verse ought to be omitted, as it is not to be found in the best MSS.

### 3. *Paul the prisoner at Rome*, xxviii. 30, 31.

30. **Two whole years.** Luke gives no account of these years; he had brought Paul to Rome, the gospel had reached the centre of the known world, and that is what concerned the writer. From the Epistles we can gather that he wrote to the Philippians, to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon: that beside Luke and Aristarchus (Acts xxvii. 2), he had the companionship of Timothy (Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; Philem. 1), of Tychicus (Eph. vi. 21), of Epaphroditus (Phil. iv. 18), and of Mark (Col. iv. 10).

**In his own hired house.** Paul received aid in money from the Church at Philippi (Phil. iv. 14, 18).

31. **With all confidence, no man forbidding him.** The phrase implies that Paul, though a prisoner, was allowed complete freedom of speech, and that Paul used his liberty to speak out boldly to all who came to him to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. He tells us himself that other Christians who saw a bound prisoner speak so freely were encouraged by his example, and that the gospel spread (Phil. i. 12-14).



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