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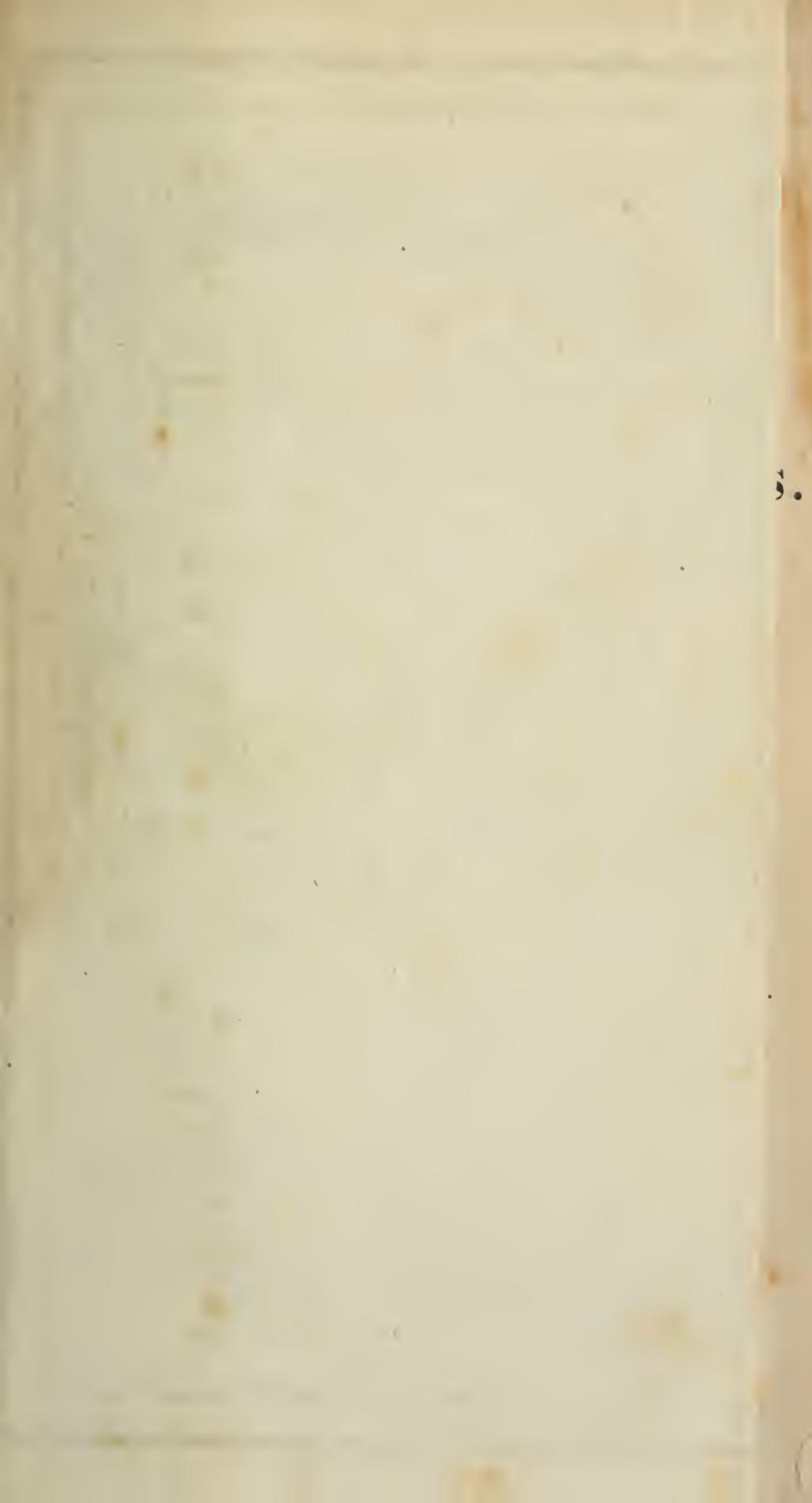
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NOTES

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL,

ON THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

DESIGNED FOR

BIBLE-CLASSES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

✓
BY ALBERT BARNES.

VOL. II.

NEW YORK:

LEAVITT, LORD & CO., No. 180 BROADWAY.

BOSTON:

CROCKER & BREWSTER, 47 WASHINGTON STREET.

1835.

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PHILADELPHIA.

PRINTED BY D. FANSHAW,
NO. 119 NASSAU-STREET,
NEW YORK.

THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

VOLUME II.

CONTAINING THE LAST FOURTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XV.

AND^b certain men which came

^b Gal.2.12.

CHAPTER XV.

1. *And certain men.* These were men undoubtedly who had been Jews, but who were now converted to Christianity. The fact that they were willing to refer the matter in dispute to the apostles and elders (ver. 2), shows that they had professedly embraced the Christian religion. The account which follows is a record of the first internal dissension which occurred in the Christian church. Hitherto they had been struggling against external foes. Violent persecutions had raged, and had fully occupied the attention of Christians. But now the churches were at peace. They enjoyed great external prosperity in Antioch. And the great enemy of souls took occasion then, as he has often done in similar circumstances since, to excite contentions in the church itself; so that when external violence could not destroy it, an effort was made to secure the same object by internal dissension and strife. The history, therefore, is particularly important, as it is the record of the first unhappy debate which arose in the bosom of the church. It is further important, as it shows the

down from Judea, taught the brethren, *and said*, Except^c ye be

^c Jno.7.22.

manner in which such controversies were settled in apostolic times; and as it established some very important principles respecting the perpetuity of the religious rites of the Jews. ¶ *Came down from Judea.* To Antioch, and to the regions adjacent which had been visited by the apostles. ver. 23. Judea was a high and hilly region, and going from that toward the level countries adjacent to the sea, was represented to be descending or going down. ¶ *Taught the brethren.* That is, Christians. They endeavoured to *convince* them of the necessity of keeping the laws of Moses. ¶ *Except ye be circumcised.* This was the leading or principal rite of the Jewish religion. It was indispensable to the name and privileges of a Jew. Proselytes to their religion were circumcised as well as native-born Jews, and they held it to be indispensable to salvation.—It is evident from this, that Paul and Barnabas had dispensed with this rite in regard to the Gentile converts, and that they intended to found the Christian church on the principle that the Jewish ceremonies were to cease. When, however, it was necessary to conciliate

circumcised after ^a the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they deter-

^a Lev. 12.3.

the minds of the Jews and to prevent contention, Paul did not hesitate to practise circumcision. ch. xvi. 3. ¶ *After the manner of Moses.* According to the custom which Moses commanded; according to the Mosaic ritual. ¶ *Ye cannot be saved.* The Jews regarded this as indispensable to salvation. The grounds on which they would press it on the attention of Gentile converts would be very plausible, and such as would produce much embarrassment. For, (1.) It would be maintained that the laws of Moses were the laws of God, and were therefore unchangeable; and, (2.) It would doubtless be maintained that the religion of the Messiah was only a completing and perfecting of the Jewish religion;—that it was designed simply to carry out its principles according to the promises, and not to subvert and destroy any thing that had been established by divine authority.—It is usually not difficult to perplex and embarrass young converts with questions of modes, and rites, and forms of religion; and it is not uncommon that a revival is followed by some contention just like this. Opposing sects urge the claims of their peculiar rites, and seek to make proselytes, and introduce contention and strife into an otherwise peaceful and happy Christian community.

2. *Had no small dissension and disputation.* The word rendered *dissension* (στῆσις) denotes sometimes sedition or intestine war, and sometimes earnest and violent disputation or controversy. Acts xxiii. 7. 10. In this place it clearly denotes that there was earnest and warm discussion; but it is *not* implied that there was any improper heat or temper on the part of Paul and Barnabas. Important principles were to be settled in regard to the organization of the church. Doctrines were advanced by the Judaizing teachers which were false, and which tended to great strife and disorder in the church. Those doctrines were urged with great zeal, were declared to be essential to salvation, and would therefore tend greatly to distract the minds of Christians, and to produce great anxiety. It became therefore necessary to meet them with a determined purpose, and to establish the truth on an immovable

basis.—And the case shows that it is right to “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3); and when similar cases occur, it is proper to resist the approach of error with all the arguments which may be at our command, and with all the weapons which truth can furnish. It is further implied here, that it is the duty of the ministers of the gospel to defend the truth and to oppose error. Paul and Barnabas regarded themselves as set for this purpose (comp. Phil. i. 17, “Knowing that I am set for the *defence* of the gospel”); and Christian ministers should be *qualified* to defend the truth; and should be willing with a proper spirit and with great earnestness to maintain the doctrines revealed. ¶ *They determined.* There was no prospect that the controversy would be settled by contention and argument. It would seem, from this statement, that those who came down from Judea were also willing that the whole matter should be referred to the apostles at Jerusalem. The reason for this may have been, (1.) That Jerusalem would be regarded by them as the source of authority in the Christian church, as it had been among the Jews. (2.) Most of the apostles and the most experienced Christians were there. They had listened to the instructions of Christ himself; had been long in the church; and were supposed to be better acquainted with its design and its laws. (3.) Those who came from Judea would not be likely to acknowledge the authority of Paul as an apostle: the authority of those at Jerusalem they would recognise. (4.) They might have had a very confident expectation that the decision there would be in their favour. The question had not been agitated there. They had all been Jews. And it is certain that they continued as yet to attend in the temple service, and to conform to the Jewish customs. They might have expected therefore, with great confidence, that the decision would be in their favour, and they were willing to refer it to those at Jerusalem. ¶ *Certain other of them.* Of the brethren; probably of each party. They did not go to debate; or to give their opinion; or to vote in the case themselves; but to lay the question fairly before the apostles and elders. ¶ *Unto the*

^b Gal. 2.1.

3 And being ^a brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion ^b of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy ^c unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and

^a Rom. 15. 24. 1 Cor. 16. 6, 11. 3 Jno. 6.
^c Luke 15. 7, 10.

^b c. 14. 27.

elders; and they ^d declared all things that God had done with them.

5 But ¹ there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, ^e That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

^d c. 21. 19.
^e ver. 1.

¹ or, rose up, said they, certain.

apostles. The authority of the apostles in such a case would be acknowledged by all. They had been immediately instructed by the Saviour, and had the promise of infallible guidance in the organization of the church. Notes, Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18. ¶ *And elders.* Note, ch. xi. 30. *Gr. Presbyters.* See Note, ch. xiv. 23. Who these were, or what was their office and authority, it is not easy now to determine. It may refer to the *aged* men in the church at Jerusalem, or to those who were appointed to rule and to preach in connexion with the apostles. As in the synagogue it was customary to determine questions by the advice of a bench of elders, there is no improbability in the supposition that the apostles would imitate that custom, and appoint a similar arrangement in the Christian church. (*Grotius.*) It is generally agreed that this is the journey to which Paul refers in Gal. ii. 1—10. If so, it happened fourteen years after his conversion. Gal. ii. 1. It was done in accordance with the divine command, “by revelation.” Gal. ii. 2. And among those who went with him was Titus, who was afterwards so much distinguished as his companion. Gal. ii. 3. ¶ *About this question.* The question whether the ceremonial laws of Moses were binding on Christian converts. In regard to the nature and design of this council at Jerusalem, see Note on ver. 30, 31.

3. *And being brought on their way by the church.* Being attended and conducted by the Christian brethren. See Note, Rom. xv. 24. It was customary for the Christians to attend the apostles in their travels. Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 6. 11. 3 John 6. ¶ *Through Phenice.* Note, ch. xi. 19. ¶ *And Samaria.* These places were directly on their route to Jerusalem. ¶ *Declaring the conversion, &c.* Of the Gentiles in Antioch, and in the regions in Asia Minor through which they had travelled. These remarkable events they would naturally communicate with joy to the Christians with whom they would have intercourse

in their journey. ¶ *Caused great joy.* At the news of the extensive spread of the gospel. It was an indication of their deep feeling in the interests of religion, that they thus rejoiced. Where Christians are themselves awake, and engaged in the service of Christ, they rejoice at the news of the conversion of sinners. Where they are cold, they hear such news with indifference, or with the utmost unconcern. One way of testing our feelings on the subject of religion is, by the emotions which we have when we hear of extensive and glorious revivals of religion. Comp. Note, Acts viii. 8.

4. *They were received of the church.* By the church, in a hospitable and friendly manner. They were acknowledged as Christian brethren, and received with Christian kindness. See Gal. ii. 9. ¶ *And they declared.* Paul and Barnabas, and those with them. That is, they stated the case; the remarkable conversion of the Gentiles, the evidence of their piety, and the origin of the present dispute.

5. *But there rose up, &c.* It has been doubted whether these are the words of Paul and Barnabas, relating what occurred at Antioch; or whether they are the words of Luke, recording what took place at Jerusalem. The correct exposition is probably that which refers it to the latter. For, (1.) This seems to be the most obvious interpretation. (2.) The use of the words “rose up” implies that. Those who disturbed the church at Antioch are said to have come down from Judea (ver 1); and if this place referred to that occurrence, the same words would have been retained. (3.) The particular specification here of “the sect of the Pharisees,” looks as if this was an occurrence taking place at Jerusalem. No such specification exists respecting those who came down to Antioch; but it would seem here, as if this party in Jerusalem resolved still to abide by the law, and to impose those rites on the Christian converts. However, this interpretation is

6 And the apostles and elders came together, ^a for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know ^b 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.

^a Matt. 18. 20.

^b Matt. 16. 18, 19. c. 10. 20.

by no means certain. ¶ *Which believed.* Who maintained, or taught. ¶ *That it was needful, &c.* Note, ver. 1.

6. *And the apostles and elders, &c.* They came together in accordance with the authority in Matt. xviii. 19, 20. It would seem, also, that the whole church was convened on this occasion; and that they concurred, at least, in the judgment expressed in this case. See ver. 12, 22, 23. ¶ *For to consider this matter.* Not to decide it arbitrarily, or even by authority, without deliberation; but to compare their views, and to express the result of the whole to the church at Antioch. It was a grave and difficult question, deeply affecting the entire constitution of the Christian church, and they therefore solemnly engaged in deliberation on the subject.

7. *Much disputing.* Or rather, much inquiry, or deliberation. With our word *disputing* we commonly connect the idea of heat and anger. This is not necessarily implied in the word used here. It might have been calm, solemn, deliberate inquiry; and there is no evidence that it was conducted with undue warmth or anger. ¶ *Peter rose up and said.* Peter was probably the most aged, and was most accustomed to speak. ch. ii. 14, &c. iii. 6. 12. Besides, there was a particular reason for his speaking here, as he had been engaged in similar scenes, and understood the case, and had had evidence that God had converted sinners *without* the Mosaic rites, and knew that it would have been inexpedient to have imposed these rites on those who had thus been converted. ¶ *A good while ago.* See ch. x. Some time since. So long since that there had been opportunity to ascertain whether it was necessary to observe the laws of Moses in order to the edification of the church. ¶ *God made choice, &c.* That is, of all the apostles, he designated me to engage in this work. Comp. Note, Matt. xvi. 18, with Acts x. ¶ *That the Gentiles.* Cornelius, and those who were

8 And God, which ^c knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying ^d their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke ^e upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

^c c. 1. 24.

^d Heb. 9. 13, 14. 1 Pet. 1. 22.

^e Gal. 5. 1.

assembled with him at Cæsarea. This was the first case that had occurred, and therefore it was important to appeal to it.

8. *And God, which knoweth the hearts.* ch. i. 24. God thus knew whether they were *true* converts or not, and gave a demonstration that he acknowledged them as his. ¶ *Giving them the Holy Ghost, &c.* ch. x. 45, 46.

9. *And put no difference, &c.* Though they had not been circumcised, and though they did not conform to the law of Moses. Thus God showed that the observance of these rites was not necessary in order to the true conversion of men, and to acceptance with him. He did not give us, who are Jews, any advantage over them, but justified and purified all in the same manner. ¶ *Purifying their hearts.* Thus giving the best evidence that he had renewed them, and admitted them to favour with him. ¶ *By faith.* By believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. This showed that the plan on which God was now about to show favour to men, was not by external rites and ceremonies, but by a scheme which required faith as the only condition of acceptance. It is further implied here, that there is no true faith which does not purify the heart.

10. *Why tempt ye God?* Why provoke him to displeasure? Why, since he has shown his determination to accept them *without* such rites, do you provoke him by attempting to impose on his own people rites without his authority, and against his manifest will? The *argument* is, that God had already accepted them. To attempt to impose these rites would be to provoke him to anger; to introduce observances which he had shown it was his purpose should now be abolished. ¶ *To put a yoke.* That which would be burdensome and oppressive, or which would infringe on their just freedom, as the children of God. It is called in Gal. v. 1, "a yoke of bondage." Note, Matt. xxiii. 4.

11 But we believe that through ^a 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 ^b among the Gentiles by them.

^a Rom. 2.34. Eph. 2.8. Tit. 3.4,5.

^b c. 14.27.

A *yoke* is an emblem of slavery or bondage (1 Tim. vi. 1); or of affliction (Lam. iii. 27); or of punishment (Lam. i. 14); or of oppressive and burdensome ceremonies, as in this place; or of the restraints of Christianity. Matt. xi. 29, 30. In this place they are called a *yoke* because, (1.) They were burdensome and oppressive; and, (2.) Because they would be an infringement of Christian freedom. One design of the gospel was to set men free from such rites and ceremonies. The yoke here referred to is not the moral law, and the just restraints of religion; but the ceremonial laws and customs of the Jews. ¶ *Which neither our fathers, &c.* Which have been found burdensome at all times. They were expensive, and painful, and oppressive: and as they had been found to be so, it was not proper to impose them on the Gentile converts, but should rather rejoice at any evidence that the people of God might be delivered from them. ¶ *Were able to bear.* Which are found to be oppressive and burdensome. They were attended with great inconvenience, and many transgressions, as the consequence.

11. *But we believe.* We apostles, who have been with them, and have seen the evidences of their acceptance with God. ¶ *Through the grace, &c.* By the grace or mercy of Christ alone, without any of the rites and ceremonies of the Jews. ¶ *We shall be saved, even as they.* In the same manner, by the mere grace of Christ. So far from being necessary to their salvation, they are really of no use in ours. We are to be saved not by these ceremonies, but by the mere mercy of God in the Redeemer. They should not, therefore, be imposed on others.

12. *Then all the multitude.* Evidently the multitude of private Christians who were assembled on this occasion. That it does not refer to a synod of ministers and elders merely, is apparent, (1.) Because the church, the brethren, are represented as having been present, and concurring in the final opinion (ver. 22, 23);

T

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me:

14 Simeon hath declared ^c how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, ^d

^c Lu. 2.31,32.

^d Am. 9.11,12.

and, (2.) Because the word *multitude* (ἡ πλῆθος) would not have been used in describing the collection of apostles and elders merely. Comp. Luke i. 10, 11. 13; v. 6; vi. 17; xix. 37. John v. 3; xxi. 6. Acts iv. 32; vi. 2. Matt. iii. 7. ¶ *Gave audience.* Heard, listened attentively to. ¶ *Barnabas and Paul.* They were deeply interested in it; and they were qualified to give a fair statement of the facts as they had occurred. ¶ *Declaring what miracles and wonders, &c.* The argument here evidently is, that God had approved their work by miracles; that he gave evidence that what they did had his approbation; and that as all this was done without imposing on them the rites of the Jews, so it would follow that those were not now to be commanded.

13. *James answered.* James the Less, son of Alphaeus. See Note, ch. xii. 1. ¶ *Hearken unto me.* This whole transaction shows that Peter had no such authority in the church as the Papists pretend, for otherwise his opinion would have been followed without debate. James had an authority not less than that of Peter. It is possible that he might have been next in age (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 17); and it seems morally certain that he remained for a considerable part of his life in Jerusalem. Acts xii. 17; xxi. 18. Gal. i. 19; ii. 9. 12.

14. *Simeon.* This a Hebrew name. The Greek mode of writing it commonly was *Simon*. It was one of the names of Peter. Matt. iv. 18. ¶ *To take out of them a people.* To choose from among the Gentiles those who should be his friends.

15. *The words of the prophets.* Amos ix. 11, 12. It was a very material point with them, as Jews, to inquire whether this was in accordance with the predictions of the Scriptures. The most powerful revivals of religion, and the most striking demonstrations of the divine presence, will be in accordance with the Bible; and should be tested by them. This habit was always manifested by the apostles and early Christians, and should

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up :

be followed by Christians at all times. Unless a supposed work of grace accords with the Bible, and can be defended by it, it must be false, and should be opposed. Comp. Isa. viii. 20.

16. *After this.* This quotation is not made literally either from the Hebrew, or the Septuagint, which differs also from the Hebrew. The 17th verse is quoted literally from the Septuagint; but in the 16th the general sense only of the passage is retained. The *main point* of the quotation, as made by James, was, to show that according to the prophets it was contemplated that *the Gentiles* should be introduced to the privileges of the children of God; and on this point the passage has a direct bearing. The prophet Amos (ix. 8—10) had described the calamities that should come upon the nation of the Jews, by their being scattered and driven away. This implied that the city of Jerusalem, and the temple, and the walls of the city should be destroyed. But *after that* (Heb. "on that day," ver. 11, that is, the day when he should revisit them, and recover them), he would restore them to their former privileges; would rebuild their temple, their city, and their walls. ver. 11. And not only so, not only should the blessing descend on the Jews, but it should also be extended to others. The "remnant of Edom," "the heathen upon whom" his "name would be called" (Amos ix. 12), should also partake of the mercy of God, and be subject to the Jewish people; and a time of general prosperity and of permanent blessings should follow. Amos ix. 13—15. James understands this as referring to the times of the Messiah, and to the introduction of the gospel to the Gentiles. And so the passage (Amos ix. 12) is rendered in the Septuagint. See ver. 17. ¶ *I will return.* When the people of God are subjected to calamities and trials, it is often represented as if God had *departed* from them. This *returning*, therefore, is an image of their restoration to his favour, and to prosperity. This is not, however, in the Hebrew, in Amos ix. 11. ¶ *I will build again.* In the calamities that should come upon the nation (Amos ix. 8), it is implied that the temple and the city should be destroyed. To build them again would be a proof of his returning favour. ¶ *The tabernacle of*

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

David. The *tent of David.* Here it means the house, or royal residence of David, and the kings of Israel. That is, he would restore them to their former glory and splendour, as his people. The reference here is not to the *temple*, which was the work of Solomon; but to the magnificence and splendour of the dwelling place of David; that is, to the full enjoyment of their former high privileges and blessings. ¶ *Which is fallen down.* Which would be destroyed by the captivity under the king of Babylon, and by the long neglect and decay resulting from their being carried to a distant land. ¶ *The ruins thereof.* Heb. "close up the breaches thereof." That is, it should be restored to its former prosperity and magnificence; an emblem of the favour of God, and of the spiritual blessings that should in future times descend on the Jewish people.

17. *That the residue of men.* This verse is quoted literally from the Septuagint, and differs in some respects from the Hebrew. The phrase "the residue of men" here, is evidently understood, both by the LXX. and by James, as referring to others than Jews, to the Gentiles. The *rest* of the world—implying that many of them would be admitted to the friendship and favour of God. The Hebrew is, "that they may possess the remnant of Edom." This change is made in the Septuagint by a slight difference in the reading of two Hebrew words. The LXX., instead of the Hebrew וירשנו, *shall inherit*, read יררשך, *shall seek of thee*; and instead of ארם, *Edom*, they read אדם, *Man*, or *mankind*, i. e. men. Why this variation occurred, cannot be explained; but the sense is not materially different. In the Hebrew, the word *Edom* has undoubted reference to another nation than the Jewish; and the expression means, that in the great prosperity of the Jews, after their return, they should extend the influence of their religion to other nations; that is, as James applies it, the *Gentiles* might be brought to the privileges of the children of God. ¶ *And also the Gentiles.* Heb. All the heathen; i. e. all who were not Jews. This was a clear prediction that other nations were to be favoured with the light of the true religion, and that without any mention of their con-

18 Known^a unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which

^a Num. 23. 19. Isa. 46. 10.

forming to the rites of the Jewish people. ¶ *Upon whom my name is called.* Who are called by my name, or who are regarded by me as my people. ¶ *Who doeth all these things.* That is, who will certainly accomplish this in its time.

18. *Known unto God, &c.* Note, ch. i. 24. The meaning of this verse, in this connexion, is this. God sees every thing future; he knows what he will accomplish; he has a plan; and all his works are so arranged in his mind, that he sees all things distinctly and clearly. As he foretold these, it was a part of his plan; and as it was a part of his plan long since foretold, it should not be opposed and resisted by us.

19. *My sentence.* Gr. I judge (*κρίνω*); that is, I give my opinion. It is the usual language in which a judge delivers his opinion; but it does not imply here that James assumed authority to settle the case, but merely that he gave his opinion, or counsel. ¶ *That we trouble not them.* That we do not molest, disturb, or oppress them, by imposing on them unnecessary and burdensome rites and ceremonies.

20. *That we write unto them.* Expressing our judgment, or our views of the case. This verse has greatly perplexed commentators. The main grounds of difficulty have been, (1.) Why fornication—an offence against the moral law, and about which there could be no dispute—should have been included; and, (2.) Whether the prohibition to abstain from blood is still binding. ¶ *That they abstain.* That they refrain from these things, or wholly avoid them. ¶ *Pollutions of idols.* The word rendered *pollutions* means any kind of defilement. But here it is evidently used to denote the flesh of those animals that were offered in sacrifice to idols. See ver. 29. That flesh, after being offered in sacrifice, was often exposed for sale in the markets, or was served up at feasts. 1 Cor. x. 25—29. It became a very important question whether it was *right* for Christians to partake of it. The Jews would contend that it was, in fact, partaking of idolatry. The Gentile converts would allege that they did not eat it *as a sacrifice* to idols, or

from among the Gentiles are turned^b to God:

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of^c idols, and *from* fornication,^d

^b 1Thess. 1. 9. ^c Ex. 20. 4, 5. 1Cor. 8. 1, &c. 10. 28. Rev. 2. 14, 20; 9. 20. ^d 1Cor. 6. 9, 18. Col. 3. 5 1Thess. 4. 3.

lend their countenance in any way to the idolatrous worship where it had been offered. See this subject discussed at length in 1 Cor. viii. 4—13. As idolatry was forbidden to the Jews in every form, and as partaking even of the sacrifices to idols, in their feasts, might seem to countenance idolatry, the Jews would be utterly opposed to it; and for the sake of peace, James advised that they be recommended to abstain from this. To partake of that food might not be *morally* wrong (1 Cor. viii. 4), but it would give occasion for scandal and offence; and, therefore, as a matter of *expediency*, it was advised that they should abstain from it. ¶ *And from fornication.* The word used here (*πορνεία*) is applicable to all illicit intercourse; and may refer to adultery, incest, and licentiousness in any form. There has been much diversity of opinion in regard to this expression. Interpreters have been greatly perplexed to understand why this violation of the *moral* law has been introduced amidst the violations of the *ceremonial* law; and the question is naturally asked, whether this was a sin about which there could be any debate between the Jewish and Gentile converts? Were there any who would practise it, or plead that it was lawful? If not, why is it prohibited here? Various interpretations have been proposed. Some have supposed that James refers here to the *offerings* which harlots would make of their gains to the service of religion, and that James would prohibit the reception of it. Beza, Selden, and Schleusner suppose the word is taken for *idolatry*, as it is often represented in the Scriptures as consisting in unfaithfulness to God, and as it is often called adultery. Heringius supposes that marriage between idolaters and Christians is here intended. But, after all, the usual interpretation of the word, as referring to illicit intercourse of the sexes of any kind, is undoubtedly here to be retained. There is no reason for departing from the ordinary and usual meaning of the word. If it be asked, then, why *this* was particularly forbidden, and was introduced in this connexion, we may reply, (1.) That this vice prevailed every where among the Gentiles, and

and from things strangled, and from ^a blood.

21 For Moses of old time hath

^a Lev. 17. 14. Deut. 12. 16, 23.

was that to which all were particularly exposed. (2.) That it was not deemed by the Gentiles disgraceful. It was practised without shame, and without remorse. Terence, Adolph. 1, 2. 21. See Grotius. It was important, therefore, that the pure laws of Christianity on this subject should be known, and that special pains should be taken to instruct the early converts from paganism in those laws. The same thing is necessary still in heathen lands. (3.) This crime was connected with religion. It was the practice not only to introduce indecent pictures and emblems into their worship, but also for females to devote themselves to the service of particular temples, and to devote the avails of indiscriminate prostitution to the service of the god, or the goddess. The vice was connected with no small part of the pagan worship; and the images, the emblems, and the customs of idolatry every where tended to sanction and promote it. A mass of evidence on this subject, which sickens the heart—but which would be too long and too indelicate to introduce here—may be seen in Tholuck's *Nature and Moral Influence of Heathenism*, in the *Biblical Repository*, for July, 1832, pp. 441—464. As this vice was almost universal; as it was practised without shame or disgrace; as there were no laws among the heathen to prevent it; as it was connected with all their views of idol worship, and of religion; it was important for the early Christians to frown upon and to oppose it, and to set a peculiar guard against it in all the churches. It was the sin to which, of all others, they were the most exposed, and which was most likely to bring scandal on the Christian religion. It is for this cause that it is so often and so pointedly forbidden in the New Testament. Rom. i. 29. 1 Cor. vi. 13. 18. Gal. v. 19. Eph. v. 3. 1 Thess. iv. 3. ¶ *And from things strangled.* That is, from animals or birds that were killed without shedding their blood. The reason why these were considered by the Jews unlawful to be eaten was, that thus they would be under a necessity of eating blood, which was positively forbidden by the law. Hence it was commanded in the law, that when any beast or fowl was taken in a snare, the blood should be poured out before it was lawful to be eaten. Lev. xvii. 13. ¶ *And from blood.*

in every city them that preach him, being ^b read in the synagogues every sabbath-day :

^b c. 13. 15, 27.

The eating of blood was strictly forbidden to the Jews. The reason of this was that it contained *the life*. Lev. xvii. 11. 14. See Note on Rom. iii. 25. The use of *blood* was common among the Gentiles. They *drank* it often at their sacrifices, and in making covenants or compacts. To separate the Jews from them in this respect was one design of the prohibition. See Spencer, *De Leg. Hebræ.* pp. 144, 145. 169. 235. 377. 381. 594. Ed. 1732. See also this whole passage examined at length in Spencer. pp. 588—626. The primary reason of the prohibition was, that it was thus used in the feasts and compacts of idolaters. That blood was thus drank by the heathens, particularly by the Sabians, in their sacrifices, is fully proved by Spencer, *De Leg.* pp. 377—380. But the prohibition specifies a *higher* reason, that the *life* is in the blood, and that *therefore* it should not be eaten. On this opinion see Note, Rom. iii. 25. This reason existed before any ceremonial law; is founded in the nature of things; has no particular reference to any custom of the Jews; and therefore is as forcible in any other circumstances as in theirs. It was proper, therefore, to forbid it to the early Christian converts; and for the same reason its use should be abstained from every where. It adds to the force of these remarks, when we remember that the same principle was settled before the laws of Moses were given; and that God regarded the fact that the life was in the blood as of so much importance as to make the shedding of it worthy of death. Gen. ix. 4—6. It is supposed, therefore, that this law is still obligatory. Perhaps also there is no food more unwholesome than blood; and it is a further circumstance of some moment that all men naturally revolt from it as an article of food.

21. *For Moses.* The meaning of this verse is, that the law of Moses, prohibiting these things, was read in the synagogues constantly. As these commands were constantly read, and as the Jewish converts would not soon learn that their ceremonial law had ceased to be binding, it was deemed to be a matter of expediency that no needless offence should be given to them. For the sake of peace, it was better that they should abstain from meat offered to idols than to give offence

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, ^a and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

23 And wrote *letters* by them after this manner: The apostles and elders, and brethren, *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of

a c. 1. 23.

to the Jewish converts. Comp. 1 Cor. viii. 10—13. ¶ *Of old time.* Greek, From ancient generations. It is an established custom; and therefore his laws are well known, and have, in their view, not only the authority of revelation, but the venerableness of antiquity. ¶ *In every city.* Where there were Jews. This was the case in all the cities to which the discussion here had reference. ¶ *Them that preach him.* That is, by reading the law of Moses. But in addition to *reading* the law, it was customary also to offer an *explanation* of its meaning. See Notes on Luke iv. 16—22.

22. *Then it pleased.* It seemed fit and proper to them. ¶ *The apostles and elders.* To whom the business had been particularly referred. ver. 2. Comp. ch. xvi. 4. ¶ *With the whole church.* All the Christians who were there assembled together. They *concurred* in the sentiment, and expressed their approbation in the letter that was sent. ver. 23. Whether they were *consulted*, does not particularly appear. But as it is not probable that they would volunteer an opinion unless they were consulted, it seems most reasonable to suppose that the apostles and elders submitted the case to them for their approbation. It would seem that the apostles and elders deliberated on it, and decided it; but still, for the sake of peace and unity, they also took measures to ascertain that their decision agreed with the unanimous sentiment of the church. ¶ *Chosen men.* Men chosen for this purpose. ¶ *Of their own company.* From among themselves. Greater weight and authority would thus be attached to their message. ¶ *Judas, surnamed Barsabas.* Possibly the same who was nominated to the vacant place in the apostleship. ch. i. 23. But Grotius supposes that it was his brother. ¶ *And Silas.* He was afterwards the travelling companion of Paul. ver. 40. ch. xvi. 25. 29; xvii. 4. 10. 15. He is also the same person, probably, who is mentioned by the

T 2

the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia:

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain ^b which went out from us have troubled ^c you with words, ^d subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom ^e we gave no *such* commandment:

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send

b ver. 1. c Gal. 5. 12. d Gal. 5. 4. e Gal. 2. 4. |

name of *Silvanus*. 2 Cor. i. 19. 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1. 1 Pet. v. 12. ¶ *Chief men among the brethren.* Greek, *Leaders*. Comp. Luke xxii. 26. Men of influence, experience, and authority in the church. Judas and Silas are said to have been *prophets*. ver. 23. They had, therefore, been engaged as preachers and rulers in the church at Jerusalem.

23. *And wrote letters.* Greek, *Having written*. It does not mean that they wrote more than one epistle. ¶ *By them.* Greek, *By their hand*. ¶ *After this manner.* Greek, *These things*. ¶ *Send greeting.* A word of salutation, expressing their desire of the happiness (*χαίρειν*) of the persons addressed. Comp. Matt. xxvi. 49; xxvii. 29. Luke i. 28. John xix. 3. ¶ *In Antioch.* Where the difficulty first arose. ¶ *And Syria.* Antioch was the capital of Syria, and it is probable that the dispute was not confined to the capital. ¶ *And Cilicia.* Note, Acts vi. 9. Cilicia was adjacent to Syria. Paul and Barnabas had travelled through it; and it is probable that the same difficulty would exist there which had disturbed the churches in Syria.

24. *Forasmuch.* Since we have heard. ¶ *That certain.* That some. ver. 1. ¶ *Have troubled you with words.* With doctrines. They have disturbed your minds, and produced contentions. ¶ *Subverting your souls.* The word here used occurs nowhere else in the New Testament (*ἀναστρέφειν*). It properly means to collect together the vessels used in a house—the household furniture—for the purpose of removing it. It is applied to marauders, robbers, and enemies, who remove and bear off property; thus producing distress, confusion, and disorder. It is thus used in the sense of disturbing, or destroying; and here denotes that they unsettled their minds; that they produced anxiety, disturbance, and distress, by these doctrines about Moses. ¶ *To whom we gave no such commandment.* They went, therefore,

chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 Men that have hazarded ^a their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by ¹ mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burthen ^b than these necessary things;

^a c.13.50; 14.19.

¹ word.

^b Rev.2.24.

without authority. Self-constituted and self-sent teachers not unfrequently produce disturbance and distress. Had the apostles been consulted on this subject, the difficulty would have been avoided. By thus saying that they had not given them a command to teach these things, they practically assured the Gentile converts that they did not approve of the course which those who went from Judea had taken.

26. *Men that have hazarded their lives, &c.* See ch. xiv. This was a noble testimony to the character of Barnabas and Paul. It was a commendation of them to the confidence of the churches, and an implied expression that they wished their authority to be regarded in the establishment and organization of the church. ¶ *For the name.* In the cause of the Lord Jesus.

27. *The same things.* The same things that we wrote to you. They shall confirm all by their own statements.

28. *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost.* This is a strong and undoubted claim to inspiration. It was with special reference to the organization of the church, that the Holy Spirit had been promised to them by the Lord Jesus. Matt. xviii. 18—20. John xiv. 26. ¶ *No greater burthen.* To impose no greater restraints; to enjoin no other observances. See Note, ver. 10. ¶ *Than these necessary things.* Necessary, (1.) In order to preserve the peace of the church. (2.) To conciliate the minds of the Jewish converts. ver. 21. (3.) Necessary in their circumstances, particularly, because the crime which is specified—licentiousness—was one to which all early converts were particularly exposed. Note, ver. 20.

29. *From meats offered to idols.* This explains what is meant by “pollutions of idols.” ver. 20. ¶ *Ye shall do well.* You

29 That ye abstain ^c from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep ^d yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

31 *Which*, when they had read, they rejoiced for the ² consolation.

^c ver.20.

^d 2Cor.11.9. Jam.1.27. 1Jno.5.21. Jude 20,21.

² or, *exhortation.*

will do what ought to be done in regard to the subjects of dispute.

31. *They rejoiced for the consolation.* They acquiesced in the decision of the apostles and elders, and rejoiced that they were not to be subjected to the burdensome rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion. This closes the account of the first Christian council. It was conducted throughout on Christian principles, in a mild, kind, conciliatory spirit; and is a model for all similar assemblages. It came together, not to promote, but to silence disputation; not to persecute the people of God, but to promote their peace; not to be a scene of harsh and angry re- crimination, but to be an example of all that was mild, and tender, and kind. Those who composed it came together, not to carry a point, not to overreach their adversaries, not to be party men; but to mingle their sober counsels, to inquire what was right, and to express, in a Christian manner, that which was proper to be done. Great and important principles were to be established, in regard to the Christian church; and they engaged in their work evidently with a deep sense of their responsibility, and with a just view of their dependence on the aid of the Holy Spirit. How happy would it have been if this spirit had been possessed by all professedly Christian councils! How happy, if ~~all~~ had really sought the peace and harmony of the churches; and if none had ever been convened to kindle the fire of contention, to convince the spirit of party, or to tend and destroy the church of God!

This council has been usually appealed to as the authority for councils in the church, as a permanent arrangement; and especially as an authority for courts of appeal and control. But it establishes neither, and should be brought as an au-

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed ^a them.

33 And after they had tarried

a c.14.22.

thority for neither. For, (1.) It was not a court of appeal in any intelligible sense. It was an assembly convened for a special purpose; designed to settle an inquiry which arose in a particular part of the church, and which required the collected wisdom of the apostles and elders to settle. (2.) It had none of the marks or appendages of a *court*. The term court, or judicature, is nowhere applied to it; nor to any assembly of Christian men, in the New Testament. Nor should these terms be used now in the churches. Courts of judicature imply a degree of authority, which cannot be proved from the New Testament to have been conceded to any ecclesiastical body of men. (3.) There is not the slightest intimation that any thing like permanency was to be attached to this council; or that it would be periodically or regularly repeated. It will prove, indeed, that when cases of difficulty occur; when Christians are perplexed and embarrassed; or when contentions arise, it will be proper to refer to Christian men for advice and direction. Such was the case here; and such a course is obviously proper. If it should be maintained that it is well that Christian ministers and laymen should assemble periodically, at stated intervals, on the supposition that such cases may arise, this is conceded; but the example of the apostles and elders should not be pleaded as making such assemblies of divine right and authority, or as being essential to the existence of a church of God. Such an arrangement has been deemed to be so desirable by Christians, that it has been adopted by Episcopalians in their regular annual and triennial conventions; by Methodists in their conferences; by Presbyterians in their general assembly; by Friends in their yearly meetings; by Baptists and Congregationalists in their associations, &c. But the example of the council *summoned a special emergency* at Jerusalem, should not be pleaded as giving divine authority to all, or to any of these periodical assemblages. They are wise and prudent arrangements, contributing to the peace of the church; and the example of the council at Jerusalem can be adduced as furnishing, as much divine authority for one as for another;

there a space, they were let go ^b in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

34 Notwithstanding, it pleased Silas to abide there still.

b 1Cor.16.11. 2Jno.10.

that is, it does not make all or either of them of divine authority, or as obligatory on the church of God. (4.) It should be added, that a degree of authority (comp. ch. xvi. 4) would, of course, be attached to the decision of the apostles and elders at that time, which cannot be to any body of ministers and laymen now. Besides, it should never be forgotten—what, alas, it seems to have been the pleasure and the interest of ecclesiastics to forget—that neither the apostles nor elders *asserted* any jurisdiction over the churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia; that they did not claim a *right* to have these cases referred to them; that they did not attempt “to lord it” over their faith or their consciences. The case was a single, specific, definite question, *referred to them*; and they decided it as such. They asserted no abstract right of such jurisdiction; they sought not to intermeddle with it; they enjoined no future reference to them, to their successors, or to any ecclesiastical tribunal. They evidently regarded the churches as blessed with the most ample freedom; and evidently contemplated no arrangement of a permanent character, asserting a right to legislate on articles of faith, or to make laws for the direction of the Lord’s freemen.

32. *Being prophets.* See Note, ch. xi. 27. This evidently implies that they had been preachers before they went to Antioch. What was the precise nature of the office of a *prophet* in the Christian church, it is not easy to ascertain. Possibly it may imply that they were *teachers* of unusual or remarkable ability. ¶ *Confirmed them.* Strengthened them; that is, by their instructions and exhortations. Note, ch. xiv. 22.

33. *A space.* For some time. ¶ *They were let go in peace.* An expression implying that they departed with the affectionate regard of the Christians to whom they had ministered, and with their highest wishes for their prosperity. 1 Cor. xvi. 11. 2 John 10. Silas, however, it seems, chose to remain. ¶ *Unto the apostles.* At Jerusalem. Many MSS. however, instead of “unto the apostles,” read, “unto those who had sent them.” The sense is not materially different.

34. *Notwithstanding, &c.* This whole

35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36 And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in ^a every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John ^b whose surname was Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to

a c.13.4,&c.

b c.12.12,25. Col.4.10.

verse is wanting in many MSS. in the Syriac, Arabic, and Coptic versions; and is regarded as spurious by Mill, Griesbach, and by other critics. It was probably introduced by some early transcriber, who judged it necessary to complete the narrative. The Latin Vulgate reads, "It seemed good to Silas to remain, but Judas went alone to Jerusalem."

35. *Paul, also, and Barnabas continued in Antioch.* How long a time is unknown. It is probable that at this time the unhappy incident occurred between Paul and Peter, which is recorded in Gal. ii. 11—14.

36. *Let us go again and visit our brethren.* That is, in the churches which they had established in Asia Minor. ch. xiii. xiv. This was a natural wish; and was an enterprise that might be attended with important advantages to those feeble churches.

37. *But Barnabas determined.* Greek, Willed, or was disposed to (βουλεύσατο). † *John, &c.* Note, ch. xii. 12. He had been with them before as a travelling companion. ch. xii. 25; xiii. 5. He was the son of a sister of Barnabas (Col. iv. 10), and it is probable that Barnabas' affection for his nephew was the main reason for inducing him to wish to take him with him in the journey.

38. *But Paul thought not good.* Did not think it proper. Because he could not confide in his perseverance with them in the toils and perils of their journey. † *Who departed from them, &c.* ch. xiii. 13. Why he did this is not known. It was evidently, however, for some cause which Paul did not consider satisfactory, and which in his view disqualified him from being their attendant again. † *To the work.* Of preaching the gospel.

39. *And the contention was so sharp.* The word used here (παροξυσμῆς) is that

take him with them, who departed ^c from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus:

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended ^d by the brethren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming ^e the churches.

c c.13.13.

d c.14.26; 20.32.

e c.16.5.

from which our word *paroxysm* is derived. It may denote any excitement of mind, and is used in a good sense in Heb. x. 24. It here means evidently a violent altercation that resulted in their separation for a time, and in their engaging in different spheres of labour. † *And sailed unto Cyprus.* This was the native place of Barnabas. Note, ch. iv. 36.

40. *Being recommended.* Being commended by prayer to God. Note, ch. xiv. 26.

41. *Syria and Cilicia.* These were countries lying near to each other, which Paul, in company with Barnabas, had before visited. † *Confirming the churches.* Strengthening them by instruction and exhortation. It has no reference to the rite of confirmation. See Note, Acts xiv. 22.

In regard to this unhappy contention between Paul and Barnabas, and their separation from each other, we may make the following remarks. (1.) That no apology or vindication of it is offered by the sacred writer. It was undoubtedly improper and evil. It was a melancholy instance in which even apostles evinced an improper spirit, and engaged in improper strife. (2.) In this contention it is probable that Paul was, in the main, right. Barnabas seems to have been influenced by attachment to a relative; Paul sought a helper who would not shrink from duty and danger. It is clear that Paul had the sympathies and prayers of the church in his favour (ver. 40), and it is more than probable that Barnabas departed without any such sympathy. ver. 39. (3.) There is reason to think that this contention was overruled for the furtherance of the gospel. They went to different places, and preached to different people. It often happens that the unhappy and wicked strifes of Christians

CHAPTER XVI.

THEN came he to Derbe ^a and Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, ^b the son of a ^c certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 2 Which was well ^d reported of

^a c. 14. 6.^b c. 19. 22. Rom. 16. 21. 1 Cor. 4. 17.^c 2 Tim. 1. 5.^d c. 6. 3. 1 Tim. 5. 10. Heb. 11. 2.

are the means of exciting their zeal, and of extending the gospel, and of establishing churches. But no thanks to their contention; nor is the guilt of their anger and strife mitigated by this. (4.) This difference was afterwards reconciled, and Paul and Barnabas again became travelling companions. 1 Cor. ix. 6. Gal. ii. 9. (5.) There is evidence that Paul also became reconciled to John Mark. Col. iv. 10. Philem. 24. 2 Tim. iv. 11. How long this separation continued is not known; but perhaps in this journey with Barnabas, John gave such evidence of his courage and zeal as induced Paul again to admit him to his confidence as a travelling companion, and as to become a profitable fellow-labourer. See 2 Tim. iv. 11, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry." (6.) This account proves that there was no collusion or agreement among the apostles to impose upon mankind. Had there been such an agreement, and had the books of the New Testament been an imposture, the apostles would have been represented as perfectly harmonious, and as united in all their views and efforts. What impostor would have thought of the device of representing the early friends of the Christian religion as divided, and contending, and separating from each other? Such a statement has an air of candour and honesty, and at the same time is apparently so much against the truth of the system, that no impostor would have thought of resorting to it.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. *Then came he.* That is, Paul, in company with Silas. Luke does not give us the history of Barnabas, but confines his narrative to the journey of Paul. ¶ *To Derbe and Lystra.* Note, ch. xiv. 6. ¶ *And behold a certain disciple named Timotheus.* It was to this disciple that Paul afterwards addressed the two epistles which bear his name. It is evident that he was a native of one of these places, but whether of Derbe or Lystra it is impossible to determine. ¶ *The son of a*

by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him, ^e because of the Jews ^f which were in those quarters; for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

^e Gal. 2. 3-8; 5. 1-3.^f 1 Cor. 9. 20.

certain woman, &c. Her name was Eunice. 2 Tim. i. 5. ¶ *And believed.* And was a Christian. It is evident also that her mother was a woman of distinguished Christian piety. 2 Tim. i. 5. It was not lawful for a Jew to marry a woman of another nation, or to give his daughter in marriage to a Gentile. Ezra ix. 12. But it is probable that this law was not regarded very strictly by the Jews who lived in the midst of heathen nations. It is evident that Timothy, at this time, was very young; for when Paul besought him to abide at Ephesus, to take charge of the church there (1 Tim. i. 4), he addressed him then as a young man. 1 Tim. iv. 12, "Let no man despise thy youth." ¶ *But his father was a Greek.* Evidently a man who had not been circumcised, for had he been, Timothy would have been also.

2. *Which.* That is, Timothy. The connexion requires us to understand this of him. Of the character of his father nothing is known. ¶ *Was well reported of* Was esteemed highly as a young man of piety and promise. Note, ch. vi. 3. Comp. 1 Tim. v. 10. Timothy had been religiously educated. He was carefully trained in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and was therefore the better qualified for his work. 2 Tim. iii. 15.

3. *Him would Paul have, &c.* This was an instance of Paul's selecting young men of piety for the holy ministry. It shows, (1.) That he was disposed to look up and call forth the talent that might be in the church, that might be usefully employed. It is quite evident that Timothy would not have thought of this, had it not been suggested by Paul. The same thing, Education societies are attempting now to accomplish. (2.) That Paul sought proper qualifications, and valued them. Those were, (a) That he had a good reputation for piety, &c. ver. 2. This he demanded as an indispensable qualification for a minister of the gospel. 1 Tim. iii. 7, "Moreover he (a bishop) must have a good report of them which are without."

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained ^a of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

5 And so were the churches ^b established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

^a c.15.28,29. ^b c.15.41.

Comp. Acts xxii. 12. (*b*) Paul esteemed him to be a young man of talents and prudence. His admitting him to a partnership in his labours, and his intrusting to him the affairs of the church at Ephesus, prove this. (*c*) He had been carefully trained in the Holy Scriptures. A foundation was thus laid for usefulness. And this qualification seems to have been deemed by Paul of indispensable value for the right discharge of his duties in this holy office. ¶ *And he took and circumcised him.* This was evidently done to avoid the opposition and reproaches of the Jews. It was a measure not binding in itself (comp. ch. xv. 1. 28, 29); but the neglect of which would expose to contention and opposition among the Jews, and greatly retard or destroy his usefulness. It was an act of expediency for the sake of peace, and was in accordance with Paul's uniform and avowed principle of conduct. 1 Cor. ix. 20, "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews." Comp. Acts xxi. 23—26.

4. *And as they went through the cities.* The cities of Syria, Cilicia, &c. ¶ *They delivered them.* Paul and Silas delivered to the Christians in those cities. ¶ *The decrees.* τὰ δέγματα. The decrees in regard to the four things specified in ch. xv. 20. 29. The word translated *decrees* occurs in Luke ii. 1, "A decree from Cæsar Augustus;" in Acts xvii. 7, "The decrees of Cæsar;" in Eph. ii. 15, and in Col. ii. 14. It properly means a law or edict of a king, or legislature. In this instance it was the decision of the council in a case submitted to it; and implied an obligation on the Christians to submit to that decision. The laws of the apostles would, and ought to be, in such cases, esteemed to be binding. It is probable that a correct and attested copy of the letter (ch. xv. 23—29) would be sent to the various churches of the Gentiles. ¶ *To keep.* To obey, or to observe. ¶ *That were ordained.* Gr. That were adjudged, or determined.

5. *Established in the faith.* Confirmed

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of ^c Galatia, and were forbidden of ^d the Holy Ghost to preach the word in ^e Asia,

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bythinia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

^c Gal. 1.2. 1Pet. 1.1. ^d Amos 8.11,12. 1Cor. 12.11.
^e Rev. 1.4,11.

in the belief of the gospel. The effect of the wise and conciliatory measure was to increase and strengthen the churches.

6. *Throughout Phrygia.* This was the largest province of Asia Minor. It had Bythinia north; Pisidia and Lycia south; Galatia and Cappadocia east; and Lydia and Mysia west. ¶ *And the region of Galatia.* This province was directly east of Phrygia. The region was formerly conquered by the Gauls. They settled in it, and called it, after their own name, *Galatia*. The Gauls invaded the country at different times, and no less than three tribes or bodies of Gauls had possession of it. Many Jews were also settled there. It was from this cause that so many parties could be formed there, and that so much controversy would arise between the Jewish and Gentile converts. See the Epistle to the Galatians. ¶ *And were forbidden.* Probably by a direct revelation. The reason of this was, doubtless, that it was the intention of God to extend the gospel farther into the regions of Greece than would have been done if they had remained in Asia Minor. This prohibition was the means of the first introduction of the gospel into Europe. ¶ *In Asia.* See Note, ch. ii. 9. This was doubtless the region of proconsular Asia. This region was also called *Ionia*. Of this region Ephesus was the capital; and here were situated also the cities of Smyrna, Thyatira, Philadelphia, &c., within which the seven churches mentioned in Rev. i. ii. iii. were established. Cicero speaks of proconsular Asia as containing the provinces of Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, and Lydia. In all this region the gospel was afterwards preached with great success. But now a more important and a wider field was opened before Paul and Barnabas, in the extensive country of Macedonia.

7. *Mysia.* This was a province of Asia Minor, having Propontis on the north, Bythinia on the east, Lydia on the south, and the Ægean sea on the west. ¶ *They assayed.* They endeavoured; they at-

8 And they passing by Mysia, came down to ^a Troas.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man ^b of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go ^c into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called

^a 2Cor.2.12. 2Tim.4.13. ^b c.19.30. ^c 2Cor.2.13.

tempted. ¶ *Into Bythinia.* A province of Asia Minor, lying east of Mysia.

8. *Came down to Troas.* This was a city of Phrygia or Mysia, on the Hellespont, between Troy north, and Assos south. Sometimes the name *Troas*, or *Troad*, is used to denote the whole country of the Trojans, the province where the ancient city of Troy had stood. This region was much celebrated in the early periods of Grecian history. It was here that the events recorded in the Iliad of Homer are supposed to have occurred. The city of Troy has long since been completely destroyed. *Troas* is several times mentioned in the New Testament. 2 Cor. ii. 12. 2 Tim. iv. 13. Acts xx. 5.

9. *And a vision.* Note, ch. x. 3. ¶ *There stood a man, &c.* The appearance of a man, who was known to be of Macedonia, probably, by his dress and language. Whether this was in a dream, or whether it was a representation made to the senses while awake, it is impossible to tell. The will of God was at different times made known in both these ways. Comp. Matt. ii. 12. Note, Acts x. 3. Grotius supposes that this was the guardian angel of Macedonia, and refers for illustration to Dan. x. 12, 13, 20, 21. But there seems to be no foundation for this opinion. ¶ *Of Macedonia.* This was an extensive country of Greece, having Thrace on the north, Thessaly south, Epirus west, and the Ægean sea east. It is supposed that it was peopled by Kittim, son of Javan. Gen. x. 4. The kingdom rose into celebrity chiefly under the reign of Philip and his son Alexander the Great. It was the first region in Europe in which we have any record that the gospel was preached. ¶ *And help us.* That is, by preaching the gospel. This was a call to preach the gospel in an extensive heathen land, amidst many trials and dangers. To this call, notwithstanding all this prospect of danger, they cheerfully responded, and

us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

12 And from thence to Philippi,^d which is the ¹ chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony. And we were in that city abiding certain days.

^d Phil.1.1.

¹ or, the first.

gave themselves to the work. Their conduct was thus an example to the church. From all portions of the earth a similar call is now coming to the churches. Openings of a similar character, for the introduction of the gospel, are presented in all lands. Appeals are coming from every quarter; and all that seems now necessary for the speedy conversion of the world is, for the church to enter into these vast fields with the self-denial, spirit, and zeal which characterized the apostle Paul.

10. *We endeavoured.* This is the first instance in which Luke refers to himself as being in company with Paul. It is hence probable that he joined Paul and Silas about this time; and it is evident that he attended him in his travels, as recorded throughout the remainder of the Acts. ¶ *Assuredly gathering.* Being certainly convinced.

11. *Loosing from Troas.* Setting sail from this place. ¶ *To Samothracia.* This was an island in the Ægean sea, not far from Thrace. It was peopled by inhabitants from Samos and from Thrace, and hence called *Samothracia*. It was about twenty miles in circumference; and was an asylum for fugitives and criminals. ¶ *And the next day to Neapolis.* This was a maritime city of Macedonia, near the borders of Thrace. It is now called *Napoli*.

12. *And from thence to Philippi.* The former name of this city was Dathos. It was repaired and adorned by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, and after him was called Philippi. It was famous for having been the place where several battles were fought in the civil wars of the Romans, and among others, for the decisive battle between Brutus and Antony. At this place Brutus killed himself. To the church in this place Paul afterwards wrote the epistle which bears its name. ¶ *Which is a chief city of that part of Macedonia.* This whole region

13 And on the ¹ sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer ^a 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 ^b the Lord

¹ sabbath-day

a c.21.5.

b Luke 24.45.

had been conquered by the Romans under Paulus Emilius. By him it was divided into four parts or provinces. (*Livy*.) The Syriac version renders it, "a city of the *first* part of Macedonia;" and there is a medal extant which also describes this region by this name. It has been proposed, therefore, to alter the Greek text in accordance with this, since it is known that Amphipolis was made the chief city by Paulus Emilius. But it may be remarked, that although Amphipolis was the chief city in the time of Paulus Emilius, it may have happened that in the lapse of two hundred and twenty years from that time, Philippi might have become the most extensive and splendid city. The Greek here may also mean simply that this was the *first* city to which they arrived in their travels. ¶ And a *colony*. This is a Latin word, and means that this was a Roman colony. The word denotes a city or province which was planted or occupied by Roman citizens. On one of the coins now extant, it is recorded that Julius Cæsar bestowed the advantages and dignity of a colony on Philippi, which Augustus afterwards confirmed and augmented. See *Rob. Cal. Art. Philippi*. ¶ *Certain days*. Some days.

13. And on the Sabbath. There is no doubt that in this city there were Jews. In the time of the apostles they were scattered extensively throughout the known world. ¶ *By a river side*. What river this was, is not known. It is known, however, that the Jews were accustomed to provide water, or to build their synagogues and oratories near water, for the convenience of the numerous washings before and during their religious services. ¶ *Where prayer*. Where there was a *proseuchæ*, or place of prayer; or where prayer was commonly offered. The Greek will bear either; but the sense is the same. Places for prayer were erected by the Jews in the vicinity of cities and towns, and particularly where there were not Jewish families enough, or where they were forbidden by the magistrate to

opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought ^c *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

c Heb.13.2.

erect a synagogue. These *proseuchæ*, or places of prayer, were simple enclosures made of stones in a grove, or under a tree, where there would be a retired and convenient place for worship. ¶ *Was wont*. Was accustomed to be offered; or where it was established by custom. ¶ *And spake unto the women, &c.* This was probably before the regular service of the place commenced.

14. A seller of purple. Purple was a most valuable colour, obtained usually from shell-fish. It was chiefly worn by princes and by the rich; and the traffic in it might be very profitable. ¶ *The city of Thyatira*. This was a city of Lydia, in Asia Minor, now called *Ak-hisar*. The art of dying was particularly cultivated, as appears from an inscription found there. (See *Kuinöel*.) ¶ *Which worshipped God*. A religious woman, a proselyte. Note, ch. xiii. 16. ¶ *Whose heart the Lord opened*. See Note, Luke xxiv. 45.

15. And when she was baptized. Apparently without any delay. Comp. Acts ii. 41; viii. 38. It was usual to be baptized immediately on believing. ¶ *And her household*. Greek, Her house (ὁ οἶκος οὐτῆς). Her family. No mention is made of their having believed. And the case is one that affords a strong presumptive proof that this was an instance of *household* or infant baptism. For, (1.) Her believing is particularly mentioned. (2.) It is not intimated that *they* believed. On the contrary, it is strongly implied that they did not. (3.) It is manifestly implied that *they* were baptized because *she* believed. It was the offering of her family to the Lord. It is just such an account as would now be given of a household or family that were baptized on the faith of the parent. ¶ *If ye have judged me to be faithful*. If you deem me a Christian, or a believer. ¶ *And she constrained us*. She urged us. This was an instance of great hospitality, and also an evidence of her desire for further instruction in the doctrines of religion.

16. As we went to prayer. Greek, As

went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed ^a with a spirit of ¹ divination met us, which brought her masters much gain ^b by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high ^c

^a 1 Sam. 28. 7.
^c Gen. 14. 18-22.

¹ or, *Python*.

^b c. 19. 24.

God, which shew unto us the way of ^d salvation.

18 And this she did many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said ^e to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. And ^f he came out the same hour.

^d c. 18. 26. Heb. 10. 20.

^e Mark 1. 25, 34.

^f Mark 16. 17.

we were going to the *proseuchæ*, the place of prayer. ver. 13. Whether this was on the same day in which the conversion of Lydia occurred, or at another time, is not mentioned by the historian. ¶ *A certain damsel*. A maid, a young woman. ¶ *Possessed with a spirit of divination*. Gr. *Python*. See the margin. Python, or Pythios, was one of the names of Apollo, the Grecian god of the fine arts, of music, poetry, medicine, and eloquence. Of these he was esteemed to have been the inventor. He was reputed to be the third son of Jupiter and Latona. He had a celebrated temple and oracle at Delphi, which was resorted to from all parts of the world, and which was perhaps the only oracle that was in universal repute. The name *Python* is said to have been given him because, as soon as he was born, he destroyed with arrows a serpent of that name, that had been sent by Juno to persecute Latona; hence his common name was *the Pythian Apollo*. He had temples on mount Parnassus, at Delphi, Delos, Claros, Tenedos, &c.; and his worship was almost universal. In the celebrated oracle at Delphi, the priestess of Apollo pretended to be inspired; became violently agitated during the periods of pretended inspiration; and during those periods gave such responses to inquirers as were regarded as the oracles of the god. Others would also make pretensions to such inspiration; and the art of fortune-telling, or of jugglery, was extensively practised, and was the source of much gain. See Note, ch. viii. 8-10. What was the cause of this extensive delusion in regard to the oracle at Delphi, it is not necessary now to inquire. It is plain that Paul regarded this as a case of demoniacal possession, and treated it accordingly. ¶ *Her masters*. Those in whose employ she was. ¶ *By soothsaying*. Pretending to foretell future events.

17. *The same followed Paul, &c.* Why she did this, or under what pretence, the sacred writer has not informed us. Various conjectures have been formed of the reason why this was done. It may have

been, (1.) That as she prophesied for gain, she supposed that Paul and Silas would reward her if she publicly proclaimed that they were the servants of God. Or, (2.) Because she was conscious that an evil spirit possessed her, and that she feared that Paul and Silas would expel that spirit; and that, by proclaiming them to be the servants of God, she hoped to conciliate their favour. Or, (3.) More probably, it was because she saw evident tokens of their being sent from God, and that their doctrine would prevail; and by proclaiming this she hoped to acquire more authority, and a higher reputation for being herself inspired. Comp. Mark v. 7.

18. *But Paul, being grieved*. Being molested, troubled, offended. Paul was grieved, probably, (1.) Because her presence was troublesome to him; (2.) Because it might be said that he was in alliance with her, and that his pretensions were just like hers; (3.) Because what she did was for the sake of gain, and was a base imposition; (4.) Because her state was one of bondage and delusion, and it was proper to free her from this demoniacal possession; and, (5.) Because the system under which she was acting was a part of a vast scheme of delusion and imposture, which had spread over a large portion of the pagan world, and which was then holding it in bondage. Throughout the Roman empire, the inspiration of the priestesses of Apollo was believed in, and temples were every where reared to perpetuate and celebrate the delusion. Against this extensive system of imposture and fraud, Christianity must oppose itself; and this was a favourable instance to expose the delusion, and to show the power of the Christian religion over all the arts and powers of imposture. The mere fact that in a *very few* instances—of which this was one—they spoke the truth, did not make it improper for Paul to interpose. That fact would only tend to perpetuate the delusion, and to make his interposition more proper and neces-

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains^a was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into¹ the market-place, unto^b the rulers,

40 And brought them to the ma-

^a Mark c.19.24,27. ¹ or, court. ^b Matt.10.18.

sary. The expulsion of the evil spirit would also afford a signal proof of the fact that the apostles were *really* from God. A far better proof than her noisy and troublesome proclamation of it would furnish. ¶ *In the name of Jesus Christ.* Or, by the authority of Jesus Christ. See Note, ch. iii. 6.

19. *The hope of their gains was gone.* It was this that troubled and enraged them. And this is as likely to enrage men as any thing. Instead of regarding the act as proof of divine power, they were intent only on their profits. And their indignation furnishes a remarkable illustration of the fixedness with which men will regard wealth; of the fact that the love of it will blind them to all the truths of religion, and all the proofs of the power and presence of God; and of the fact that *any* interposition of divine power that destroys their hopes of gain, fills them with wrath and hatred and murmuring. Many a man has been opposed to God and his gospel, because, if religion should be extensively prevalent, the hopes of gain would be gone. Many a slave-dealer, and many a trafficker in ardent spirits, and many a man engaged in other unlawful modes of gain, have been unwilling to abandon their employments, simply because the hopes of their gain would be destroyed. No small part of the opposition to the gospel arises from the fact, that if embraced, it would strike at so much of the dishonourable employments of men, and make them honest and conscientious. ¶ *The market-place.* The court or forum. The market-place was a place of concourse; and the courts were often held in or near those places. ¶ *The rulers.* The term used here refers commonly to *civil magistrates.*

20. *And brought them to the magistrates.* To the *military rulers* (στρατηγούς), or prætors. Phillippi was a Roman colony; and it is probable that the officers of the army exercised the double function of civil and military rulers. ¶ *Do exceedingly trouble our city.* In what way they did it they specify in the next verse. The charge which they wished to substantiate was, that of being disturbers of the public

magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble^c our city,

21 And teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

^c 1 Kings 18.17. c.17.6.

peace. All at once they became conscientious. They forgot the subject of their gains, and were greatly distressed about the violation of the laws. There is nothing that will make men more hypocritically conscientious, than to denounce, and detect, and destroy their unlawful and dishonest practices. Men who are thus exposed, become suddenly filled with reverence for the law or for religion; and they, who have heretofore cared nothing for either, become greatly alarmed lest the public peace should be disturbed. Men slumber quietly in sin, and pursue their wicked gains; they hate or despise all law and all forms of religion; but the moment their course of life is attacked and exposed, they become full of zeal for laws that they would not themselves hesitate to violate, and for the customs of religion, which in their hearts they thoroughly despise. Worldly-minded men often thus complain that their towns, and cities, and villages are disturbed by revivals of religion; and the preaching of the truth and attacking vice often arouses this hypocritical conscientiousness, and makes them alarmed for the laws, and for religion, and for order, which they at other times are the first to disturb and disregard.

21. *And teach customs.* The word *customs* here (ἑθνη) refers to religious *rites* or forms of worship. See Note, ch. vi. 14. They meant to charge the apostles with introducing a new mode of worship and a new religion, which was unauthorized by the Roman laws. This was a cunning and artful accusation. It is perfectly evident that they cared nothing either for the religion of the Romans or of the Jews. Nor were they really concerned about any change of religion. Paul had destroyed their hopes of gain; and as they could not prevent that except by securing his punishment or expulsion, and as they had no way of revenge except by endeavouring to excite indignation against him and Silas for violating the laws, they endeavoured to convict them of such violation. This is one, among many instances, where wicked and unprincipled men will endeavour to make religion the

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*.

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them*

a 2Cor.6.5; 11.23,25. 1Thess.2.22.

means of promoting their own interest. If they can make money by it, they will become its professed friends; or if they can annoy Christians, they will at once have remarkable zeal for the laws and for the purity of religion. Many a man opposes revivals of religion and the real progress of evangelical piety, from professed zeal for truth and order. ¶ *Which are not lawful for us to receive.* There were laws of the Roman empire under which they might shield themselves in this charge, though it is evident that their zeal was, not because they loved the laws more, but because they loved Christianity less. Thus Servius on Virgil, *Æneid*, viii. 187, says, "Care was taken among the Athenians and the Romans, that no one should introduce new religions. It was on this account that Socrates was condemned, and the Chaldeans or Jews were banished from the city." Cicero (*de Legibus* ii. 8) says, "No person shall have any separate gods, or new ones; nor shall he privately worship any strange gods, unless they be publicly allowed." Wetstein (in loco) says, "The Romans would indeed allow foreigners to worship their own gods, but not unless it were done secretly, so that the worship of foreign gods would not interfere with the allowed worship of the Romans, and so that occasion for dissension and controversy might be avoided. Neither was it lawful among the Romans to recommend a new religion to the citizens, contrary to that which was confirmed and established by the public authority, and to call off the people from that. It was on this account that there was such a hatred of the Romans against the Jews." (*Kuinöel*.) Tertullian says, that "there was a decree that no god should be consecrated, unless approved by the senate." (*Grotius*.) See many other authorities quoted in bishop Watson's "Apology for Christianity." ¶ *To observe.* To do. ¶ *Being Romans.* Having the privileges of Roman citizens. Note, ver. 12.

22. *And the multitude, &c.* It is evident that this was done in a popular tumult, and without even the form of law. Of this, Paul afterwards justly complain-

into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely:

24 Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

ed, as it was a violation of the privileges of a Roman citizen, and contrary to the laws. See Note, ver. 37. It was one instance in which men affect great zeal for the honour of the law, and yet are among the first to disregard it. ¶ *And the magistrates.* ver. 20. They who should have been their protectors until they had had a fair trial according to law. ¶ *Rent off their clothes.* This was always done when one was to be scourged or whipped. The criminal was usually stripped entirely naked. Livy says (ii. 5), "The lictors, being sent to inflict punishment, beat them with rods, *being naked*." Cicero against Verres says, "He commanded the man to be seized, and to be stripped naked in the midst of the forum, and to be bound, and rods to be brought." ¶ *And commanded to beat them.* *Παῖδος, ζειν.* To beat them with rods. This was done by lictors, whose office it was, and was a common mode of punishment among the Romans. Probably Paul alludes to this when he says (2 Cor. xi. 25), "Thrice was I beaten with rods."

23. *And when they had laid many stripes on them.* The Jews were by law prohibited from inflicting more than forty stripes, and usually inflicted but thirty-nine. 2 Cor. xi. 24. But there was no such law among the Romans. They were unrestricted in regard to the number of lashes; and probably inflicted many more. Perhaps Paul refers to this when he says (2 Cor. xi. 23), "In stripes above measure," i. e. beyond the usual measure among the Jews, or beyond moderation. ¶ *They cast them into prison.* The magistrates (ver. 36, 37), as a punishment; and probably with a view hereafter of taking vengeance on them, more according to the forms of law.

24. *Thrust them into the inner prison.* Into the most retired and secure part of the prison. The cells in the interior of the prison would be regarded as more safe, being doubtless more protected, and the difficulty of escape would be greater. ¶ *And made their feet fast in the stocks.* Greek, And made their feet secure to wood. The word *stocks*, with us, denotes a machine made of two pieces of timber,

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed^a and sang^b praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

26 And suddenly there was a

^a Jam. 5. 13.

^b Ps. 34. 1.

between which the feet of the criminals are placed, and in which they are thus made secure. The account here does not imply necessarily that they were secured precisely in this way, but that they were fastened or secured by the feet, probably by cords, to a piece or beam of wood, so that they could not escape. It is supposed that the legs of the prisoners were bound to large pieces of wood, which not only encumbered them, but which often were so placed as to extend their feet to a considerable distance. In this condition it might be necessary for them to lie on their backs; and if this, as is probable, was on the cold ground, after their severe scourging, their sufferings must have been very great. Yet in the midst of this they sang praises to God.

25. *And at midnight.* Probably their painful posture, the sufferings of their recent scourging, prevented their sleeping. Yet though they had no repose, they had a quiet conscience, and the supports of religion. ¶ *Prayed.* Though they had suffered much, yet they had reason to apprehend more. They sought, therefore, the sustaining grace of God. ¶ *And sang praises.* Nothing but religion would have enabled them to do this. They had endured much, but they had cause still for gratitude. A Christian may find more true joy in a prison, than the monarch on his throne. ¶ *And the prisoners heard them.* And doubtless with astonishment. Prayer and praise were not common in a prison. The song of rejoicing and the language of praise is not usual among men lying bound in a dungeon. From this narrative we may learn, (1.) That the Christian has the sources of his happiness within him. External circumstances cannot destroy his peace and joy. In a dungeon he may find as real happiness as on a throne. On the cold earth, beaten and bruised, he may be as truly happy as on a bed of down. (2.) The enemies of Christians cannot destroy their peace. They may incarcerate the body, but they cannot bind the spirit. They may exclude from earthly comforts, but they cannot shut them out from the presence and sustaining grace of God. (3.) We see the value of a good conscience. Nothing else can give peace; and amidst

great earthquake, so^c that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately^d all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

^c c. 4. 31.

^d Isa. 42. 7. c. 5. 19; 12. 7, 10.

the wakeful hours of the night, whether in a dungeon or on a bed of sickness, it is of more value than all the wealth of the world. (4.) We see the inestimable worth of the religion of Christ. It fits for all scenes; supports in all trials; upholds by day or by night; inspires the soul with confidence in God; and puts into the lips the songs of praise and thanksgiving. (5.) We have here a sublime and holy scene, which sin and infidelity could never furnish. What more sublime spectacle has the earth witnessed than that of scourged and incarcerated men, suffering from unjust and cruel inflictions, and anticipating still greater sorrows; yet, with a calm mind, a pure conscience, a holy joy, pouring forth their desires and praises at midnight, into the ear of the God who always hears prayer! The darkness, the stillness, the loneliness, all give sublimity to the scene, and teach us how invaluable is the privilege of access to the throne of mercy in this suffering world.

26. *And suddenly.* While they were praying and singing. ¶ *A great earthquake.* Matt. xxviii. 2. An earthquake, in such circumstances, was regarded as a symbol of the presence of God, and as an answer to prayer. See Note, ch. iv. 31. The *design* of this was, doubtless, to furnish them proof of the presence and protection of God, and to provide a way for them to escape. It was one among the series of wonders by which the gospel was established, and the early Christians protected amidst their dangers. ¶ *And immediately all the doors were opened.* An effect that would naturally follow from the violent concussion of the earthquake. Comp. ch. v. 19. ¶ *Every one's bands were loosed.* This was evidently a miracle. Some have supposed that their chains were dissolved by electric fluid; but the narrative gives no account of any such fluid, even supposing such an effect to be possible. It was evidently a direct interposition of divine power. But for what purpose it was done is not recorded. Grotius supposes that it was that they might know that the apostles might be useful to them and to others, and that by them their spiritual bonds might be loosed. Probably the design was to impress all the

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But ^a Paul cried with a loud

^a Prov. 24. 11, 12. 1 Thess. 5. 15.

prisoners with the conviction of the presence and power of God, and thus to prepare them to receive the message of life from the lips of his servants Paul and Silas. They had just before heard them singing and praying; they were aware, doubtless, of the cause for which they were imprisoned; they saw evident tokens that they were the servants of the Most High, and under his protection; and their own minds were impressed and awed by the terrors of the earthquake, and by the fact of their own liberation. It renders this scene the more remarkable, that though the doors were opened, and the prisoners loosed, yet no one made any attempt to escape.

27. *Would have killed himself.* This was all done in the midst of agitation and alarm. He supposed that the prisoners had fled. He presumed that their escape would be charged on him. It was customary to hold a jailer responsible for the safe keeping of prisoners, and to subject him to the punishment due them, if he suffered them to escape. See ch. xii. 19. It should be added, that it was common and approved among the Greeks and Romans for a man to commit suicide when he was encompassed with dangers from which he could not escape. Thus Cato was guilty of self-murder in Utica; and thus, at this very place—at Philippi—Brutus and Cassius, and many of their friends, fell on their own swords, and ended their lives by suicide. The custom was thus sanctioned by the authority and example of the great; and we are not to wonder that the jailer, in a moment of alarm, should also attempt to destroy his own life. It is not one of the least benefits of Christianity, that it has proclaimed the evil of self-murder, and that it has done so much to drive it from the world.

28. *Do thyself no harm.* This is the solemn command of religion in his case, and in all others. It enjoins on men to do themselves no harm—by self-murder, whether by the sword, the pistol, the halter; or by intemperance, and lust, and dissipation. In all cases, Christianity seeks the true welfare of man. In all cases, if it were obeyed, men would do

voice, saying, Do thyself ^b no harm; for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, ^c and fell down before Paul and Silas:

30 And brought them out, and

^b Eccl. 5. 17.

^c Jer. 5. 22.

themselves no harm. They would promote their own best interests here, and their eternal welfare hereafter.

29. *Then he called for a light.* Greek, *Lights*, in the plural. Probably several torches were brought by his attendants. ¶ *And came trembling.* Alarmed at the earthquake, and amazed that the prisoners were still there, and probably not a little confounded at the calmness of Paul and Silas, and overwhelmed at the proof of the presence of God. Comp. Jer. v. 22, "Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my presence?" &c. ¶ *And fell down, &c.* This was an act of profound reverence. See Note, Matt. ii. 11. It is evident that he regarded them as the favourites of God, and was constrained to recognise them in their character as religious teachers.

30. *And brought them out.* From the prison. ¶ *Sirs.* Greek, *κυριοι*, lords—an address of respect; a title usually given to masters, or owners of slaves. ¶ *What must I do to be saved?* Never was a more important question asked than this. It is evident that by this question he did not refer to any danger to which he might be exposed from what had happened. For, (1.) The apostles evidently understood him as referring to his eternal salvation, as is manifest from their answer; since to believe on the Lord Jesus would have no effect in saving him from any danger of punishment to which he might be exposed from what had occurred. (2.) He could scarcely consider himself as exposed to punishment by the Romans. The prisoners were all safe; none had escaped, or showed any disposition to escape: and besides, for the earthquake and its effects he could not be held responsible. It is not improbable that there was much confusion in his mind. There would be a *rush* of many thoughts; a state of agitation, and alarm, and fear; and in view of all, he would naturally ask those whom he now saw to be men sent by God, and under his protection, what he should do to obtain the favour of that great Being under whose protection he saw that they manifestly were. Perhaps the following thoughts might have gone to produce this

said, Sirs, what ^a must I do to be saved ?

a c.2.37; 9.6.

state of agitation and alarm. (1.) They had been designated by the Pythoness (ver. 17) as religious teachers sent from God, and appointed to "show the way of salvation," and in her testimony he might have been disposed to put confidence, or it might now be brought fresh to his recollection. (2.) He manifestly saw that they were under the protection of God. A remarkable interposition—an earthquake—an event which all the heathen regarded as ominous of the presence of the divinity—had showed this. (3.) The guilt of their imprisonment might rush upon his mind; and he might suppose that he, the agent of the imprisonment of the servants of God, would be exposed to his displeasure. (4.) His own guilt in attempting his own life might overwhelm him with alarm. (5.) The whole scene was fitted to show him the need of the protection and friendship of the God that had thus interposed. In this state of agitation and alarm, the apostles directed him to the only source of peace and safety—the blood of the atonement. The feelings of an awakened sinner are often strikingly similar to those of this jailer. He is agitated, alarmed, and fearful; he sees that he is a sinner, and trembles; the sins of his life rush over his memory, and fill him with deep anxiety, and he inquires what he must do to be saved. Often too, as here, the providence of God is the means of awakening the sinner, and of leading to this inquiry. Some alarming dispensation convinces him that God is near, and that the soul is in danger. The loss of health, or property, or of a friend, may thus alarm the soul; or the presence of the pestilence, or any fearful judgment, may arrest the attention, and lead to the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" Reader, have you ever made this inquiry? Have you ever, like the heathen jailer at Philippi, seen yourself to be a lost sinner, and been willing to ask the way to life?

In this narrative we see the *contrast* which exists in periods of distress and alarm between Christians and sinners. The guilty jailer was all agitation, fear, distress, and terror; the apostles, all peace, calmness, joy. The one was filled with thoughts of self-murder; the others, intent on saving life and doing good. This difference is to be traced to religion. It was confidence in God that gave peace to *them*; it was the want of that, which led to agitation and alarm in *him*. It is so

31 And they said, Believe ^b on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou

b Hab.2.4. Jno.3.16,36; 6.47. c.13.39.

still. In the trying scenes of this life, the same difference is still seen. In bereavements, in sickness, in times of pestilence, in death, it is still so. The Christian is calm; the sinner is agitated and alarmed. The Christian can pass through such scenes with peace and joy; to the sinner, they are scenes of terror and of dread. And thus it will be beyond the grave. In the morning of the resurrection, the Christian will rise with joy and triumph; the sinner, with fear and horror. And thus at the judgment-seat. Calm and serene, the saint shall witness the solemnities of that day, and triumphantly hail the Judge as his friend: fearful and trembling, the sinner shall regard these solemnities, and with a soul filled with horror, shall listen to the sentence that consigns him to eternal wo! With what solicitude, then, should we seek, without delay, an interest in that religion which alone can give peace to the soul!

31. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.* This was a simple, a plain, and an effectual direction. They did not direct him to use the means of grace, to pray, or to continue to seek for salvation. They did not advise him to delay, or to wait for the mercy of God. They told him to believe at once; to commit his agitated, and guilty, and troubled spirit to the Saviour, with the assurance that he should find peace. They presumed that he would understand what it was to believe; and they commanded him *to do the thing*. And this was the uniform direction which the early preachers gave to those inquiring the way to life. See Note, Matt. xvi. 16. Comp. Note, Acts viii. 22. ¶ *And thy house.* And thy family. That is, the same salvation is equally adapted to, and offered to your family. It does not mean that his family would be saved simply by *his* believing; but that the offers had reference to them as well as to himself; that they might be saved as well as he. His attention was thus called at once, as every man's should be, to his family. He was reminded that they needed salvation; and he was presented with the assurance that they might unite with him in the peace and joy of redeeming mercy. Comp. Note, ch. ii. 39. It *may be* implied here that the faith of a father may be expected to be the means of the salvation of his family. It often is so in fact: but the direct meaning of this is, that salvation was offered to his family as well as

shalt be saved, and thy ^a house.

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and ^b to all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he, and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat ^c

^a c.2.39.

^b Rom.1.14,16.

Luke 5.29.

himself; implying that if they believed, they should also be saved.

32. *To all that were in his house.* Old and young. They instructed them in the doctrines of religion, and doubtless in the nature of the ordinances of the gospel, and then baptized the entire family.

33. *And he took them.* To a convenient place for washing. It is evident from this, that though the apostles had the gift of miracles, that they did not exercise it in regard to their own sufferings, or to heal their own wounds. They restored others to health; not themselves. ¶ *And washed their stripes.* The wounds which had been inflicted by the severe scourging which they had received the night before. We have here a remarkable instance of the effect of religion in producing humanity and tenderness. This same man, a few hours before, had thrust them into the inner prison, and made them fast in the stocks. He evidently had then no concern about their stripes or their wounds. But no sooner was he converted, and his heart changed, than one of his first acts was an act of humanity. He saw them suffering; he pitied them, and hastened to minister to them and to heal their wounds. Till the time of Christianity, there never had been a hospital or an almshouse. Nearly all the hospitals for the sick since, have been reared by Christians. They who are most ready to minister to the sick and dying are Christians. They who are willing to encounter the pestilential damps of dungeons to aid the prisoner, are, like Howard, Christians. Who ever saw an infidel attending a dying bed, if he could help it? and where has infidelity ever reared a hospital or an almshouse, or made provision for the widow and the fatherless? Often one of the most striking changes that occurs in conversion is seen in the disposition to be kind and humane to the suffering. Comp. James i. 27. ¶ *And was baptized.* This was done *straightway*; that is, immediately. As it is altogether im-

before them, and rejoiced, ^d believing in God with all his house.

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

^d Rom.5.11.

probable that either in his house or in the prison there would be water sufficient for *immersing* them, there is every reason to suppose that this was performed in some other mode. All the circumstances lead us to suppose that it was not by immersion. It was at the dead of night; in a prison; amidst much agitation; and evidently performed in haste.

34. *He set meat before them.* Food. Gr. He placed a *table*. The word *meat* formerly meant food of all kinds. ¶ *And rejoiced.* This was the effect of believing. Religion produces joy. See Note, ch. viii. 8. He was free from danger and alarm; he had evidence that his sins were forgiven, and that he was the friend of God. The agitating and alarming scenes of the night had passed away; the prisoners were safe; and religion, with its peace, and pardon, and rejoicings, had visited his family. What a change to be produced in one night! What a difference between the family, when Paul was thrust into prison, and when he was brought out and received as an honoured guest at the very table of the renovated jailer! Such a change would Christianity produce in every family, and such joy would it diffuse through every household. ¶ *With all his house.* With all his family. Whether they believed *before* they were baptized, or *after*, is not declared. But the whole narrative would lead us to suppose, that as soon as the jailer believed, he and all his family were baptized. It is subsequently added, that they believed also. The *joy* arose from the fact, that they all believed the gospel; the *baptism* appears to have been performed on account of the faith of the head of the family.

35. *And when it was day, &c.* It is evident from the narrative that it was not contemplated at first to release them so soon. ver. 22—24. But it is not known what produced this change of purpose in the magistrates. It is probable, however, that they had been brought to reflection,

37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, ^a being Romans, and

a c.22.25.

somewhat as the jailer had, by the earthquake; and that their consciences had been troubled by the fact, that in order to please the multitude, they had caused strangers to be beaten and imprisoned without trial, and contrary to the Roman laws. An earthquake is always fitted to alarm the guilty; and among the Romans it was regarded as an omen of the anger of the gods, and was therefore fitted to produce agitation and remorse. Their agitation and alarm were shown by the fact that they sent the officers *as soon* as it was day. The judgments of God are eminently adapted to alarm sinners. Two ancient MSS. read this, "The magistrates, who were alarmed by the earthquake, sent," &c. (*Doddridge*.) Whether this reading be genuine or not, it doubtless expresses the true cause of their sending to release the apostles. ¶ *The sergeants.* εὐβδούχους. Literally, those having rods; the lictors. These were public officers, who went before magistrates with the emblems of authority. In Rome, they bore before the senators the *fascēs*; that is, a bundle of rods with an axe in its centre, as a symbol of office. They performed somewhat the same office as a beadle in England, or as a constable in our courts.

37. *They have beaten us openly uncondemned.* There are three aggravating circumstances mentioned, of which Paul complains. (1.) That they had been *beaten*, contrary to the Roman laws. (2.) That it had been *public*; the disgrace had been in the presence of the people, and the reparation ought to be as public; and, (3.) That it had been done without a trial, and while they were uncondemned; and therefore the magistrates ought themselves to come and release them, and thus publicly acknowledge their error. Paul knew the privileges of a Roman citizen; and at proper times, when the interests of justice and religion required it, he did not hesitate to assert them. In all this, he understood and accorded with the Roman laws. The Valerian law declared, that if a citizen appealed from the magistrate to the people, it should not be lawful for the magistrate to beat him with rods, or to behead him. Plutarch, *Life of P. Valerius Publicola*. Livy, ii. 8. By the Porcian law, it was expressly forbidden that a citizen should be beaten. Livy, iv. 9. Cicero (*Pro. Rabir.* ch. 4) says, that

have cast *us* into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily; but let them come them-

the body of every Roman citizen was inviolable. "The Porcian law," he adds, "has removed the rod from the body of every Roman citizen." And in his celebrated oration against Verres, he says, "A Roman citizen was beaten with rods in the forum, O judges; where, in the mean time, no groan, no other voice of this unhappy man was heard, except the cry, 'I am a Roman citizen!' Take away this hope," he says, "take away this defence from the Roman citizens, let there be no protection in the cry *I am a Roman citizen*, and the prætor can with impunity inflict any punishment on him who declares himself a citizen of Rome," &c. ¶ *Being Romans.* Being Romans, or having the privilege of Roman citizens. They were born Jews, but they claimed that they were Roman citizens, and had a right to the privileges of citizenship. On the ground of this claim, and the reason why Paul claimed to be a Roman citizen, see Notes, ch. xxii. 28. ¶ *Privily.* Privately. The release should be as public as the unjust act of imprisonment. As they have publicly attempted to disgrace us, so they should as publicly acquit us. This was a matter of mere justice; and as it was of great importance to their character and success, they insisted on it. ¶ *Nay, verily; but let them come, &c.* It was proper that they should be required to do this, (1.) Because they had been illegally imprisoned, and the injustice of the magistrates should be acknowledged. (2.) Because the Roman laws had been violated, and the majesty of the Roman people thus insulted, and honour should be done to the laws. (3.) Injustice had been done to Paul and Silas, and they had a right to demand just treatment and protection. (4.) Such a public act on the part of the magistrates would strengthen the young converts, and show them that the apostles were not guilty of a violation of the laws. (5.) It would tend to the honour and to the furtherance of religion. It would be a public acknowledgment of their innocence; and would go far towards lending to them the sanction of the laws as religious teachers. We may learn from this also, (1.) That though Christianity requires meekness in the reception of injuries, yet that there are occasions where Christians may insist on their rights according to the laws. Comp. John xviii. 23. (2.) That

selves,^a and fetch us out.

38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates; and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

39 And they came and besought^b them, and brought *them* out, and

^a Dan.6.18,19. Matt.10.16.

^b Ex.11.8. Rev.3.9.

this is to be done, particularly where the honour of religion is concerned, and where by it the gospel will be promoted. A Christian may bear much as a man in a private capacity, and may submit, without any effort to seek reparation; but where the honour of the gospel is concerned; where submission, without any effort to obtain justice, might be followed by disgrace to the cause of religion, a higher obligation may require him to seek a vindication of his character, and to claim the protection of the laws. His name, and character, and influence belong to the church. The laws are designed as a protection to an injured name, or of violated property and rights, and of an endangered life. And when that protection can be had only by an appeal to the laws, such an appeal, as in the case of Paul and Silas, is neither vindictive nor improper. My private interests I may sacrifice, if I choose; my public name, and character, and principles belong to the church and the world; and the laws, if necessary, may be called in for their protection.

38. *They feared when they heard, &c.* They were apprehensive of punishment for having imprisoned them in violation of the laws of the empire. To punish unjustly a Roman citizen was deemed an offence to the majesty of the Roman people, and was severely punished by the laws. Dionysius Hali. (Ant. Rom. ii.) says, that "The punishment appointed for those who abrogated or transgressed the Valerian law was death, and the confiscation of his property." The emperor Claudius deprived the inhabitants of Rhodes of freedom for having crucified some Roman citizens. Dio. Cass. lib. 60. (See *Kuinöel* and *Grotius*.)

39. *And they came and besought them.* A most humiliating act for Roman magistrates, but in this case it was unavoidable. The apostles had them completely in their power, and could easily effect their disgrace and ruin. Probably they besought

desired^c *them* to depart out of the city.

40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of Lydia*:^d and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

^c Matt.8.34.

^d ver.14.

them by declaring them innocent; by affirming that they were ignorant that they were Roman citizens, &c. ¶ *And desired them to depart, &c.* Probably, (1.) To save their own character, and be secure from their taking any further steps to convict the magistrates of violating the laws; and, (2.) To evade any further popular tumult on their account. This advice they saw fit to comply with, after they had seen and comforted the brethren. ver. 40. They had accomplished their main purpose in going to Philippi; they had preached the gospel; had laid the foundation of a flourishing church (comp. the Epistle to the Philippians); and they were now prepared to prosecute the purpose of their agency into surrounding regions. Thus, the opposition of the people and the magistrates at Philippi was the occasion of the founding of the church there; and thus their unkind and inhospitable request that they should leave them, was the means of the extension of the gospel into adjacent regions.

40. *They comforted them.* They exhorted them, and encouraged them to persevere, notwithstanding the opposition and persecution which they might meet with. ¶ *And departed.* That is, Paul and Silas departed. It would appear probable that Luke and Timothy remained in Philippi, or, at least, did not attend Paul and Silas. For Luke, who, in ch. xvi. 10, uses the first person, and speaks of himself as with Paul and Silas, speaks of them now in the third person, implying that he was not with them until Paul had arrived at Troas, where Luke joined him from Philippi. ch. xx. 5, 6. In ch. xvii. 14, also, Timothy is mentioned as being at Berea in company with Silas, from which it appears that he did not accompany Paul and Silas to Thessalonica. Comp. ch. xvii. 1. 4. Paul and Silas, when they departed from Philippi, went to Thessalonica. ch. xvii. 1.

CHAPTER XVII.

NOW when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

2 And Paul, as his manner was, ^a

^a Luke 4.16. c.9.20; 13.5,14.

CHAPTER XVII.

1. *Amphipolis.* This was the capital of the eastern province of Macedonia. It was originally a colony of the Athenians; but under the Romans it was made the capital of that part of Macedonia. It was near to Thrace, and was situated not far from the mouth of the river Strymon, which flowed *around the city*, and thus occasioned its name, *around the city*. In the middle ages it was called Chrysopolis. The village which now stands upon the site of the ancient city, is called *Empoli* or *Yamboli*, a corruption of Amphipolis. (*Rob. Cal.*) ¶ And Apollonia. This city was situated between Amphipolis and Thessalonica, and was formerly much celebrated for its trade. ¶ *They came to Thessalonica.* This was a seaport of the second part of Macedonia. It is situated at the head of the bay Thermaicus. It was made the capital of the second division of Macedonia by Æmilius Paulus, when he divided the country into four districts. It was formerly called Therma, but afterwards received the name of Thessalonica, either from Cassander, in honour of his wife Thessalonica, the daughter of Philip, or in honour of a army which Philip obtained over the armies of Thessaly. It was inhabited by Greeks, Romans, and Jews. It is now called *Saloniki*, and is a wretched place, though it has a population of near sixty thousand. In this place a church was collected, to which Paul afterwards addressed the two epistles to the Thessalonians. ¶ *Where was a synagogue.* Gr. Where was THE synagogue (ἡ συναγωγή) of the Jews. It has been remarked by Grotius and Kuinöel, that the article used here is emphatic, and denotes that there was probably no synagogue at Amphipolis and Apollonia. This was the reason why they passed through those places without making any delay.

2. *His manner was.* His custom was to attend on the worship of the synagogue, and to preach the gospel to his countrymen first. ch. ix. 20; xiii. 5. 14. ¶ *Reasoned with them.* Discoursed to them, or attempted to prove that Jesus was the Mes-

siah. The word used here (διελέγιστο) means often no more than to make a public address or discourse. Note, ch. xxiv. 25. ¶ *Out of the Scriptures.* By many critics this is connected with the following verse, 'Opening and alleging from the Scriptures, that Christ must needs have suffered,' &c. The sense is not varied materially by the change.

3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must ^b needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this ¹ Jesus, whom I preach

^b Luke 24.26,46. c.18.28. Gal.3.1. 1Thess.1.5,6.

¹ or, whom, said he, I preach.

siah. The word used here (διελέγιστο) means often no more than to make a public address or discourse. Note, ch. xxiv. 25. ¶ *Out of the Scriptures.* By many critics this is connected with the following verse, 'Opening and alleging from the Scriptures, that Christ must needs have suffered,' &c. The sense is not varied materially by the change.

3. *Opening.* Διανοίγων. See Luke, xxiv. 32. The word means, to explain, or to unfold. It is usually applied to that which is *shut*, as to the eyes, &c. Then it means to explain that which is concealed or obscure. It means here, that he *explained* the Scriptures in their true sense. ¶ *And alleging.* Παρεπιτίθειμι. Laying down the proposition; that is, maintaining that it must be so. ¶ *That Christ must needs have suffered.* That there was a fitness and necessity in his dying, as Jesus of Nazareth had done. The sense of this will be better seen by retaining the word *Messiah*. 'That there was a fitness or necessity that the *Messiah* expected by the Jews and predicted in their Scriptures, should suffer.' This point the Jews were unwilling to admit; but it was essential to his argument in proving that Jesus was the *Messiah*, to show that it was foretold that he should die for the sins of men. On the *necessity* of this, see Note, Luke xxiv. 26, 27. ¶ *Have suffered.* That he should die. ¶ *And that this Jesus.* And that this Jesus of Nazareth, who has thus suffered and risen, whom, said he, I preach to you, is the *Messiah*.

The arguments by which Paul probably proved that Jesus was the *Messiah*, were, (1.) That he corresponded with the *prophecies* respecting him, in the following particulars. (a) He was born at Bethlehem. Micah v. 2. (b) He was of the tribe of Judah. Gen. xlix. 10. (c) He was descended from Jesse, and of the royal line of David. Isa. xi. 1. 10. (d) He came at the *time* predicted. Dan. ix. 24—27. (e) His appearance, character, work, &c. corresponded with the predictions. Isa. liii. (2.) His miracles proved that he was the *Messiah*, for he *professed* to be, and God

unto you, is Christ.

4 And some ^a of them believed, and ^b 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, ^c and sought

^a c. 28. 24.

^b 2 Cor. 8. 5.

^c Rom. 16. 21.

would not work a miracle to confirm the claims of an impostor. (3.) For the same reason, his resurrection from the dead proved that he was the Messiah.

4. *And consorted.* Literally, had their lot with Paul and Silas; that is, they united themselves to them, and became their disciples. The word is commonly applied to those who are partakers of an inheritance. ¶ *And of the devout Greeks.* Religious Greeks; or, of those who worshipped God. Those are denoted who had renounced the worship of idols, and who attended on the worship of the synagogue, but who were not fully admitted to the privileges of Jewish proselytes. They were called, by the Jews, proselytes of the gate. ¶ *And of the chief women.* Note, ch. xiii. 50.

5. *Moved with envy.* That they made so many converts, and met with such success. ¶ *Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort.* This is an unhappy translation. The word *lewd* is not in the original. The Greek is, 'And having taken certain wicked men of those who were about the forum,' or market-place. The forum, or market-place, was the place where the idle assembled, and where those were gathered together that wished to be employed. Matt. xx. 3. Many of these would be of abandoned character,—the idle, the dissipated, and the worthless; and, therefore, just the materials for a mob. It does not appear that they felt any particular interest in the subject; but they were, like other mobs, easily excited, and urged on to any acts of violence. The pretence on which the mob was excited was, that they had every where produced disturbance, and that they violated the laws of the Roman emperor. ver. 6, 7. It may be observed, however, that a mob usually regards very little the cause in which they are engaged. They may be roused

to bring them out to the people.

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These ^d that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also;

7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary ^e to the decrees of Cesar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus.

8 And they troubled ^f the people,

^d Luke 23. 5. c. 16. 20.

^e Luke 23. 2. Jno. 19. 12.

^f Matt. 2. 3. Jno. 11. 48.

either for or against religion, and become as full of zeal for the *insulted* honour of religion as *against* it. The profane, the worthless, and the abandoned thus often become violently enraged for the *honour* of religion, and full of indignation and tumult against those who are accused of violating public peace and order. ¶ *The house of Jason.* Where Paul and Silas were. ver. 7. Jason appears to have been a relative of Paul, and for this reason it was probably that he lodged with him. Rom. xvi. 21.

6. *These that have turned the world upside down.* That have excited commotion and disturbance in other places. The charge has been often brought against the gospel, that it has been the occasion of confusion and disorder.

7. *Whom Jason hath received.* Has received into his house, and entertained kindly. ¶ *These all do contrary to the decrees of Cesar.* The charge against them was that of sedition and rebellion against the Roman emperor. Grotius on this verse remarks, that the Roman people, and after them the emperors, would not permit the name of king to be mentioned in any of the vanquished provinces, except by their permission. ¶ *Saying that there is another king.* This was probably a charge of mere malignity. They probably understood, that when the apostles spoke of Jesus as a king, they did not do it as of a temporal prince. But it was easy to pervert their words, and to give plausibility to the accusation. The same thing had occurred in regard to the Lord Jesus himself. Luke xxiii. 2.

8. *And they troubled the people.* They excited the people to commotion and alarm. The rulers feared the tumult that was excited, and the people feared the Romans, when they heard the charge that there were rebels against the govern

and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away ^a Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither*,

a c.9.25, ver.14.

ment in their city. It does not appear that there was a disposition in the rulers or the people to persecute the apostles; but they were excited and alarmed by the representations of the Jews, and by the mob that they had collected.

9. *And when they had taken security of Jason.* This is an expression taken from courts, and means that Jason and the other gave satisfaction to the magistrates for the good conduct of Paul and Silas, or became responsible for it. Whether it was by depositing a sum of money, and by thus giving bail, is not quite clear. The sense is, that they did it in accordance with the Roman usages, and gave sufficient security for the good conduct of Paul and Silas. Heuman supposes that the pledge given was, that they should leave the city. Michaelis thinks that they gave a pledge that they would no more harbour them; but that if they returned again to them, they would deliver them to the magistrates. ¶ *And of the other.* The other brethren (ver. 6) who had been drawn to the rulers of the city.

10. *And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas.* Comp. ch. ix. 25. They did this for their safety. Yet this was not done until the gospel had taken deep root in Thessalonica. Having preached there, and laid the foundation of a church; having thus accomplished the purpose for which they went there, they were prepared to leave the city. To the church in this city Paul afterwards addressed two epistles. ¶ *Unto Berea.* This was a city of Macedonia, near Mount Cithanes. There is a medal of Berea extant, remarkable for being inscribed, "of the second Macedonia."

11. *These were more noble.* *Ἐυγενεστῆες.* This literally means more noble by birth; descended from more illustrious ancestors. But here the word is used to denote a quality of mind and heart; they were more generous, liberal, and noble in their feelings; more disposed to inquire candidly into the truth of the doctrines advanced by Paul and Silas. It is always

went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more ^b noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness ^c of mind, and searched the Scriptures ^d daily, whether those things were so.

b Ps.119.99,100.

c Jam.1.21. 1Pet.2.2.

c Isa.

34.16. Luke 16.29; 24.44. Jno.5.39.

proof of a noble, liberal, and ingenuous disposition, to be willing to examine into the truth of any doctrine presented. The writer refers here particularly to the Jews. ¶ *In that.* Because. ¶ *They received the word, &c.* They listened attentively and respectfully to the gospel. They did not reject and spurn it, as unworthy of examination. This is the first particular in which they were more noble than those in Thessalonica. ¶ *And searched the Scriptures.* That is, the Old Testament. Note, John v. 39. The apostles always affirmed that the doctrines which they maintained respecting the Messiah were in accordance with the Jewish Scriptures. The Bereans made diligent and earnest inquiry in respect to this, and were willing to ascertain the truth. ¶ *Daily.* Not only on the Sabbath, and in the synagogue; but they made it a daily employment. It is evident from this, that they *had* the Scriptures; and this is one proof that Jewish families would, if possible, obtain the oracles of God. ¶ *Whether these things were so.* Whether the doctrines stated by Paul and Silas were in accordance with the Scriptures. The Old Testament they received as the standard of truth, and whatever could be shown to be in accordance with that they received. On this verse we may remark, (1.) That it is proof of true nobleness and liberality of mind to be willing to examine the proofs of the truth of religion. What the friends of Christianity have had most cause to lament and regret is, that so many are unwilling to examine its claims; that they spurn it as unworthy of serious thought, and condemn it without hearing. (2.) The Scriptures should be examined *daily*. If we wish to arrive at the truth, they should be the object of constant study. That man has very little reason to expect that he will grow in knowledge and grace, who does not peruse, with candour and with prayer, a portion of the Bible every day. (3.) The constant searching of the Scriptures is the best way to keep the

12 Therefore many of them believed: also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul

at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up ^a the people.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away ^b Paul, to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

15 And they that conducted Paul

^a Luke 12.51. ^b Matt. 10.23

mind from error. He who does not do it daily may expect to "be carried about with every wind of doctrine," and to have no settled opinions. (4.) The preaching of ministers should be examined by the Scriptures. Their doctrines are of no value unless they accord with the Bible. Every preacher should expect his doctrines to be examined in this way, and to be rejected if they are not in accordance with the word of God. The church, in proportion to its increase in purity and knowledge, will feel this more and more; and it is an indication of advance in piety when men are increasingly disposed to examine every thing by the Bible. How immensely important then is it, that the young should be trained up to diligent habits of searching the word of God. And how momentous is the duty of parents, and of Sabbath-school teachers, to inculcate just views of the interpretation of the Bible, and to form the habits of the rising generation so that they shall be disposed and enabled to examine every doctrine by the sacred oracles. The purity of the church depends on the extension of the spirit of the noble-minded Bereans; and that spirit is to be extended mainly by the instrumentality of Sabbath-schools.

12. *Therefore.* As the result of their examination. They found that the doctrines of Paul and Silas accorded with the Old Testament. This result will commonly follow when people search the Scriptures. Much is gained when men can be induced to examine the Bible. We may commonly take it for granted that such an examination will result in their conviction of the truth. The most prominent and invariable cause of infidelity is found in the fact that men will not investigate the Scriptures. Many infidels have confessed that they had never carefully read the New Testament. Thomas Paine confessed that he wrote the first part of the "Age of Reason" without having a Bible at hand; and without its being possible to procure one where he then was (in Paris). "I had," says he, "neither Bible nor Testament to

refer to, though I was writing against both; nor could I procure any." *Age of Reason*, p. 65. Ed. 1831. Also p. 33. None have ever read the Scriptures with candour, and with the true spirit of prayer, who have not been convinced of the truth of Christianity, and been brought to submit their souls to its influence and its consolations. The great thing which Christians desire their fellow men to do is, candidly to search the Bible; and when this is done, they confidently expect that they will be truly converted to God. ¶ *Of honourable women.* Note, ch. xiii. 50.

13. *Stirred up the people.* The word used here (*σαλεύειν*) denotes properly to *agitate*, or *excite*, as the waves of the sea are agitated by the wind. It is with great beauty used to denote the agitation and excitement of a popular tumult, from its resemblance to the troubled waves of the ocean. The figure is often employed by the classic writers, and also occurs in the Scriptures. See Ps. lxxv. 7. Isa. xvii. 12, 13. Jer. xlvi. 7, 8.

14. *The brethren.* Those who were Christians. ¶ *Sent away Paul.* In order to secure his safety. A similar thing had been done in Thessalonica. ver. 10. The tumult was great; and there was no doubt, such was the hostility of the Jews, that the life of Paul would be endangered, and they therefore resolved to secure his safety. ¶ *As it were.* Rather, 'even to the sea,' for that is its signification. It does not imply that there was any feint or sleight in the case, *as if* they intended to deceive their pursuers. They took him to the sea-coast, not far from Berea, and from that place he probably went by sea to Athens.

15. *Unto Athens.* This was the first visit of Paul to this celebrated city; and perhaps the first visit of a Christian minister. His success in this city, for some cause, was not great. But his preaching was attended with the conversion of some individuals. See ver. 34. Athens was the most celebrated city of Greece, and was distinguished for the military talents, learning, eloquence, and politeness of its inhabitants. It was

brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus ^a for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

a c.18.5.

founded by Cecrops and an Egyptian colony, about 1556 years before the Christian era. It was called *Athens* in honour of Minerva, who was chiefly worshipped there, and to whom the city was dedicated. The city, at first, was built on a rock in the midst of a spacious plain; but in process of time the whole plain was covered with buildings, which were called the lower city. No city of Greece, or of the ancient world, was so much distinguished for philosophy, learning, and the arts. The most celebrated warriors, poets, statesmen, and philosophers were either born or flourished there. The most celebrated models of architecture and statuary were there; and for ages it held its pre-eminence in civilization, arts, and arms. The city still exists, though it has been often subject to the calamities of war, to a change of masters, and to the mouldering hand of time. It was twice burnt by the Persians; destroyed by Philip II. of Macedon; again by Sylla; was plundered by Tiberius; desolated by the Goths in the reign of Claudius; and the whole territory ravaged and ruined by Alaric. From the reign of Justinian to the thirteenth century, the city remained in obscurity, though it continued to be a town at the head of a small state. It was seized by Omar, general of Mahomet the Great, in 1455; was sacked by the Venetians in 1464; and was taken by the Turks again in 1688. In 1812, the population was 12,000; but it has since been desolated by the sanguinary contests between the Turks and the Greeks, and left almost a mass of ruins. It is now free; and efforts are making by Christians to restore it to its former elevation in learning and importance, and to impart to it the blessings of the Christian religion. Two American missionaries are labouring in the place where Paul preached almost two thousand years ago; and schools under their immediate superintendence and care, are established by American Christian missionaries, in the place that was once regarded as "the eye of Greece," and the light of the civilized world. In the revolutions of ages it has been ordered that men should bear the torch of learning to Athens from a land unknown to its ancient philosophers, and convey the blessings of civilization to

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, ^b his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city ¹ wholly given to idolatry.

^b Ps.119.136. 2Pet.2.8.

¹ or, full of idols.

them by that gospel which in the time of Paul they rejected and despised. ¶ *And receiving a commandment.* They who accompanied Paul received his commands to Silas and Timothy. ¶ *With all speed.* As soon as possible. Perhaps Paul expected much labour and success in Athens, and was therefore desirous of securing their aid with him in his work.

16. *Now while Paul waited.* How long he was there is not intimated; but doubtless some time would elapse before they could arrive. In the mean time, Paul had ample opportunity to observe the state of the city. ¶ *His spirit was stirred within him.* His mind was greatly excited. The word used here (*παρωξύνετο*) denotes any excitement, agitation, or *paroxysm* of mind. 1 Cor. xiii. 5. It here means that the mind of Paul was greatly *concerned*, or agitated, doubtless with pity and distress, at their folly and danger. ¶ *The city wholly given to idolatry.* Gr. *κατέιδωλον*. It is well translated in the margin, "or full of idols." The word is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. That this was the condition of the city is abundantly testified by profane writers. Thus Pausanias (in Attic. i. 24) says, "the Athenians greatly surpassed others in their zeal for religion." Lucian (l. i. Prometh. p. 180) says of the city of Athens, "On every side there are altars, victims, temples, and festivals." Livy (45. 27) says, that Athens "was full of the images of gods and men, adorned with every variety of material, and with all the skill of art." And Petronius (Sat. xvii.) says humorously of the city, that "it was easier to find a god than a man there." See *Kuinöel*. In this verse we may see how a splendid, idolatrous city will strike a pious mind. Athens then had more that was splendid in architecture, more that was brilliant in science, and more that was beautiful in the arts, than any other city of the world; perhaps more than all the rest of the world united. Yet there is no account that the mind of Paul was filled with admiration; there is no record that he spent his time in examining the works of art; there is no evidence that he forgot his high purpose in an idle and useless contemplation of temples and statuary. His was a Christian mind; and he contemplated all

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout ^a persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

a c. 8. 2.

this with a Christian heart. That heart was deeply affected in view of the amazing guilt of a people that were ignorant of the true God, and that had filled their city with idols reared to the honour of imaginary divinities; and who, in the midst of all this splendour and luxury, were going down to the gates of death. So should every pious man feel who treads the streets of a splendid and guilty city. The Christian will not despise the productions of art; but he will feel, deeply feel, for the unhappy condition of those who, amidst wealth and splendour and adorning, are withholding their affections from the living God, bestowing them on the works of their own hands, or on objects degraded and polluting; and who are going unredeemed to eternal wo. Happy would it be if every Christian traveller who visits cities of wealth and splendour, would, like Paul, be affected in view of their crimes and dangers; and happy if, like him, men could cease their unbounded admiration of magnificence and splendour in temples and palaces and statuary, to regard the condition of *mind*, not perishable like marble; and of *the soul*, more magnificent even in its ruins than all the works of Phidias or Praxiteles.

17. *Therefore disputed he.* Or reasoned. He engaged in an argument with them. ¶ *With the devout persons.* Those worshipping God after the manner of the Jews. They were Jewish proselytes, who had renounced idolatry, but who had not been fully admitted to the privileges of the Jews. See Note, ch. x. 2. ¶ *And in the market.* In the forum. It was not only the place where provisions were sold, but was also a place of great public concourse. In this place the philosophers were not unfrequently found engaged in public discussion.

18. *Then certain philosophers.* Athens was distinguished, among all the cities of Greece and the world, for the cultivation of a subtle and refined philosophy. This was their boast, and the object of their constant search and study. 1 Cor. i. 22. ¶ *Of the Epicureans.* This sect of philosophers was so named from Epicurus, who lived about 300 years before the Christian era. They denied that the

18 Then certain philosophers ^b of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this ¹ babbler say? Other some, He seemeth to be a

b Col. 2. 8. ¹ or, base fellow.

world was created by God, and that the gods exercised any care or providence over human affairs, and also the immortality of the soul. Against these positions of the sect, Paul directed his main argument, in proving that the world was created and governed by God. One of the distinguishing doctrines of Epicurus was, that pleasure was the *summum bonum*, or chief good, and that virtue was to be practised only as it contributed to pleasure. By pleasure, however, Epicurus did not mean sensual and grovelling appetites, and degraded vices, but rational pleasure, properly regulated and governed. See Good's Book of Nature. But whatever *his* views were, it is certain that his followers had embraced the doctrine that voluptuousness and the pleasures of sense were to be practised without restraint. Both in principle and practice, therefore, they devoted themselves to a life of gayety and sensuality, and sought happiness only in indolence, effeminacy, and voluptuousness. Confident in the belief that the world was not under the administration of a God of justice, they gave themselves up to the indulgence of every passion; the infidels of their time, and the exact example of the gay and fashionable multitudes of all times, that live without God, and that seek pleasure as their chief good. ¶ *And of the Stoics.* These were a sect of philosophers, so named from the Greek *στοά*, *Stoa*, a porch, or portico, because *Zeno*, the founder of the sect, held his school and taught in a *porch*, in the city of Athens. *Zeno* was born in the island of Cyprus, but the greater part of his life was spent at Athens in teaching philosophy. After having taught publicly 48 years, he died at the age of 96, two hundred and sixty-four years before Christ. The doctrines of the sect were, that the universe was created by God; that all things were fixed by fate; that even God was under the dominion of fatal necessity; that the fates were to be submitted to; that the passions and affections were to be suppressed and restrained; that happiness consisted in the insensibility of the soul to pain; and that a man should gain an absolute mastery over all the passions and affections of his nature.

setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

They were stern in their views of virtue, and, like the Pharisees, prided themselves on their own righteousness. They supposed that matter was eternal, and that God was either the animating principle or soul of the world, or that all things were a part of God. They fluctuated much in their views of a future state; some of them holding that the soul would exist only until the destruction of the universe, and others that it would finally be absorbed into the divine essence, and become a part of God. It will be readily seen, therefore, with what pertinency and address Paul discoursed to them. The leading doctrines of both sects were met by him. ¶ *Encountered him.* Contended with him; opposed themselves to him. ¶ *And some said.* This was said in scorn and contempt. He had excited attention; but they scorned the doctrines that should be delivered by an unknown foreigner from Judea. ¶ *What will this babbler say?* Margin, *base fellow.* Greek, *σπερματολογος.* The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It properly means *one who collects seeds*, and was applied by the Greeks to the poor persons who collected the scattered grain in the fields after harvest, or to gleaners; and also to the poor, who obtained a precarious subsistence around the markets and in the streets. It was also applied to birds that picked up the scattered seeds of grain in the field, or in the markets. The word came hence to have a two-fold signification. (1.) It denoted the poor, needy, and vile; the refuse and off-scouring of society; and, (2.) From the birds which were thus employed, and which were troublesome by their continual unmusical sounds, it came to denote those who were talkative, garrulous, and opinionated; those who collected the opinions of others, or scraps of knowledge, and retailed them fluently, without order or method. It was a word, therefore, expressive of their contempt for an unknown foreigner who should pretend to instruct the learned men and philosophers of Greece. Doddridge renders it, “retailer of scraps.” Syriac, “collector of words.” ¶ *Other some.* Others. ¶ *He seemeth to be a setter forth.* He announces or declares the existence of strange gods. The reason why they supposed this, was, that he made the capital points of his preaching to be Jesus and the resurrection, which they mistook

19 And they took him, and brought him unto ¹ Areopagus, saying, May we know what this

¹ or, *Mars' hill.* It was the highest court in Athens.

for the names of divinities. ¶ *Of strange gods.* Of foreign gods, or demons. They worshipped many gods themselves, and as they believed that every country had its own peculiar divinities, they supposed that Paul had come to announce the existence of some such foreign, and to them unknown divinities. The word translated *gods* (*δαίμονιον*) denotes properly the genii, or spirits who were superior to men, but inferior to the gods. It is, however, often employed to denote the gods themselves; and is evidently so used here. The *gods* among the Greeks were such as were supposed to have that rank by nature. The *demons* were such as had been exalted to divinity from being heroes and distinguished men. ¶ *He preached unto them Jesus.* He proclaimed him as the Messiah. The mistake which they made, by supposing that he was a foreign divinity, was one which was perfectly natural for minds degraded like theirs by idolatry. They had no idea of a pure God; they knew nothing of the doctrine of the Messiah; and they naturally supposed, therefore, that he of whom Paul spoke so much must be a god of some other nation, of a rank similar to their own divinities. ¶ *And the resurrection.* The resurrection of Jesus, and through him the resurrection of the dead. It is evident, I think, that by the resurrection (*τῆν ἀνάστασιν*) they understood him to refer to the name of some goddess. Such was the interpretation of Chrysostom. The Greeks had erected altars to Shame, and Famine, and Desire (Paus. i. 17), and it is probable that they supposed ‘the resurrection,’ or *the Anastasis*, to be the name also of some unknown goddess who presided over the resurrection. Thus they regarded him as a setter forth of *two* foreign or strange gods—Jesus, and the Anastasis, or resurrection.

19. *And brought him unto Areopagus.* Margin, or Mars' hill. This was the place or court in which the Areopagites, the celebrated supreme judges of Athens, assembled. It was on a hill almost in the middle of the city; but nothing now remains by which we can determine the form or construction of the tribunal. The hill is almost entirely a mass of stone, and is not easily accessible, its sides being steep and abrupt. On many accounts this was the most celebrated tribunal in the world. Its decisions were distin-

new ^a doctrine, whereof thou speak-
est, *is* ²?

20 For thou bringest certain ^b
strange things to our ears: we
would know therefore what these
things mean.

^a Jno. 13. 34. 1 Jno. 2. 7, 8. ^b Hos. 8. 12.

guished for justice and correctness; nor was there any court in Greece in which so much confidence was placed. This court took cognizance of murders, impieties, and immoralities; they punished vices of all kinds, including idleness; they rewarded the virtuous; they were peculiarly attentive to blasphemies against the gods, and to the performance of the sacred mysteries of religion. It was, therefore, with the greatest propriety that Paul was questioned before this tribunal, as being regarded as a setter forth of strange gods, and as being supposed to wish to introduce a new mode of worship. See Potter's *Antiquities of Greece*, b. i. ch. 19; and *Travels of Anacharsis*, vol. i. 136. 185; ii. 292—295. ¶ *May we know.* We would know. This seems to have been a respectful inquiry; and it does not appear that Paul was brought there for the sake of *trial*. There are no accusations; no witnesses; none of the forms of trial. They seem to have resorted thither because it was the place where the subject of religion was usually discussed, and because it was a place of confluence for the citizens and judges and wise men of Athens, and of foreigners. The design seems to have been, not to *try* him, but fairly to canvass the claims of his doctrines. See ver. 21. It was just an instance of the inquisitive spirit of the people of Athens, willing to hear before they condemned, and to examine before they approved.

20. *Certain strange things.* Literally, something pertaining to a *foreign* country, or people. Here it means something unusual, remarkable, to which we are not accustomed. It was something different from what they had been accustomed to hear from their philosophers and religious teachers. ¶ *What these things mean.* We would understand more clearly what is affirmed respecting Jesus and the resurrection.

21. *For all the Athenians.* This was their *general* character. ¶ *And strangers which were there.* Athens was greatly distinguished for the celebrity of its schools of philosophy. It was at that time at the head of the literary world.

x 2

21 (For all the Athenians, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' ¹ Hill, and said, *Ye men*

¹ or, *the court of the Areopagites.*

Its arts and its learning were celebrated in all lands. It is known, therefore, that it was the favourite resort of men of other nations, who came there to become acquainted with its institutions, and to listen to its sages. ¶ *Spent their time in nothing else.* The learned and subtle Athenians gave themselves much to speculation, and employed themselves in examining the various new systems of philosophy that were proposed. Strangers and foreigners who were there, having much leisure, would also give themselves to the same inquiries. ¶ *But either to tell or to hear some new thing.* Greek, *something newer.* Κεῖνότερον. The latest news; or the latest subject of inquiry proposed. This is well known to have been the character of the people of Athens at all times. "Many of the ancient writers bear witness to the garrulity, and curiosity, and intemperate desire of novelty, among the Athenians, by which they inquired respecting all things, even those in which they had no interest, whether of a public or private nature." (*Kuinöel.*) Thus Thucyd. (3. 38) says of them, "you excel in suffering yourselves to be deceived with *novelty of speech.*" On which the old Scholiast makes this remark, almost in the words of Luke: "He (Thucydides) he, blames the Athenians, who care for nothing else but to tell or to hear something new." Thus Ælian (5. 13) says of the Athenians, that they are versatile in novelties. Thus Demosthenes represents the Athenians "as inquiring in the place of public resort if there were any *NEWS?*" Τὸ νεότερον. Meursius has shown, also, that there were more than three hundred public places in Athens of public resort, where the principal youth and reputable citizens were accustomed to meet for the purpose of conversation and inquiry.

22. *Then Paul.* This commences Paul's explanation of the doctrines which he had stated. It is evident that Luke has recorded but a mere summary or outline of the discourse; but it is such as to enable us to see clearly his course of thought, and the manner in which he met the two principal sects of their philosophers. ¶ *In the midst of Mars' hill.* Greek, Areopagus.

of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. ^a

23 For as I passed by, and be-

a Jer.50.38.

This should have been retained in the translation. ¶ *Ye men of Athens.* This language was perfectly respectful, notwithstanding his heart had been deeply affected by their idolatry. Every thing about this discourse is calm, grave, cool, and argumentative. Paul understood the character of his auditors, and did not commence his discourse by denouncing them, or suppose that they would be convinced by mere dogmatical assertion. No happier instance can be found, of cool, collected argumentation, than is furnished in this discourse. ¶ *I perceive.* He perceived this by his observations of their forms of worship, in passing through their city. ver. 23. ¶ *In all things.* In respect to all events. ¶ *Ye are too superstitious.* Δεισιδχιμονοστέρεους. This is a most unhappy translation. We use the word *superstitious* always in a bad sense, to denote being over-scrupulous and rigid in religious observances, particularly in smaller matters; or to a zealous devotion to rites and observances which are not commanded. But the word here is designed to convey no such idea. It properly means reverence for the gods or demons. It is used in the classic writers in a *good* sense, to denote piety towards the gods, or suitable *fear* and reverence for them; and also in a *bad* sense, to denote improper fear or excessive dread of their anger; and in this sense it accords with our word *superstitious*. But it is altogether improbable that Paul should have used it in a bad sense. For, (1.) It was not his custom needlessly to blame or offend his auditors. (2.) It is not probable that he would commence his discourse in a manner that would only excite their prejudice and opposition. (3.) In the thing which he specifies (ver. 23) as proof on the subject, he does not introduce it as a matter of blame, but rather as a proof of their devotedness to the cause of religion, and of their regard for God. (4.) The whole speech is calm, dignified, and argumentative—such as became such a place, such a speaker, and such an audience. The meaning of the expression is, therefore, ‘I perceive that you are greatly devoted to reverence for religion; that it is a characteristic of the people to honour the gods, to rear altars to them, and to recognise the divine agency in times of trial.’ The *proof* of

held your devotions, ¹ I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom there-

¹ or, gods that ye worship. Gal.4.8.

this was the altar reared to the unknown God; its *bearing* on his purpose was, that such a state of public sentiment must be favourable to an inquiry into the truth of what he was about to state.

23. *For as I passed by.* Greek, ‘For I, coming through, and seeing,’ &c. ¶ *And beheld.* Diligently contemplated; attentively considered (ἀναθεωρεῖν). The worship of an idolatrous people will be an object of intense and painful interest to a Christian. ¶ *Your devotions.* Τασεβάσματα. Our word *devotions* refers to the *act of worship*—to prayers, praises, &c. The Greek word here used means properly any sacred *thing*; any *object* which is worshipped, or which is connected with the place or rites of worship. Thus it is applied either to the gods themselves, or to the temples, altars, shrines, sacrifices, statues, &c., connected with the worship of the gods. This is its meaning here. It does not denote that Paul saw them engaged in the *act of worship*, but that he was struck with the numerous temples, altars, statues, &c., which were reared to the gods, and which indicated the state of the people. Syriac, “The temple of your gods.” Vulgate, “your images.” Margin, “gods that ye worship.” ¶ *I found an altar.* An altar usually denotes a place for sacrifice. Here, however, it does not appear that any sacrifice was offered; but it was probably a monument of stone, reared to commemorate a certain event, and dedicated to the unknown God. ¶ *To the unknown God.* Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ. Where this altar was reared, or on what occasion, has been a subject of much debate with expositors. That there was such an altar in Athens, though it may not have been specifically mentioned by the Greek writers, is rendered probable by the following circumstances. (1.) It was customary to rear such altars. Minutius Felix says of the Romans, “they build altars to unknown divinities.” (2.) The term *unknown God* was used in relation to the worship of the Athenians. Lucian, in his *Philopatriis*, uses this form of an oath: “I swear by the *unknown God* at Athens,” the very expression used by the apostle. And again he says (ch. xxix. 180), “We have found out the *unknown God* at Athens, and worshipped him with our hands stretched up to heaven,” &c.

fore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

24 God ^a that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that

a c.14.15.

(3.) There were altars at Athens inscribed to the *unknown gods*. Philostratus says (in Vita. Apollo. vi. 3), "And this at Athens, where there are even altars to the *unknown gods*." Thus Pausanius (in Attic. ch. 1) says, that "at Athens there are altars of gods which are called the UNKNOWN ones." Jerome, in his commentary (Epistle to Titus i. 12), says that the whole inscription was, "to the gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa; to the *unknown and strange gods*." (4.) There was a remarkable altar reared in Athens in a time of pestilence, in honour of the unknown god which had granted them deliverance. Diogenes Laertius says that Epimenides restrained the pestilence in the following manner: "Taking white and black sheep, he led them to the Areopagus, and there permitted them to go where they would, commanding those who followed them to sacrifice (τῷ προσήκοντι θεῷ) to the god to whom these things pertained [or who had the power of averting the plague, whoever he might be, without adding the name], and thus to allay the pestilence. From which it has arisen, that at this day, through the villages of the Athenians, altars are found without any name." Dioge. Laer. b. i. § 10. This took place about 600 years before Christ, and it is not improbable that one or more of those altars remained until the time of Paul. It should be added that the natural inscription on those altars would be, "to the unknown god." None of the gods to whom they usually sacrificed could deliver them from the pestilence. They therefore reared them to some unknown Being who had the power to free them from the plague. ¶ *Whom therefore*. The true God, who had really delivered them from the plague. ¶ *Ye ignorantly worship*. Or worship without knowing his name. You have expressed your homage for him by rearing to him an altar. ¶ *Him declare I unto you*. I make known to you his name, attributes, &c. There is remarkable address and *tact* in Paul's seizing on this circumstance; and yet it was perfectly fair and honest. God only could deliver in the time of the pestilence. This altar had, therefore, been really reared to him, though his name was unknown. The same Being who

he is ^b Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth ^c not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with

b Matt.11.25.

c c.7.48.

had interposed at that time, and whose interposition was recorded by the building of this altar, was He who had made the heavens; who ruled over all; and whom Paul was now about to make known to them. There is another feature of skill in the allusion to this altar. In other circumstances it might seem to be presumptuous for an unknown Jew to attempt to instruct the sages of Athens. But here they had confessed and proclaimed their ignorance. By rearing this altar they acknowledged their need of instruction. The way was, therefore, fairly open for Paul to address even these philosophers, and to discourse to them on a point on which they acknowledged their ignorance.

24. *God that made the world*. The main object of this discourse of Paul is to convince them of the folly of idolatry (ver. 29), and thus to lead them to repentance. For this purpose he commences with a statement of the true doctrine respecting God as the Creator of all things. We may observe here, (1.) That he speaks here of *God* as the Creator of the world—thus opposing *indirectly* their opinions that there were *many gods*. (2.) He speaks of him as the *Creator* of the world, and thus opposes the opinion that matter was eternal; that all things were controlled by fate; and that he could be confined to temples. The Epicureans held that matter was eternal, and that the world was formed by a fortuitous concourse of atoms. To this opinion Paul opposed the doctrine that all things were *made* by one God. Comp. ch. xiv. 15. ¶ *Seeing that, &c.* Gr. "He being Lord of heaven and earth." ¶ *Lord of heaven and earth*. Proprietor and Ruler of heaven and earth. It is highly absurd, therefore, to suppose that he who is present in heaven and in earth at the same time, and who rules over all, should be confined to a temple of an earthly structure, or dependent on man for any thing. ¶ *Dwelleth not, &c.* See Note, ch. vii. 48.

25. *Neither is worshipped with men's hands*. The word here rendered *worshipped* (θεραπεύεται) denotes to *serve*; to wait upon; and then to render religious service or homage. There is reference here, undoubtedly, to a notion pre-

men's hands, as though he ^a needed any thing; seeing he ^b giveth to all, life, and breath, and ^c all things;

^a Ps. 50. 8. ^b Job 12. 10. Zech. 12. 1. ^c Rom. 11. 36.

valent among the heathen, that the gods were fed or nourished by the offerings made to them. The idea is prevalent among the Hindoos, that the sacrifices which are made, and which are offered in the temples, are consumed by the gods themselves. Perhaps, also, Paul had reference to the fact that so many persons were employed in their temples in serving them *with their hands*; that is, in preparing sacrifices and feasts in their honour. Paul affirms that the great Creator of all things cannot be thus dependent on his creatures for happiness; and consequently that that mode of worship must be highly absurd. The same idea occurs in Ps. l. 10, 11, 12 :

For every beast of the forest is mine;
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.
I know all the fowls of the mountain;
And the wild beasts of the field are mine.
If I were hungry, I would not tell thee;
For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

¶ *Seeing he giveth.* Gr. He having given to all, &c. ¶ *Life.* He is the source of life; and therefore he cannot be dependent on that life which he has himself imparted. ¶ *And breath.* The power of breathing, by which life is sustained. He not only originally gave life, but he gives it at each moment; he gives the power of drawing each breath by which life is supported. It is possible that the phrase "life and breath" may be the figure *hendyades*, by which one thing is expressed by two words. And it is highly probable that Paul here had reference to Gen. ii. 7: "And the LORD God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." The same idea occurs in Job xii. 10 :

In whose hand is the life (*margin*) of every living thing;
And the breath of all mankind.

¶ *And all things.* All things necessary to sustain life. We may see here how dependent man is on God. There can be no more absolute dependence than that for every *breath*. How easy it would be for God to suspend our breathing! How incessant the care, how unceasing the Providence by which, whether we sleep or wake—whether we remember or forget him, he heaves our chest; fills our lungs; restores the vitality of our blood; and infuses vigour into our frame! Comp. Note, Rom. xi. 36.

26 And hath made of one ^d blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times ^e before ap-

^d Mal. 2. 10. ^e Ps. 31. 15.

26. *And hath made of one blood.* All the families of men are descended from one origin, or stock. However different their complexion, features, language, &c., yet they are derived from a common parent. The word *blood* is often used to denote *race, stock, kindred*. This passage completely proves that all the human family are descended from the same ancestor; and that, consequently, all the variety of complexion, &c., is to be traced to some other cause than that there were originally different races created. See Gen. i. Comp. Mal. ii. 10. The *design* of the apostle in this affirmation was, probably, to convince the Greeks that he regarded them all as brethren; and that, although he was a Jew, yet he was not enslaved to any narrow notions or prejudices in reference to other men. It follows also from this, that no one nation, and no individual, can claim any pre-eminence over others in virtue of birth or blood. All are in this respect equal; and the whole human family, however they may differ in complexion, customs, and laws, are to be regarded and treated as brethren. It follows, also, that no one part of the race has a right to enslave or oppress any other part, on account of difference of complexion. Nor has man a right because

He finds his fellow guilty of a sin
Not coloured like his own; and having power
To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
to

Doom and devote him as his lawful prey.

¶ *For to dwell, &c.* To cultivate and till the earth. This was the original command (Gen. i. 28); and God, by his providence, has so ordered it that the descendants of one family have found their way to all lands, and have become adapted to the climate where he has placed them. ¶ *And hath determined.* Gr. *ἔσεισας*. Having fixed, or marked out a boundary. Note, Rom. i. 4. The word is usually applied to a *field*, which is designated by a boundary. It means here that God hath marked out, or designated in his purpose, their future abodes. ¶ *The times before appointed.* This evidently refers to the dispersion and migration of nations. And it means that God had, in his plan, fixed the times when each country should be

pointed, and the bounds ^a of their habitation ;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after

^a Isa. 45. 21.

settled ; the time of the location, the rise, the prosperity, and the fall of each nation. It implies, (1.) That these *times* had been before appointed ; and, (2.) That it was done in wisdom. It was his plan ; and the different continents and islands had not, therefore, been settled by chance, but by a wise rule, and in accordance with his arrangement and design. ¶ *And the bounds of their habitation.* Their limits, and boundaries as a people. He has designated the black man to Africa ; the white man to northern regions ; the American savage he fixed in the wilds of the western continent, &c. By customs, laws, inclinations, and habits, he fixed the boundaries of their habitations, and disposed them to dwell there. We may learn, (1.) That the revolutions and changes of nations are under the direction of infinite wisdom ; (2.) That men should not be restless, and dissatisfied with the place where God has located them ; (3.) That God has given sufficient limits to all, so that it is not needful to invade others ; and, (4.) That wars of conquest are evil. God has given to men their places of abode, and we have no right to disturb those abodes, or to attempt to displace them in a violent manner. This strain of remark by the apostle was also opposed to all the notions of the Epicurean philosophers, and yet so obviously true and just, that they could not gainsay or resist it.

27. *That they should seek the Lord.* Gr. To seek the Lord. The design of thus placing them on the earth—of giving them their habitation among his works—was, that they should contemplate his wisdom in his works, and thus come to a knowledge of his existence and character. All nations, though living in different regions and climates, have thus the opportunity of becoming acquainted with God. Rom. i. 19, 20. The fact, that the nations did not thus learn the character of the true God, shows their great stupidity and wickedness. The design of Paul in this was, doubtless, to prove the idolatry of the Athenians. The argument is this : ‘ God has given to each nation its proper opportunity to learn his character. Idolatry, therefore, is folly and wickedness ; since it is possible to find out the existence of the one God from his works.’ ¶ *If haply.*

him, and find him, though ^b he be not far from every one of us :

28 For in ^c him we live, and move, and have our being ; as ^d cer-

^b c. 14. 17.

^c Col. 1. 17.

^d Tit. 1. 12.

εἰ ἄρα γε. If perhaps—implying that it was possible to find God, though it might be attended with some difficulty. God has placed us here that we may make the trial ; and has made it possible thus to find him. ¶ *They might feel after him.* The word used here (ψηλασθήσεσθε) means properly to touch, to handle (Luke xxiv. 39. Heb. xii. 18), and then to ascertain the qualities of an object by the sense of touch. And as the sense of touch is regarded as a certain way of ascertaining the existence and qualities of an object, the word means to search diligently, that we may know distinctly and certainly. The word has this sense here. It means to search diligently and accurately for God, to learn his existence and perfections. The Syriac renders it, “ that they may seek for God, and find him from his creatures.” ¶ *And find him.* Find the proofs of his existence. Become acquainted with his perfections and laws. ¶ *Though he be not far, &c.* This seems to be stated by the apostle to show that it was possible to find him ; and that even those who were without a revelation, need not despair of becoming acquainted with his existence and perfections. He is near to us, (1.) Because the proofs of his existence and power are round about us every where. Ps. xix. 1—6. (2.) Because he fills all things in heaven and earth by his essential presence. Ps. cxxxix. 7—10. Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. Amos ix. 2—4. 1 Kings viii. 27. We should learn then, (1.) To be afraid to sin. God is present with us, and sees all. (2.) He can protect the righteous. He is ever with them. (3.) He can detect and punish the wicked. He sees all their plans and thoughts, and records all their doings. (4.) We should seek him continually. It is the design for which he has made us ; and he has given us abundant opportunities to learn his existence and perfections.

28. *For in him we live.* The expression “ in him ” evidently means *by* him ; by his originally forming us, and continually sustaining us. No words can better express our constant dependence on him. He is the original fountain of life ; and he upholds us each moment. A similar sentiment is found in Plautus (5. 4. 14) : “ O Jupiter, who dost cherish and nourish the race of man ; by whom we live,

tain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not

to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

30 And the times of this igno-

a Isa. 40. 18, &c.

and with whom is the hope of the life of all men." (*Kuinöel.*) It does not appear however that Paul intended this as a quotation; yet he doubtless intended to state a sentiment with which they were familiar, and with which they would agree. ¶ *And move.* *Κινούμεθα.* Dodridge translates this, "And are moved." It may however be in the middle voice, and be correctly rendered as in our version. It means that we derive strength to move from him; an expression denoting constant and absolute dependence. There is no idea of dependence more striking than that we owe to him the ability to perform the slightest motion. ¶ *And have our being.* *Καὶ ἴσμεν.* *And are.* This denotes that our *continued* existence is owing to him. That we live at all is his gift; that we have power to move is his gift; and our *continued* and *prolonged* existence is his gift also. Thus Paul traces our dependence on Him from the lowest pulsation of life to the highest powers of action and of continued existence. It would be impossible to express in more emphatic language our entire dependence on God. ¶ *As certain also.* As some. The sentiment which he quotes was found substantially in several Greek poets. ¶ *Of your own poets.* He does not refer particularly here to poets of Athens, but to Greek poets—poets who had written in their language. ¶ *For we are also his offspring.* This precise expression is found in Aratus (*Phænomen.* v. 5), and in Cleanthus in a hymn to Jupiter. Substantially the same sentiment is found in several other Greek poets. Aratus was a Greek poet of Cilicia, the native place of Paul, and flourished about 277 years before Christ. As Paul was a native of the same country, it is highly probable he was acquainted with his writings. Aratus passed much of his time at the court of Antigonus Gonatas, king of Macedonia. His principal work was the *Phænomena*, which is here quoted, and was so highly esteemed in Greece that many learned men wrote commentaries on it. The sentiment here quoted was directly at variance with the views of the Epicureans; and it is proof of Paul's address and skill, as well as his acquaintance with his auditors, and with the Greek poets, that he was able to adduce

a sentiment so directly in point, and that had the concurrent testimony of so many of the Greeks themselves. It is *one* instance among thousands where an acquaintance with profane learning may be of use to a minister of the gospel.

29. *Forasmuch then.* Admitting or assuming this to be true. The argument which follows is drawn from the concessions of their own writers. ¶ *We ought not to think.* It is absurd to suppose. The argument of the apostle is this: 'Since we are formed by God; since we are like him, living and intelligent beings; since we are more excellent in our nature than the most precious and ingenious works of art; it is absurd to suppose that the original source of our existence can be like gold, and silver, and stone. Man himself is far more excellent than an image of wood and stone; how much more excellent still must be the great Fountain and Source of all our wisdom and intelligence.' See this thought pursued at length in Isa. xl. 18—23. ¶ *The Godhead.* The divinity (*τὸ Θεῖον*), the divine nature, or essence. The word used here is an adjective employed as a noun, and does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. ¶ *Is like unto gold, &c.* All these things were used in making images, or statues of the gods. It is absurd to think that the source of all life and intelligence resembles a lifeless block of wood or stone. Even degraded heathen, one would think, might see the force of an argument like this. ¶ *Graven.* Sculptured; wrought into an image.

30. *And the times of this ignorance.* The long period when men were ignorant of the true God, and when they worshipped stocks and stones. Paul here refers to the times preceding the gospel. ¶ *God winked at.* Ὑπερίδων. Overlooked, connived at; did not come forth to punish. In ch. xiv. 16, it is expressed thus, "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." The sense is, he passed over those times without punishing them, as if he did not see them. For wise purposes he suffered them to walk in ignorance, and to make the fair experiment to show what men would do; and how much necessity there was for a revelation to instruct them in the true knowledge of God. We are not to sup-

rance God winked ^a at, but now ^b commandeth all men every where to repent :

31 Because he hath appointed ^c a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by *that* man whom he hath ordained ; *whereof* he hath given assurance ¹ unto

^a Rom. 3. 23.
^c Rom. 2. 16.

^b Luke 24. 47. Tit. 2. 11, 12.
¹ or, offered faith.

pose, that God regarded idolatry as innocent, or the crimes and vices to which idolatry led as of no importance ; but their ignorance was a mitigating circumstance, and he suffered the nations to live without coming forth in direct judgment against them. Comp. Notes on ch. iii. 17 ; xiv. 16. ¶ *But now commandeth.* By the gospel. Luke xxiv. 47. ¶ *All men.* Not Jews only, who had been favoured with peculiar privileges, but all nations. The barrier was broken down, and the call to repentance was sent abroad into all the earth. ¶ *To repent.* To exercise sorrow for their sins, and to forsake them. If God *commands* all men to repent, we may observe, (1.) That it is their *duty* to do it. There is no higher obligation than to obey the command of God. (2.) *It can* be done. God would not command an impossibility. (3.) It is binding on *all*. The rich, the learned, the great, the gay, are as much bound as the beggar and the slave. There is no distinction made. It pertains to all people, in all lands. (4.) It *must* be done, or the soul lost. It is not wise, and it is not safe, to neglect a plain law of God. It will not be well to die reflecting that we have all our life neglected and despised his plain commands. (5.) We should send the gospel to the heathen. God calls on the *nations* to repent, and to be saved. It is the duty of Christians to make known to them the command, and to invite them to the blessings of pardon and heaven.

31. *Because he hath appointed a day.* This is given as a reason why God commands men to repent. They must be judged ; and if they are not penitent and pardoned, they must be condemned. See Note, Rom. ii. 16. ¶ *Judge the world.* The whole world—Jews and Gentiles. ¶ *In righteousness.* According to the principles of strict justice. See Matt. xxv. ¶ *Whom he hath ordained.* Or whom he has constituted or appointed as judge. See Note, ch. x. 42. John v. 25. ¶ *Hath given assurance.* Has afforded evidence of this. That evidence consists, (1.) In

all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, ^d some mocked : and others said, We will hear thee again ^e of this *matter*.

33 So Paul departed from among them.

^d c. 26. S.

^e Luke 14. 18. c. 24. 25.

the fact that Jesus *declared* that he would judge the nations (John v. 25, 26. Matt. xxv.) ; and, (2.) God confirmed the truth of his declarations by raising him from the dead, or gave his sanction to what the Lord Jesus had said, for God would not work a miracle in favour of an impostor.

32. *Some mocked.* Some of the philosophers derided him. It was believed by none of the Greeks ; it seemed incredible ; and they regarded it as so absurd as not to admit of an argument. It has not been uncommon for even professed philosophers to mock at the doctrines of religion, and to meet the arguments of Christianity with a sneer. The Epicureans particularly would be likely to deride this, as they denied altogether any future state. It is not improbable that this derision by the Epicureans produced such a disturbance as to break off Paul's discourse, as that of Stephen had been by the clamour of the Jews. ch. vii. 54. ¶ *And others said.* Probably some of the Stoics. The doctrine of a future state was not denied by them ; and the fact, affirmed by Paul, that one had been raised up from the dead, would appear more plausible to them, and it *might* be a matter worth inquiry to ascertain whether the alleged fact did not furnish a new argument for their views. They, therefore, proposed to examine this further at some future time. That the inquiry was prosecuted any further does not appear probable, for, (1.) No church was organized at Athens. (2.) There is no account of any future interview with Paul. (3.) He departed almost immediately from them. ch. xviii. 1. Men who defer inquiry on the subject of religion, seldom find the favourable period arrive. Those who propose to examine its doctrines at a future time, often do it to avoid the *inconvenience* of becoming Christians now ; and as a plausible and easy way of rejecting the gospel altogether, without appearing to be rude, or to give offence.

34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

33. *So Paul departed.* Seeing there was little hope of saving them. It was not his custom to labour long in a barren field, or to preach where there was no prospect of success.

34. *Clave unto him.* Adhered to him firmly; embraced the Christian religion. ¶ *Dionysius.* Nothing more is certainly known of this man than is here stated. ¶ *The Areopagite.* Connected with the court of Areopagus, but in what way is not known. It is probable that he was one of the judges. The conversion of *one* man was worth the labour of Paul. And the secret influence of that conversion might have had an extensive influence on others.

In regard to this interesting account of the visit of Paul to Athens—probably the only one which he made to that splendid capital—we may remark, (1.) That he was indefatigable and constant in his great work. (2.) Christians, amidst the splendour and gayeties of such cities, should have their hearts deeply affected in view of the moral desolations of the people. (3.) They should be willing to do their duty, and to bear witness to the pure and simple gospel in the presence of the great and the noble. (4.) They should not consider it their main business to admire splendid temples, and statues, and paintings—the works of art; but their main business should be, to do good as they may have opportunity. (5.) A discourse, even in the midst of much wickedness, and idolatry, may be calm and dignified; not an appeal merely to the passions, but to the understanding. Paul *reasoned* with the philosophers of Athens; he did not denounce them; he endeavoured calmly to convince them, not harshly to censure them. (6.) The example of Paul is a good one for all Christians. In all places—cities, towns, or country; amidst all people—philosophers, and the rich, and the poor; among friends and countrymen, or among strangers and foreigners, the great object should be to do good, to instruct mankind, and to seek to elevate the human character, and promote human happiness, by diffusing the mild and pure precepts of the gospel of Christ.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER these things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth:

2 And found a certain Jew named

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. *After these things.* After what occurred at Athens, as recorded in the previous chapter. ¶ *Came to Corinth.* Corinth was the capital of Achaia, called anciently Ephyra, and was seated on the isthmus which divides the Peloponnesus from Attica. The city itself stood on a little island; it had two ports, Lechæum on the west, and Cenchrea on the east. It was one of the most populous and wealthy cities of Greece; and, at the same time, one of the most luxurious, effeminate, proud, ostentatious, and dissolute. Lasciviousness here was not only practised and allowed, but was consecrated by the worship of Venus; and no small part of the wealth and splendour of the city arose from the offerings made by licentious passion in the very temples of this goddess. No city of ancient times was more profligate. It was the *Paris* of antiquity; the seat of splendour, and show, and corruption. Yet even here, notwithstanding all the disadvantages of splendour, gayety, and dissoluteness, Paul entered on the work of rearing a church; and here he was eminently successful. The two epistles which he afterwards wrote to this church show the extent of his success; and the well-known character and propensities of the people will account for the general drift of the admonitions and arguments in those epistles. Corinth was destroyed by the Romans 146 years before Christ; and during the conflagration, several metals in a fused state, running together, produced the composition known as Corinthian brass. It was afterwards restored by Julius Cæsar, who planted in it a Roman colony. It soon regained its ancient splendour, and soon relapsed into its former dissipation and licentiousness. Paul arrived there A. D. 52 or 53.

2. *And found a certain Jew.* Aquila is elsewhere mentioned as the friend of Paul. Rom. xvi. 3. 2 Tim. iv. 19. 1 Cor. xvi. 19. Though a Jew by birth, yet it is evident that he became a convert to the Christian faith. ¶ *Born in Pontus.* Note, ch. ii. 9. ¶ *Lately come from Italy.* Though the command of Claudius extended only to Rome, yet it was probably

^a Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome;) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them,

a Rom. 16.3.

and ^b wrought: for by their occupation they were tent-makers.

4 And he reasoned in the ^c synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

5 And when ^d Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia,

b c. 20.24. c c. 17.2. d c. 17.14,15.

deemed not safe to remain, or it might have been difficult to procure occupation in any part of Italy. ¶ *Because that Claudius.* Claudius was the Roman emperor. He commenced his reign A. D. 41, and was poisoned A. D. 54. At what time in his reign this command was issued is not certainly known. ¶ *Had commanded, &c.* This command is not mentioned by Josephus; but it is recorded by Suetonius, a Roman historian (*Life of Claudius*, ch. 25), who says, that "he expelled the Jews from Rome, who were constantly exciting tumults under their leader, Chrestus." Who this *Chrestus* was, is not known. It *might* have been a foreign Jew, who raised tumults on some occasion of which we have no knowledge; as the Jews in all heathen cities were greatly prone to excitements and insurrections. Or it *may* be that Suetonius, little acquainted with Jewish affairs, mistook this for the name *Christ*, and supposed that he was the leader of the Jews. This explanation has much plausibility; for, (1.) Suetonius could scarcely be supposed to be intimately acquainted with the affairs of the Jews. (2.) There is every reason to believe, that before this, the Christian religion was preached at Rome. (3.) It would produce there, as every where else, great tumult and contention among the Jews. (4.) Claudius, the emperor, might suppose that such tumults endangered the peace of the city, and resolve to remove the cause at once by the dispersion of all the Jews. (5.) A Roman historian might easily mistake the true state of the case; and while they were contending *about* Christ, he might suppose that it was *under* him, as a leader, that these tumults were excited. All that is material, however, here, is *the fact*, in which Luke and Suetonius agree, that the Jews were expelled from Rome during his reign.

3. *The same craft.* Of the same trade, or occupation. ¶ *And wrought.* And worked at that occupation. *Why* he did it, the historian does not affirm; but it seems pretty evident that it was because he had no other means of maintenance.

He also laboured for his own support in Ephesus (*Acts* xx. 34), and also at Thessalonica. 2 *Thess.* iii. 9, 10. The apostle was not ashamed of honest industry for a livelihood; nor did he deem it any disparagement that a minister of the gospel should labour with his own hands. ¶ *For by their occupation.* By their trade; that is, they had been brought up to this business. Paul had been designed originally for a lawyer, and had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. But it was a regular custom among the Jews to train up their sons to some useful employment, that they might have the means of an honest livelihood. Even though they were trained up to the liberal sciences, yet they deemed a handicraft trade, or some honourable occupation, an indispensable part of education. Thus Maimonides (in the *Tract Talmud. Tora*, c. i. § 9) says, that "the wise generally practise some of the arts, lest they should be dependent on the charity of others." See Grotius. The wisdom of this is obvious; and it is equally plain that a custom of this kind now might preserve the health and lives of many professional men, and save from ignoble dependence or vice, in future years, many who are trained up in the lap of indulgence and wealth. ¶ *They were tent-makers.* Σκηνοποιοί. There have been various opinions about the meaning of this word. Many have supposed that it denotes a weaver of tapestry. Luther thus translated it. But it is probable that it denotes, as in our translation, a manufacturer of tents, made of skin, or cloth. In eastern countries, where there was much travel; where there were no inns; and where many were shepherds, such a business might be useful, and a profitable source of living. It was an honourable occupation, and Paul was not ashamed to be employed in it.

4. *And he reasoned, &c.* Note, ch. xvii. 2.

5. *And when Silas and Timotheus, &c.* They came to Paul according to his request, which he had sent by the brethren who accompanied him from Thessalo-

Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus¹ was Christ.*

6 And when they opposed^a themselves, and blasphemed, he shook^b his raiment, and said unto them, Your^c blood be upon your own heads: I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped

¹ or, is the Christ. a 2Tim.2.25. b Neh.5.13.
c Ezek.33.4.

God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 And^d 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 not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

10 For I^e am with thee, and no

d 1Cor.1.14. e Matt.28.20.

nica. ch. xvii. 15. ¶ *Paul was pressed.* Was urged; was borne away by an unusual impulse. It was deeply impressed on him as his duty. ¶ *In spirit.* In his mind, in his feelings. His love to Christ was so great, and his conviction of the truth so strong, that he laboured to make known to them the truth that Jesus was the Messiah. ¶ *That Jesus was Christ.* That Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. Comp. ch. xvii. 16. The presence of Silas and Timothy animated him; and the certainty of aid in his work urged him to zeal in making known the Saviour.

6. *And when they opposed themselves.* To him and his message. ¶ *And blasphemed.* Note, ch. xiii. 45. ¶ *He shook his raiment.* As an expressive act of shaking off the guilt of their condemnation. Comp. ch. xiii. 45. He shook his raiment to show that he was resolved henceforward to have nothing to do with them; perhaps, also, to express the fact that God would soon shake them off, or reject them. (*Doddridge.*) ¶ *Your blood, &c.* The guilt of your destruction is your own. You only are the cause of the destruction that is coming upon you. See Note on Matt. xxvii. 25. ¶ *I am clean.* I am not to blame for your destruction. I have done my duty. The gospel had been fairly offered, and deliberately rejected; and Paul was not to blame for their ruin, which he saw was coming upon them. ¶ *I will go, &c.* See ch. xiii. 46.

7. *A certain man's house.* Probably he had become a convert to the Christian faith. ¶ *Joined hard.* Was near to the synagogue.

8. *And Crispus.* He is mentioned in 1 Cor. i. 14, as having been one of the few whom Paul baptized with his own hands. The conversion of such a man must have tended greatly to exasperate

the other Jews, and to further the progress of the Christian faith among the Corinthians. ¶ *With all his house.* With all his family. ch. x. 2. ¶ *And many of the Corinthians.* Many even in this voluptuous and wicked city. Perhaps the power of the gospel was never more signal than in converting sinners in Corinth, and rearing a Christian church in a place so dissolute and abandoned. If it was adapted to such a place as *Corinth*; if a church, under the power of Christian truth, could be organized *there*; it is adapted to any city; and there is none so corrupt that the gospel cannot change and purify it.

9. *By a vision.* Comp. Note, ch. x. 3; xvi. 9. ¶ *Be not afraid.* Perhaps, Paul might have been intimidated by the learning, refinement, and splendour of Corinth; perhaps, embarrassed in view of his duty of addressing the rich, the polite, and the great. To this he may allude in 1 Cor. ii. 3: "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." In such circumstances it pleased God to meet him, and disarm his fears. This he did by assuring him of success. The fact that God had much people in that city (ver. 10), was employed to remove his apprehensions. The prospect of success in the ministry, and the certainty of the presence of God, will take away the fear of the rich, the learned, and the great.

10. *For I am with thee.* I will attend, bless, and protect you. See Note, Matt. xxviii. 20. ¶ *No man shall set on thee.* No one who shall rise up against thee shall be able to hurt thee. His life was in God's hands, and he would preserve him, in order that his people might be collected into the church. ¶ *For I have.* Gr. There is to me; i. e. I possess, or there belongs to me. ¶ *Much people.*

man shall set on thee, to hurt thee : for I have much people in this city.

11 And he¹ 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 in-

¹ or, *sat* there.

Many who should be regarded as his true friends, and who should be saved. ¶ *In this city.* In that very city that was so voluptuous ; so rich ; so effeminate ; and where there had been already so decided opposition shown to the gospel. This passage evidently means that God had a design or purpose to save many of that people. For it was given to Paul as an encouragement to him to labour there, evidently meaning that God *would* grant him success in his work. It cannot mean that the Lord meant to say that the great mass of the people, or that the moral and virtuous part, if there were any such, was *then* regarded as *his* people ; but that he *intended* to convert many of those guilty and profligate Corinthians to himself, and to gather a people for his own service there. We may learn from this, (1.) That God has a *purpose* in regard to the salvation of sinners. (2.) That that purpose is so fixed in the mind of God that *he* can say that those in relation to whom it is formed are *his*. There is no chance ; no hap-hazard ; no doubt in regard to his gathering them to himself. (3.) This is the ground of encouragement to the ministers of the gospel. Had God no purpose to save sinners, they could have no hope in their work. (4.) This plan may have reference to the most gay, and guilty, and abandoned population ; and ministers should not be deterred by the amount or the degree of wickedness from attempting to save them. (5.) There may be more hope of success among a dissolute and profligate population, than among proud, and cold, and skeptical philosophers. Paul had little success in philosophic Athens ; he had great success in dissolute Corinth. There is often more hope of converting a man openly dissolute and abandoned, than one who prides himself on his philosophy, and is confident in his own wisdom.

11. *And he continued, &c.* Paul was not accustomed to remain long in a place. At Ephesus, indeed, he remained three years (Acts xx. 31) ; and his stay at Corinth was caused by his success, and by the necessity of placing a church, collect-

surrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat, ^a

13 Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

14 And when Paul was now

^a Jam. 2.6.

ed out of such corrupt, and dissolute materials, on a firm foundation.

12. *And Gallio.* After the Romans had conquered Greece, they reduced it to two provinces, Macedonia and Achaia, which were each governed by a proconsul. Gallio was the brother of the celebrated philosopher Seneca, and was made proconsul of Achaia A. D. 53. His proper name was Marcus Annæus Novatus, but having been adopted into the family of Gallio, a rhetorician, he took his name. He is described by ancient writers as having been of a remarkably mild and amiable disposition. His brother Seneca (Præf. Quest. Natu. 4) describes him as being of the most lovely temper : "No mortal," says he, "was ever so mild to any one, as he was to all ; and in him there was such a natural power of goodness, that there was no semblance of art or dissimulation." ¶ *Was deputy.* See this word explained in Acts xiii. 7. It means here proconsul. ¶ *Of Achaia.* This word, in its largest sense, comprehended the whole of Greece. Achaia proper, however, was a province of which Corinth was the capital. It embraced that part of Greece lying between Thesaly and the southern part of the Pæloponnesus. ¶ *The Jews made insurrection.* Excited a tumult, as they had in Philippi, Antioch, &c. ¶ *And brought him to the judgment-seat.* The tribunal of Gallio ; probably intending to arraign him as a disturber of the peace.

13. *Contrary to the law.* Evidently intending contrary to *all* law—the laws of the Romans and of the Jews. It was permitted to the Jews to worship God according to their own views in Greece ; but they could easily pretend that Paul had departed from *that* mode of worshipping God. It was easy for them to maintain that he taught contrary to the laws of the Romans, and their acknowledged religion ; and their design seems to have been to accuse him of teaching men to worship God in an unlawful and irregular way, a way unknown to *any* of the laws of the empire.

14. *About to open his mouth.* In self-

about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, ^a reason would that I should bear with you :

15 But if it be a question of

^a Rom. 13.3.

defence, ever ready to vindicate his conduct. ¶ *A matter of wrong.* Injustice, or crime, such as could be properly brought before a court of justice. ¶ *Or wicked lewdness.* Any flagrant and gross offence. The word used here occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It denotes properly an act committed by him who is skilled, facile, or an adept in iniquity—an act of a veteran offender. Such crimes Gallio was willing to take cognizance of. ¶ *Reason would, &c.* Greek, 'I would bear with you according to reason.' 'There would be propriety or fitness in my hearing and trying the case. That is, it would fall within the sphere of my duty, as appointed to guard the peace, and to punish crimes.

15. *Of words.* A dispute about words, for such he would regard all their controversies about religion to be. ¶ *And names.* Probably he had heard something of the nature of the controversy, and understood it to be a dispute about names, i. e. whether Jesus was to be called the Messiah or not. To him this would appear as a matter pertaining to the Jews alone, and to be ranked with their other disputes arising from the difference of sect and name. ¶ *Of your law.* A question respecting the proper interpretation of the law, or the rites and ceremonies which it commanded. The Jews had many such disputes, and Gallio did not regard them as coming under his cognizance as a magistrate. ¶ *Look ye to it.* Judge this among yourselves; settle the difficulty as you can. Comp. John xviii. 31. ¶ *For I will be no judge &c.* I do not regard such questions as pertaining to my office, or deem myself called on to settle them.

16. *And he drave them, &c.* He refused to hear and decide the controversy. He commanded them to depart from the court. The word used here does not denote that there was any violence used by Gallio, but merely that he dismissed them in an authoritative manner.

17. *Then all the Greeks.* The Greeks who had witnessed the persecution of Paul by the Jews, and who had seen the tumult which they had excited. ¶ *Took Sosthenes, &c.* As he was the chief ruler

words and names, and of your law, ^b look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.

16 And he drave them from the judgment-seat.

17 Then all the Greeks took

^b Jno. 18.31. c.23.29; 25.11,19.

of the synagogue, he had probably been a leader in the opposition to Paul, and in the prosecution. Indignant at the Jews; at their bringing such questions before the tribunal; at their bigotry, and rage, and contentious spirit, they probably fell upon him in a tumultuous and disorderly manner as he was leaving the tribunal. The Greeks would feel no small measure of indignation at these disturbers of the public peace, and they took this opportunity to express their rage. ¶ *And beat him.* ἔτυπτον. This word is not that which is commonly used to denote a judicial act of scourging. It probably means that they fell upon him, and beat him with their fists, or with whatever was at hand.

¶ *Before the judgment-seat.* Probably while leaving the tribunal. Instead of "Greeks" in this verse, some MSS. read "Jews," but the former is probably the true reading. The Syriac, Arabic, and Coptic read it "the Gentiles." It is probable that this Sosthenes afterwards became a convert to the Christian faith, and a preacher of the gospel. See 1 Cor. i. 1, 2, "Paul, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth." ¶ *And Gallio cared, &c.* This has been usually charged on Gallio as a matter of reproach, as if he were wholly indifferent to religion. But the charge is unjustly made; and his name is often improperly used to represent the indifferent, the worldly, the careless, and the skeptical. But by the testimony of ancient writers, he was a most mild and amiable man; and an upright and just judge. Nor is there the least evidence that he was indifferent to the religion of his country, or that he was of a thoughtless and skeptical turn of mind. All that this passage implies is, (1.) That he did not deem it to be his duty, or a part of his office, to settle questions of a theological nature that were started among the Jews. (2.) That he was unwilling to make this subject a matter of legal discussion and investigation. (3.) That he would not interfere, either on one side or the other, in the question about making proselytes either to or from Judaism. So far certainly his conduct was exemplary and proper.

α Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

α 1Cor.1.1.

(4.) That he did not choose to interpose, and rescue Sosthenes from the hands of the mob. From *some* cause he was willing that *he* should feel the effects of the public indignation. Perhaps it was not easy to quell the riot; perhaps, he was not unwilling that he who had joined in a furious and unprovoked persecution, should feel the effect of it in the excited passions of the people. At all events, he was but following the common practice among the Romans, which was to regard the Jews with contempt, and to care little how much they were exposed to popular fury and rage. In this he was wrong; and it is certain also that he was indifferent to the disputes between Jews and Christians; but there is no propriety in defaming his name, and making him the type and representative of all the thoughtless and indifferent men on the subject of religion in subsequent times. Nor is there propriety in using this passage as a text as applicable to this class of men.

18. *And sailed thence into Syria.* Or set sail for Syria. His design was to go to Jerusalem to the festival which was soon to occur. ver. 21. ¶ *Having shorn his head.* Many interpreters have supposed that this refers to Aquila, and not to Paul. But the connexion evidently requires us to understand it of Paul, though the Greek construction does not with certainty determine to which it refers. The Vulgate refers it to Aquila, the Syriac to Paul. ¶ *In Cenchrea.* Cenchrea was the eastern port of Corinth. A church was formed in that place. Rom. xvi. 1. ¶ *For he had a vow.* A *vow* is a solemn promise made to God respecting any thing. The use of vows is observable throughout the Scripture. Jacob going into Mesopotamia, vowed the tenth of his estate, and promised to offer it at Bethel to the honour of God. Gen. xxviii. 22. Moses made many regulations in regard to vows. A man might devote himself or his children to the Lord. He might devote any part of his time or property to his service. The vow they were required sacredly to observe (Deut. xxiii. 21, 22), except in certain specified cases they were permitted to redeem that which had been thus devoted. The most remarkable vow among the Jews was that of the Nazarite; by

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

which a man made a solemn promise to God to abstain from wine, and all intoxicating liquors, to let the hair grow, and not to enter any house polluted by having a dead body in it, or to attend any funeral. This vow generally lasted eight days, sometimes a month, sometimes during a definite period fixed by themselves, and sometimes during their whole lives. When the vow expired, the priest made an offering of a he-lamb for a burnt-offering, a she-lamb for an expiatory sacrifice, and a ram for a peace-offering. The priest then, or some other person, shaved the head of the Nazarite at the door of the tabernacle, and burnt the hair on the fire of the altar. Those who made the vow out of Palestine, and who could not come to the temple when the vow was expired, contented themselves with observing the abstinence required by the law, and cutting off the hair where they were. This I suppose to have been the case with Paul. His hair he cut off at the expiration of the vow at Cenchrea, though he delayed to perfect the vow by the proper ceremonies until he reached Jerusalem. Acts xxi. 23. 24. *Why* Paul made this vow, or on what occasion, the sacred historian has not informed us, and conjecture perhaps is useless. We may observe, however, (1.) That it was common for the Jews to make such vows to God, as an expression of gratitude or of devotedness to his service, when they had been raised up from sickness, or delivered from danger or calamity. See Josephus b. i. 2. 15. Vows of this nature were also made by the Gentiles on occasions of deliverance from any signal calamity. Juvenal Sat. 12. 81. It is *possible* that Paul may have made such a vow in consequence of signal deliverance from some of the numerous perils to which he was exposed. But, (2.) There is reason to think that it was mainly with a design to convince the Jews, that he did not despise their law, and was not its enemy. See ch. xxi. 22, 23, 24. In accordance with the custom of the nation, and in compliance with a law which was not wrong in itself, he might have made this vow, not for a time-serving purpose, but in order to conciliate them, and to mitigate their anger against the gospel. But where

him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn ^a his head in Cenchrea: ^b for he had a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned ^c with the Jews.

20 When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: ^d but I will return again unto you, if ^e God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

^a Num. 6. 18. c. 21. 24. ^b Rom. 16. 1. ^c c. 17. 2. ^d c. 19. 21; 20. 16. ^e 1 Cor. 4. 19. Jam. 4. 15.

nothing is recorded, conjecture is useless. Those who wish to see the subject discussed, may consult Grotius and Kuinöel in loco, and Spencer de Legibus Hebræ. p. 862, and Calmet's Dic. art. *Nazarite*.

19. *And he came to Ephesus.* This was a celebrated city in Ionia, in Asia Minor, about forty miles south of Smyrna. It was chiefly famous for the temple of Diana, usually reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world. Pliny styles this city the ornament of Asia. In the times of the Romans it was the metropolis of Asia. This city is now under the dominion of the Turks, and is almost in a state of ruin. Dr. Chandler, in his travels in Asia Minor, says—"The inhabitants are a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility; the representatives of an illustrious people, and inhabiting the wreck of their greatness; some in the substructions of the glorious edifices which they raised; some beneath the vaults of the stadium, once the crowded scene of their diversions; and some in the sepulchres which received their ashes." Travels, p. 131, Oxford, 1775. The Jews, according to Josephus, were very numerous in Ephesus, and had obtained the privilege of citizenship. ¶ *Left them there.* That is, Aquila and Priscilla. ver. 24—26. ¶ *Reasoned with the Jews.* Note, ch. xvii. 2.

21. *Keep this feast.* Probably the Passover is here referred to. *Why* he was so anxious to celebrate that feast at Jerusalem, the historian has not informed us. It is probable, however, that he wished to meet as many of his countrymen as possible, and to remove, if practicable, the

22 And when he had landed at Cesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

23 And after he had spent some time *there*, he departed, and went over *all* the country of Galatia ^f and Phrygia in order, strengthening ^g all the disciples.

24 And a certain Jew named ^h Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent ⁱ in the spirit, he spake and

^f Gal. 1. 2. ^g c. 14. 22; 15. 32, 41. ^h 1 Cor. 1. 12; 3. 5, 6. Tit. 3. 13. ⁱ Rom. 12. 11. Jam. 5. 16.

prejudices which had every where been raised against him. ch. xxi. 20, 21. Perhaps, also, he supposed that there would be many Christian converts present, whom he might meet also. ¶ *But I will return, &c.* This he did (ch. xix. 1), and remained there three years. ch. xx. 31.

22. *At Cesarea.* Note, ch. viii. 40. ¶ *And gone up.* From the ship. ¶ *And saluted the church.* Having expressed for them his tender regard and affection. ¶ *To Antioch.* In Syria. Note, ch. xi. 19.

23. *The country of Galatia and Phrygia.* He had been over these regions before, preaching the gospel. ch. xvi. 6. ¶ *Strengthening.* Establishing them by exhortation and counsel. Note, ch. xiv. 22.

24. *And a certain Jew named Apollos.* Apollos afterwards became a distinguished and successful preacher of the gospel. 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 5, 6; iv. 6. Titus iii. 13. Nothing more is known of him than is stated in these passages. ¶ *Born at Alexandria.* Alexandria was a celebrated city in Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great. There were large numbers of Jews resident there. Note, ch. vi. 9. ¶ *An eloquent man.* Alexandria was famous for its schools, and it is probable that Apollos, in addition to his natural endowments, had enjoyed the benefit of these schools. ¶ *Mighty in the Scriptures.* Well instructed, or able in the Old Testament. The foundation was thus laid for future usefulness in the Christian church. Note, Luke xxiv. 19.

25. *This man was instructed.* Greek, was *catechised*. He was instructed, in some degree, into the knowledge of the

taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing ^a 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

^a c. 19.3.

Christian religion. By whom this was done, we have no information. See Note, ch. ii. 9—11. ¶ *In the right way of the Lord.* The word *way* often refers to doctrine. Matt. xxi. 32. It means here that he had been correctly taught in regard to the Messiah; yet his knowledge was imperfect. ver. 26. The amount of his knowledge seems to have been,—(1.) He had correct views of the Messiah to come—views which he had derived from the study of the Old Testament. He was expecting a Saviour that should be humble, obscure, and a sacrifice, in opposition to the prevailing notions of the Jews. (2.) He had heard of John; had embraced his doctrine; and probably had been baptized with reference to him that was to come. Comp. Matt. iii. 2. Acts xix. 4. But it is clear that he had not heard that Jesus was the Messiah. With his correct views in regard to the coming of the Messiah, he was endeavouring to instruct and reform his countrymen. He was just in the state of mind to welcome the announcement that the Messiah had come, and to embrace Jesus of Nazareth as the hope of the nation. ¶ *Being fervent in the spirit.* Being zealous and ardent. See Note, Rom. xii. 11. ¶ *Taught diligently.* Defended with zeal and earnestness his views of the Messiah. ¶ *The things of the Lord.* The doctrines pertaining to the Messiah as far as he understood them. ¶ *Knowing only the baptism of John.* Whether he had heard John, and been baptized by him, has been made a question, and cannot now be decided. It is not necessary, however, to suppose this, as it seems that the knowledge of John's preaching and baptism had been propagated extensively into other nations besides Judea. ch. xix. 1—3. The Messiah was expected about that time. The foreign Jews would be waiting for him; and the news of John's ministry, doctrine, and success would be rapidly propagated from synagogue to synagogue into the surrounding nations. John preached repentance, and baptized with reference to him that was to come after him. (ch. xix. 4),

more ^b perfectly.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped ^c them much which had believed ^d through grace:

28 For he mightily convinced

^b Heb. 6. 1. 2Pet. 3. 18.

^c 1Cor. 3. 6.

^d Eph. 2. 8.

and this doctrine Apollos seems to have embraced.

26. *And expounded.* Explained. ¶ *The way of God.* Gave him full and ample instructions respecting the Messiah as having already come, and respecting the nature of his work.

27. *Into Achaia.* Note, ch. xviii. 12. ¶ *The brethren wrote.* The brethren at Ephesus. *Why* he went, the historian does not inform us. But he had heard of the success of Paul there; of the church which he had established; of the opposition of the Jews; and it was doubtless with a desire to establish that church, and with a wish to convince his unbelieving countrymen that their views of the Messiah were erroneous, and that Jesus of Nazareth corresponded with the predictions of the prophets. Many of the Greeks at Corinth were greatly captivated with his winning eloquence (1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 4, 5), and his going there was the occasion of some unhappy divisions that sprung up in the church. But in all this, he retained the confidence and love of Paul. 1 Cor. i. iii. It was thus shown that Paul was superior to envy, and that great success by one minister need not excite the envy, or alienate the confidence and good will of another. ¶ *Helped them much.* Strengthened them, and aided them in their controversies with the unbelieving Jews. ¶ *Which had believed through grace.* The words "through grace" may either refer to Apollos, or to the Christians who had believed. If to *him*, it means that he was enabled by grace to strengthen the brethren there; if to *them*, it means that they had been led to believe by the grace or favour of God. Either interpretation makes good sense. Our translation has adopted that which is most natural and obvious.

28. *For he mightily convinced the Jews.* He did it by strong arguments; he bore down all opposition, and effectually silenced them. ¶ *And that publicly.* In his public preaching in the synagogue and elsewhere. ¶ *Showing by the Scriptures.* Proving from the Old Testament. Show-

the Jews, *and that* publicly, showing by ^a the Scriptures that Jesus ¹ was Christ.

CHAPTER XIX.

AND it came to pass, that while Apollos ^b was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples,

2 He said unto them, have ye

^a Jno.6.39. ¹ or, is the Christ, ver.5. ^b 1Cor. 3,5,6.

ing that Jesus of Nazareth corresponded with the account of the Messiah given by the prophets. See Note, John v. 39. ¶ *That Jesus was Christ.* See the margin. That Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.

CHAPTER XIX.

1. *While Apollos was at Corinth.* It is probable that he remained there a considerable time. ¶ *Paul having passed through the upper coasts.* The upper, or more elevated regions of Asia Minor. The writer refers here particularly to the provinces of Phrygia and Galatia. ch. xviii. 23. These regions were called *upper*, because they were situated on the high table-land in the interior of Asia Minor, while Ephesus was in the low maritime regions, and called the *low* country. ¶ *Came to Ephesus.* Agreeably to his promise. ch. xviii. 21. ¶ *And finding certain disciples.* Certain persons who had been baptized into John's baptism, and who had embraced John's doctrine, that the Messiah was soon to appear. ver. 3, 4. It is very clear that they had not yet heard that he had come, or that the Holy Ghost was given. They were evidently in the same situation as Apollos. Notes, ch. xviii. 25.

2. *Have ye received the Holy Ghost?* Have ye received the extraordinary effusions and miraculous influences of the Holy Ghost? Paul would not doubt that, if they had "believed," they had received the ordinary converting influences of the Holy Spirit—for it was one of his favourite doctrines, that the Holy Spirit renews the heart. But, besides this, the miraculous influences of the Spirit were conferred on most societies of believers. The power of speaking with tongues, or of working miracles, was imparted as an evidence of the presence of God, and of their acceptance with him. ch. x. 45, 46. 1 Cor. xiv. It was natural for Paul to ask whether *this* evidence of the divine favour had been granted to

received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not ^c so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto ^d John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John ^e verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, ^f saying unto the people,

^c c.8.16. 1Sam.3.7. ^d c.18.25. ^e Matt.3.11. ^f Jno.1.15,27,30.

them. ¶ *Since ye believed.* Since you embraced the doctrine of John, that the Messiah was soon to come. ¶ *We have not so much as heard, &c.* This seems to be a very remarkable and strange answer. Yet we are to remember, (1.) That these were mere disciples of *John's* doctrine, and that *his* preaching related particularly to the Messiah, and not to the Holy Ghost. (2.) It does not even appear that they had heard that the Messiah *had* come, or had heard of Jesus of Nazareth. ver. 4, 5. (3.) It is not remarkable, therefore, that they had no clear conceptions of the character and operations of the Holy Ghost. Yet, (4.) They were just in that state of mind, that they were willing to embrace the doctrine when it was proclaimed to them; thus showing that they were *really* under the influence of the Holy Spirit. God may often produce important changes in the hearts and lives of sinners, even where they have no clear and systematic views of religious doctrines. In all such cases, however, as in this, there will be a readiness of heart to embrace the truth where it is made known.

3. *Unto what.* Unto what faith, or doctrine. What did you profess to believe when you were baptized. ¶ *Unto John's baptism.* Note, ch. xviii. 25.

4. *John verily baptized.* John did indeed baptize. ¶ *With the baptism of repentance.* Having special relation to repentance, or as a profession that they *did* repent of their sins. Note, Matt. iii. 6. ¶ *Saying unto the people.* The design of his coming was, to turn the people from their sins, and to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah. He therefore directed their attention principally to him that was to come. John i. 15. 22—27. ¶ *That is on Christ Jesus.* These are the words of Paul, explaining what John taught. He taught them to believe in the Messiah, and that the Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth. The argument of Paul is,

that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name ^a of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid ^b his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; ^c and they spake with tongues, ^d and prophesied.

^a c.8.16. 1Cor.1.13. ^b c.8.17. ^c c.2.4; 10.46.
^d 1Cor.14.1, &c.

that it was highly proper for them now to profess publicly that Saviour to whom John had borne such explicit testimony. 'Jesus is the Messiah for whom John came to prepare the way; and as you have embraced John's doctrine, you ought now publicly to acknowledge that Redeemer by baptism in his name.'

5. *When they heard this.* When they heard what Paul had said respecting the nature of John's baptism. ¶ *They were baptized, &c.* As there is no other instance in the New Testament of any persons having been rebaptized, it has been made a question by some critics, whether it was done here; and they have supposed that all this is the narrative of Luke respecting what took place under the ministry of John, to wit: that he told them to believe on Christ Jesus, and then baptized them in his name. But this is a most forced construction; and it is evident that these persons were *rebaptized* by the direction of Paul. For, (1.) This is the *obvious* interpretation of the passage—that which would strike all persons as correct, unless there were some previous theory to support. (2.) It was not a matter of fact that John baptized in the name of Christ Jesus. His was the baptism of repentance; and there is not the slightest evidence that he ever used the name of Jesus in the form of baptism. (3.) If this be the sense of the passage, that John baptized them in the name of Jesus, then this verse is a mere repetition of ver. 4; a tautology of which the sacred writers would not be guilty. (4.) It is evident, that the persons on whom Paul laid his hands (ver. 6), and those who were baptized, were the same. But these were the persons who *heard* (ver. 5) what was said. The narrative is *continuous*, all parts of it cohering together as relating to a transaction that occurred at the same time. If the *obvious* interpretation of the passage be the true one, it follows, that the baptism of John was not strictly

7 And all the men were about twelve.

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing, ^e and persuading ^f the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when divers were hardened, ^g and believed not, but spake evil ^h of that ⁱ way before the mul-

^e c.18.19. ^f c.28.23. ^g Rom.11.7. Heb.3.13.
^h 2Tim.1.15. 2Pet.2.2. Jude 10. ⁱ ver.23.

Christian baptism. It was the baptism of repentance; a baptism designed to prepare the way for the introduction of the kingdom of the Messiah. It will *not* follow, however, from this, that Christian baptism is now ever to be repeated. For this, there is no warrant, no example in the New Testament. There is no command to repeat it, as in the case of the Lord's supper; and the nature and design of the ordinance evidently supposes that it is to be performed but once. The disciples of John were rebaptized, not because baptism is designed to be repeated, but because they never had been, in fact, baptized in the manner prescribed by the Lord Jesus. ¶ *In the name of the Lord Jesus.* Note, ch. viii. 16.

6. *And when Paul laid his hands, &c.* Note, ch. viii. 17. ¶ *And they spake with tongues.* Notes, ch. ii. 4; x. 46. ¶ *And prophesied.* Notes, ch. ii. 17; xi. 27.

7. *And all the men.* The whole number.

8. *Persuading the things.* Endeavouring to persuade them of the truth of what was affirmed respecting the kingdom of God.

9. *But when divers.* When some were hardened. ¶ *Were hardened.* When their hearts were hardened, and they became violently opposed to the gospel. When the truth made no *impression* on them. The word *harden*, as applied to the heart, is often used to denote insensibility, and opposition to the gospel. ¶ *But spake evil of that way.* Of the gospel—the way, path, or manner in which God saves men. See Acts xvi. 17; xviii. 26. Matt. vii. 13, 14. ¶ *Separated the disciples.* Removed them from the influence and society of those who were seeking to draw them away from the faith. This is often the best way to prevent the evil influence of others. Christians, if they wish to preserve their minds calm and peaceful; if they wish to avoid the agitations of conflict, and the temptations of those who

titude, he departed ^a from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued by the space ^b of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia ^c heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both

^a 1 Tim. 6. 5.

^b c. 20. 31.

^c c. 20. 18.

would lead them astray, may often find it necessary to withdraw from their society, and should seek the fellowship of their Christian brethren. ¶ *Disputing daily.* This is not a happy translation. The word used here (διαλεγιμενος) does not of necessity denote *disputation* or *contention*, but is often used in a good sense of reasoning (Acts xvii. 2; xviii. 4. 19; xxiv. 25), or of public *preaching*. Acts xx. 7. 9. It is used in this sense here, and denotes that Paul taught publicly, or reasoned on the subject of religion in this place. ¶ *In the school of one Tyrannus.* Who this Tyrannus was, is not known. It is probable that he was a Jew, who was engaged in this employment, and who might not be unfavourable to Christians. In his school, or in the room which he occupied for teaching, Paul instructed the people when he was driven from the synagogue. Christians at that time had no churches, and they were obliged to assemble in any place where it might be convenient to conduct public worship.

10. *This continued.* This public instruction. ¶ *By the space, &c.* For two whole years. ¶ *So that all.* That is, the great mass of the people. ¶ *That dwelt in Asia.* In that province of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the principal city. The name *Asia* was used sometimes to denote that single province. See Note, Acts ii. 9. Ephesus was the capital; and there was, of course, a constant and large influx of people there for the purposes of commerce and worship. ¶ *Heard the word of the Lord Jesus.* Heard the doctrine respecting the Lord Jesus.

11. *Special miracles.* Miracles that were remarkable; that were not common, or that were very unusual (ου τας τυχουσας). This expression is classic Greek. Thus Longinus says of Moses, that he was no common man. Ὁυκ' ὁ τυχων ἀνὴρ.

12. *So that from his body.* That is, those handkerchiefs which had been applied to his body, which he had used, or which he had touched. An instance somewhat similar to this occurs in the case of the woman who was healed by

Jews and Greeks.

11 And God wrought special ^d miracles by the hands of Paul:

12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs ^e or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

^d Mark 16. 20.

^e c. 5. 15.

touching the hem of the Saviour's garment. Matt. ix. 20—22. ¶ *Unto the sick.* The sick who were at a distance, and who were unable to go where he was. If it be asked *why* this was done, it may be observed, (1.) That the working of miracles in that region would greatly contribute to the spread of the gospel. (2.) We are not to suppose that there was any *efficacy* in the aprons thus brought, or in the mere fact that they had touched the body of Paul, any more than there was in the hem of the Saviour's garment which the woman touched, or in the clay which he made use of to open the eyes of the blind man. John viii. 6. (3.) In this instance, the fact, that the miracles were wrought in this manner by garments which had touched his body, was a *mere sign*, or an *evidence* to the persons concerned, that it was done by the instrumentality of Paul, as the fact that the Saviour put his fingers into the ears of a deaf man, and spit and touched his tongue (Mark vii. 33), was an evidence to those who saw it, that the power of healing came from him. The bearing of these aprons to the sick was, therefore, a mere *sign*, or *evidence* to all concerned, that miraculous power was given to Paul. ¶ *Handkerchiefs.* The word used here (σουδάριον) is of Latin origin, and properly denotes a piece of linen with which *sweat* was wiped from the face; and then any piece of linen used for tying up, or containing any thing. In Luke xix. 20, it denotes the "napkin" in which the talent of the unprofitable servant was concealed; in John xi. 44; xx. 7, the "napkin" which was used to bind up the face of the dead, applied to Lazarus and to our Saviour. ¶ *Or aprons.* Σιμικινθια. This is also a Latin word, and means literally a *half-girdle*—a piece of cloth which was girded round the waist to preserve the clothes of those who were engaged in any kind of work. The word *aprons* expresses the idea. ¶ *And the diseases departed.* The sick were healed. ¶ *And the evil spirits.* See Notes, Matt. iv. 24. It is evident that this power of working miracles would

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them ^a to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure ^b you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth.

14 And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered

^a Mark 9.38. Luke 9.49.

^b Josh.6.26.

contribute greatly to Paul's success among the people.

13. *The vagabond Jews.* Gr. *Jews going about.* Ἰσχυροζομίμων. The word *vagabond* with us is now commonly used in a bad sense, to denote a vagrant; a man who has no home; an idle, worthless fellow. The word, however, properly means one wandering from place to place, without any settled habitation, from whatever cause it may be. Here it denotes those Jews who wandered from place to place, practising exorcism. ¶ *Exorcists.* Ἐξοκιστῶν. This word properly denotes those who went about pretending to be able to expel evil spirits, or to cure diseases by charms, incantations, &c. The word is derived from ορκος, *orkos*, an oath, and from ορκίζω, to bind with an oath. It was applied in this sense, because those who pretended to be able to expel demons used the formula of an oath, or adjured them, to compel them to leave the possessed persons. Comp. Matt. xii. 27. They commonly used the name of God, or called on the demons in the name of God to leave the person. Here they used the name Jesus to command them to come out. ¶ *To call over them.* To name, or to use his name as sufficient to expel the evil spirit. ¶ *The name of the Lord Jesus.* The reasons why they attempted this were, (1.) That Jesus had expelled many evil spirits; and, (2.) That it was in his name that Paul had wrought his miracles. Perhaps they supposed there was some *charm* in this name to expel them. ¶ *We adjure you.* We bind you by an oath; we command you as under the solemnity of an oath. Mark v. 7. 1 Thess. v. 27. It is a form of putting one under oath. 1 Kings ii. 43. Gen. xxiv. 37. 2 Kings xi. 4. Neh. xiii. 25. (Septuagint.) That this art was practised then, or attempted, is abundantly proved from Iræneus, Origen, and Josephus. (Ant. b. viii. ch. 2. § 5.) See Doddridge. The common name which was used, was the incom-

and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leapt ^c on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear ^d fell on them

^c Luke 8.29.

^d Luke 1.65. c.2. 43; 5.5,11.

municable name of God, JEHOVAH, by pronouncing which, in a peculiar way, it was pretended they had the power of expelling demons.

14. *One Sceva.* Sceva is a Greek name, but nothing more is known of him. ¶ *Chief of the priests.* Ἀρχιερεως. This cannot mean that he was high-priest among the Jews, as it is wholly improbable that his sons would be wandering exorcists. But it denotes that he was of the sacerdotal order. He was a Jewish chief priest; a priest of distinction, and that had held the office of a ruler. The word *chief priest*, in the New Testament, usually refers to men of the sacerdotal order who were also rulers in the sanhedrim.

15. *Jesus I know.* His power to cast out devils I know. Comp. Matt. viii. 29. ¶ *Paul I know.* Paul's power to cast out devils. ver. 12. ¶ *But who are ye?* What power have you over evil spirits? By what right do you attempt to expel them? The meaning is, 'you belong neither to Jesus nor Paul; you are not of their party; and you have no right or authority to attempt to work miracles in the name of either.'

16. *Leapt on them.* Several such instances are recorded of the extraordinary power and rage of those who were possessed with evil spirits. Mark v. 3; ix. 29. Luke ix. 42.

17. *The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.* Acquired increasing honour. The transaction showed that the miracles performed in the name of the Lord Jesus, by Paul, were real, and were wrought in attestation of the truth of the doctrine which he taught. Impostors could not work such miracles; and they who pretended to be able to do it only exposed themselves to the rage of the evil spirits. It was thus shown that there was a real, vital difference between Paul and these impostors; and their failure only served to extend his

all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18 And many that believed, came,

reputation and the power of the gospel.

18. *Their deeds.* Their actions; their evil course of life. Their deeds of iniquity in their former state. The direct reference here is to the magical arts which had been used, but the word may also be designed to denote iniquity in general. They who make a profession of religion will be willing to confess their transgressions. And no man can have evidence that he is truly renewed who is not willing to *confess* as well as to *forsake* his sins. Rom. x. 10. Prov. xxviii. 13. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy."

19. *Curious arts.* Arts or practices requiring skill, address, cunning. The word used here (*πειρασμα*) denotes properly those things that require care, or skill; and was thus applied to the arts of magic, and jugglery, and sleight of hand, that were practised so extensively in eastern countries. That such arts were practised at Ephesus is well known. The *Ephesian letters*, by which incantations and charms were supposed to be produced, were much celebrated. They seem to have consisted of certain combinations of letters or words, which, by being pronounced with certain intonations of voice, were believed to be effectual in expelling diseases, or evil spirits; or which, by being written on parchment and worn, were supposed to operate as *amulets*, or charms, to guard from evil spirits, or from danger. Thus Plutarch (Sympos. 7) says, "the magicians compel those who are possessed with a demon to recite and pronounce the *Ephesian letters*, in a certain order, by themselves." Thus Clemens Alex. (Strom. ii.) says, "Androcydes, a Pythagorean, says that the letters which are called *Ephesian*, and which are so celebrated, are symbols," &c. Erasmus says (Adagg. Cent. 2), that there were certain marks and magical words among the Ephesians, by using which they succeeded in every undertaking. Eustha. ad Homer Odys. τ says, "that those letters were incantations which Cræsus used when on the funeral pile, and which greatly befriended him." He adds, that in the war between the Milesians and Ephesians, the latter were

and confessed, ^a and shewed their deeds.

19 Many also of them which

a Matt.3.6. Rom.10.10.

thirteen times saved from ruin by the use of these letters. See Grotius and Kuinöel *in loco*. ¶ *Brought their books.* Books which explained the arts; or which contained the magical forms and incantations—perhaps pieces of parchment, on which were written the letters which were to be used in the incantations and charms. ¶ *And burned them before all men.* Publicly. Their arts and offences had been public, and they sought now to *undo* the evil, as much as lay in their power, as extensively as they had done it. ¶ *And they counted.* The price was estimated. By whom this was done does not appear. Probably it was not done by those who had been engaged in this business, and who had suffered the loss, but by the people, who were amazed at the sacrifice, and who were astonished at their folly in thus destroying their own property. ¶ *Fifty thousand pieces of silver.* What coin the word (*αργυριον*) here translated *silver* denotes, it is impossible to tell; and consequently the precise value of this sacrifice cannot be ascertained. If it refers to the Jewish *shekel*, the sum would be \$25,000, as the shekel was worth about half a dollar. If it refers to Grecian or Roman coin—which is much more probable, as this was a heathen country, where the Jewish coin would not probably be much used—the value would be much less. Probably, however, it refers to the Attic *drachm*, which was a silver coin worth about 9d. sterling, or not far from 17 cents; and then the value would be about \$8,500. The precise value is not material. It was a large sum; and it is recorded to show that Christianity had power to induce men to forsake arts that were most lucrative, and to destroy the means of extending and perpetuating those arts, however valuable in a pecuniary point of view they might be. We are to remember, however, that this was not the *intrinsic* value of these books, but only their value as books of incantation. In themselves they might have been of very little worth. *The universal prevalence of Christianity would make much that is now esteemed valuable property utterly worthless*—as, e. g. all that is used in gambling; in fraud; in counterfeiting; in distilling ardent spirits for drink; in the slave-trade; and in at-

used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

20 So mightily grew ^a the word of God, and prevailed.

a c.12.24

tempts to impose on and defraud mankind.

20. *So mightily*. So powerfully. It had such efficacy and power in this wicked city. The power *must* have been mighty that would thus make them willing, not only to cease to practise imposition, but to give up all hopes of future gains, and to destroy their property. On this instructive narrative, we may remark, (1.) That religion has power to break the hold of sinners on unjust and dishonest means of living. (2.) That those who have been engaged in an unchristian and dishonourable practice, will abandon it when they become Christians. (3.) That their abhorrence of their former course will be, and ought to be, expressed as publicly as was the offence. (4.) That the evil practice will be abandoned at any sacrifice, however great. The only question will be, *what is right*; not, *what will it cost*. Property, in the view of a converted man, is nothing when compared with a good conscience. (5.) This conduct of those who had used curious arts shows us what ought to be done by those who have been engaged in any evil course of life, and who are then converted. If their conduct was right—and who can doubt it?—it settles a great principle on which young converts should act. If a man has been engaged in the slave-trade, he will abandon it; and his duty will *not* be to sell his ship to one who he knows will continue the traffic. His property should be withdrawn from the business publicly, either by being destroyed, or by being converted to a useful purpose. If a man has been a distiller of ardent spirits as a drink, his duty will be to forsake his evil course. Nor will it be his duty to sell his distillery to one who will continue the business; but to withdraw his property from it *publicly*, either by destroying it, or converting it to some useful purpose. If a man has been engaged in the *traffic* in ardent spirits, his duty is not to sell his stock to those who will continue the sale of the poison, but to withdraw it from public use; converting it to

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

22 So he sent into Macedonia

b Gal.2.1.

c Rom.15.23-28.

some useful purpose, if he can; if not, by destroying it. All that has ever been said by money-loving distillers, or vendors of ardent spirits, about the loss which they would sustain by abandoning the business, might have been said by these practitioners of curious arts in Ephesus. And if the excuses of rum-selling men are valid, *their* conduct was folly; and they should either have continued the business of practising "curious arts" after they were converted, or have sold their "books" to those who would have continued it. For assuredly it was not worse to practise jugglery and fortune-telling than it is to destroy the bodies and souls of men by the traffic in ardent spirits. And yet, how few men there are in Christian lands who practise on the principle of these honest, but comparatively unenlightened men at Ephesus!

21. *After these things were ended*. After the gospel was firmly established at Ephesus, so that his presence was no longer necessary. ¶ *Purposed in the spirit*. Resolved in his mind. ¶ *When he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia*. In these places he had founded flourishing churches. It is probable that his main object in this visit was to take up a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem. See Note, Rom. xv. 25, 26. ¶ *To go to Jerusalem*. To bear the contribution of the Gentile churches to the poor and oppressed Christians in Judea. ¶ *I must also see Rome*. See Note, Rom. xv. 24. He did go to Rome, but he went in chains, as a prisoner.

22. *Timotheus*. Timothy. He was a proper person to send there to visit the churches, as he had been there before with Paul, when they were established. ch. xvi. 3; xvii. 14. ¶ *And Erastus*. Erastus was chamberlain of Corinth (Rom. xvi. 23), or more properly the *treasurer* of the city (see Note on that place); and he was, therefore, a very proper person to be sent with Timothy, for the purpose of making the collection for the poor at Jerusalem. Paul had wisdom enough to employ a man accustomed to moneyed transactions in making a collection. On

two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; ^a but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

23 And the same time there arose no small stir ^b about that way.

24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made

^a Rom. 16. 23. 2 Tim. 4. 20.

^b 2 Cor. 1. 8; 6. 9.

this collection his heart was intent, and he afterwards went up with it to Jerusalem. See 2 Cor. viii. ix., and Notes, Rom. xv. 25, 26. ¶ Stayed in Asia. At Ephesus. ¶ For a season. How long is uncertain. He waited for a convenient opportunity to follow them; probably intending to do it as soon as they had fully prepared the way for the collection. See Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, p. i. ch. ii.

23. *No small stir.* No little excitement, disturbance, or tumult (τρέξιμος). Comp. ch. xvii. 4, 5. ¶ *About that way.* Respecting the doctrines of Christianity which Paul preached. Note, ch. ix. 2; xviii. 26; xix. 9.

24. *A silversmith.* The word used here denotes one who works in silver in any way, either in making money, in stamping silver, or in forming utensils of it. It is probable that the employment of this man was confined to the business here specified, that of making shrines; as his complaint (ver. 26, 27) implied, that destroying this would be sufficient to throw them all out of employment. ¶ *Silver shrines.*

Νεβός. Temples. The word *shrine* properly means a case, small chest, or box; particularly applied to a box in which sacred things are deposited. Hence we hear of the *shrines* for relics. (*Webster.*) The word *shrines* here denotes small portable temples, or edifices, made of silver, so as to resemble the temple of Diana, and probably containing a silver image of the goddess. Such shrines would be purchased by devotees and by worshippers of the goddess, and by strangers, who would be desirous of possessing a representation of one of the seven wonders of the world. See Note on ver. 27. The great number of persons that came to Ephesus for her worship would constitute an ample sale for productions of this kind, and make the manufacture a profitable employment. It is well known that pagans every where are accustomed to carry with them small images, or representations of their gods, as an amulet, or charm. The Romans had such images in all their houses, called *Penates*, or household gods. A similar thing is men-

tioned as early as the time of Laban (Gen. xxxi. 19), whose *images* Rachel had stolen and taken with her. Comp. Judg. xviii. 5. "The man Micah had an house of gods." 1 Sam. xix. 13. Hos. iii. 4. These images were usually enclosed in a box, case, or chest, made of wood, iron, or silver; and probably, as here, usually made to resemble the temple where the idol was worshipped. ¶ *Diana.* This was a celebrated goddess of the heathen, and one of the twelve superior deities. In the heavens she was Luna, or Meni (the moon); on earth Diana; and in hell Hecate. She was sometimes represented with a crescent on her head, a bow in her hand, and dressed in a hunting-habit; at other times with a triple face, and with instruments of torture. She was commonly regarded as the goddess of hunting. She was also worshipped under the various names of Lucina, Proserpine, Trivia, &c. She was also represented with a great number of breasts, to denote her being the fountain of blessings, or as distributing her benefits to each in their proper station. She was worshipped in Egypt, Athens, Cilicia, and among heathen nations generally; but the most celebrated place of her worship was Ephesus—a city peculiarly dedicated to her. ¶ *To the craftsmen.* To the labourers employed under Demetrius in the manufacture of shrines.

silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25 Whom he called ^d together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26 Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but al-

^c c. 16. 16. 19.

^d Rev. 18. 11.

lone at Ephesus, but also throughout all Asia, ye see and hear, that by this craft we have our wealth. ¶ *Throughout all Asia.* All Asia

25. *With the workmen of like occupation.* Those who were in his employ, and all others engaged in the same business. As they would be all affected in the same way, it was easy to produce an excitement among them all. ¶ *Sirs.* Gr. Men. ¶ *By this craft.* By this business, or occupation. This is our *trade.* ¶ *Our wealth.* Gr. Our acquisition; our property. We are dependent on it for a living. It does not mean that they were *rich*, but that they relied on this for a subsistence. That it was a lucrative business is apparent; but it is not affirmed that they were in fact rich.

26. *Ye see and hear.* You see at Ephesus; and you hear the same of other places. ¶ *Throughout all Asia.* All Asia

most throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that ^a they be no gods which are made with hands :

^a Ps. 115. 4. Isa. 44. 10-20.

Minor; or perhaps the province of which Ephesus was the capital. Note, ch. ii. 9. ¶ *This Paul hath persuaded.* We have here the noble testimony of a heathen to the zeal and success of the ministry of Paul. It is an acknowledgment that his labours had been most strikingly successful in turning the people from idolatry. ¶ *Saying that they be no gods, &c.* Note, ch. xiv. 14, 16.

27. *So that not only, &c.* The grounds of the charge which Demetrius made against Paul were two;—first, that the business of the craftsmen would be destroyed—usually the first thing that strikes the mind of a sinner who is influenced by self-interest alone; and second, that the worship of Diana would cease if Paul and his fellow-labourers were suffered to continue their efforts. ¶ *This our craft.* This business in which we are engaged, and on which we are dependent. Gr. This part (το μέρος) which pertains to us. ¶ *To be set at nought.* To be brought into contempt. It will become so much an object of ridicule and contempt that we shall have no further employment. Gr. *'Is in danger of coming into refutation.'* Εἰς ἐπιλεγμον. As that which is refuted by argument is deemed useless, so the word comes also to signify that which is useless, or which is an object of contempt or ridicule. We may here remark, (1.) That the extensive prevalence of the Christian religion would destroy many kinds of business in which men now engage. It would put an end to all that now ministers to the pride, vanity, luxury, vice, and ambition of men. Let religion prevail, and wars would cease, and all the preparations for war which now employ so many hearts and hands would be useless. Let religion prevail, and temperance would prevail also; and consequently all the capital and labour now employed in distilling and vending ardent spirits would be withdrawn, and the business be broken up. Let religion prevail, and luxury ceases, and the arts which minister to licentiousness would be useless. Let Christianity prevail, and all that goes now to minister to idolatry, and the corrupt passions of men, would be destroyed. No small part of the talent, also, that is now worse than

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised,^b and her magnificence should be de-

^b Zeph. 2. 11.

wasted in corrupting others by ballads and songs, by fiction and licentious tales, would be withdrawn. A vast amount of capital and talent would thus be at once set at liberty, to be employed in nobler and better purposes. (2.) The effect of religion is often to bring the employments of men into shame and contempt. A revival of religion often makes the business of distilling an object of abhorrence. It pours shame on those who are engaged in ministering to the vices and luxuries of the world. Religion reveals the evil of such a course of life, and those vices are banished by the mere prevalence of better principles. Yet, (3.) The talent and capital thus disengaged is not rendered useless. It may be directed to other channels and other employments. Religion does not make men idle. It devotes talents to useful employments, and opens fields in which all may toil usefully to themselves and to their fellowmen. If all the capital, and genius, and learning which are now wasted, and worse than wasted, were to be at once withdrawn from their present pursuits, they might be profitably employed. There is not now a useless man who might not be useful; there is not a cent wasted which might not be employed to advantage in the great work of making the world better and happier. ¶ *But also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised.* This temple, so celebrated, was regarded as one of the seven wonders of the world. It was two hundred and twenty years in building, before it was brought to perfection. It was built at the expense of all Asia Minor. The original object of worship among the Ephesians was a small statue of Diana, of elm, or ebony, made by one Canitias, though commonly believed in those days to have been sent down from heaven by Jupiter. It was merely an Egyptian hieroglyphic, with many breasts, representing the goddess of Nature—under which idea Diana was probably worshipped at Ephesus. As the original figure became decayed by age, it was propped up by two rods of iron like spits, which were carefully copied in the image which was afterwards made in imitation of the first. A temple, most magnificent in structure,

stroyed, whom all Asia and the world^a worshippeth.

28 And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath,^b and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!

29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught

a 1Jno.5.19. Rev.13.8.

b Jer.50.38.

was built to contain the image of Diana, which appears to have been several times built and rebuilt. The first is said to have been completed in the reign of Servius Tullius, at least 570 years before Christ. Another temple is mentioned as having been designed by Ctesiphon, 540 years before the Christian era, and which was completed by Daphnis of Miletus, and a citizen of Ephesus. This temple was partially destroyed by fire on the very day on which Socrates was poisoned, 400 years B. C., and again 356 years B. C., by the philosopher Herostratus, on the day on which Alexander the Great was born. He confessed, on being put to the torture, that the only motive which he had was to immortalize his name. The four walls, and a few columns only, escaped the flames. The temple was repaired, and restored to more than its former magnificence, in which, says Pliny (Lib. xxxvi. c. 14), 220 years were required to bring it to completion. It was four hundred and twenty-five feet in length, two hundred and twenty in breadth, and was supported by one hundred and twenty-seven pillars of Parian marble, each of which was sixty feet high. These pillars were furnished by as many princes, and thirty-six of them were curiously carved, and the rest were finely polished. Each pillar, it is supposed, with its base, contained one hundred and fifty tons of marble. The doors and panneling were made of cypress wood, the roof of cedar, and the interior was rendered splendid by decorations of gold, and by the finest productions of ancient artists. This celebrated edifice, after suffering various partial demolitions, was finally burnt by the Goths, in their third naval invasion, in A. D. 260. Travellers are now left to conjecture where its site was. Amidst the confused ruins of ancient Ephesus, it is now impossible to tell where was this celebrated temple, once one of the wonders of the world. "So passes away the glory of this world." See Edinburgh Ency. art. Ephesus; also Anacharsis' Travels, vol. vi. 188. Ancient

Gaius^c and Aristarchus,^d men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31 And certain of the chief of

c Rom.16.23. 1Cor.1.14.

d c.4.10.

Universal History, vol. vii. 416; and Pockocke's Travels. ¶ *And her magnificence.* Her majesty and glory; i. e. the splendour of her temple and her worship. ¶ *Whom all Asia.* All Asia Minor. ¶ *And the world.* Other parts of the world. The temple had been built by contributions from a great number of princes; and doubtless multitudes from all parts of the earth came to Ephesus to pay their homage to Diana.

28. *Were full of wrath.* Were greatly enraged—probably at the prospect of losing their gains. ¶ *Great is Diana, &c.* The term *great* was often applied by the Greeks to Diana. • Thus in *Xenophon* (Ephes. i.) he says, "I adjure you by your own goddess, the great (την μεγαλην) Diana of the Ephesians." The *design* of this clamour was doubtless to produce a persecution against Paul; and thus to secure a continuance of their employment. Often, when men have no arguments, they raise a clamour; when their employments are in danger of being ruined, they are filled with rage. We may learn, also, that when men's pecuniary interests are affected, they often show great zeal for religion, and expect by clamour in behalf of some doctrine, to maintain their own interest, and to secure their own gains.

29. *Confusion.* Tumult; disorder. ¶ *Gaius.* He had lived at Corinth, and had kindly entertained Paul at his house. 1 Cor. i. 14. Rom. xvi. 23. ¶ *Aristarchus.* He attended Paul to Rome, and was there a prisoner with him. Col. iv. 10. ¶ *With one accord.* Tumultuously; or with one mind, or purpose. ¶ *Into the theatre.* The *theatres* of the Greeks were not only places for public exhibitions, but also for holding assemblies, and often for courts, elections, &c. The people, therefore, naturally rushed there, as being a suitable place to decide this matter.

30. *Would have entered in unto the people.* Probably to have addressed them, and to defend his own cause.

31. *Certain of the chief of Asia.* Τῶν Ἀσιερχῶν. Of the Asiarchs. These

Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring "him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

32 Some ^b therefore cried one thing, and some another; for the assembly was confused: and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

33 And they drew Alexander out

a c.21.12.

b c.21.34.

were persons who presided over sacred things, and over the public games. It was their business to see that the proper services of religion were observed, and that proper honour was rendered to the Roman emperor in the public festivals, at the games, &c. They were annually elected, and their election was confirmed at Rome before it was valid. They held a common council at the principal city within their province, as at Ephesus, Smyrna, Sardis, &c., to consult and deliberate about the interests committed to their charge in their various provinces. (*Kuinöl* and *Schleusner*.) Probably they were assembled on such an occasion now; and during their remaining there they had heard Paul preach, and were friendly to his views and doctrines. ¶ *Which were his friends.* It does not appear from this that they were Christian converts; but they probably had feelings of respect towards him, and were disposed to defend him and his cause. Perhaps, also there might have existed a present acquaintance and attachment. ¶ *Would not adventure.* Would not risk his life in the tumult, and under the excited feelings of the multitude.

32. *Some therefore cried one thing, &c.* This is an admirable description of a mob, assembled for what purpose they knew not; but agitated by passions, and strifes, and tumults. ¶ *And the most part knew not, &c.* The greater part did not know. They had been drawn together by the noise and excitement; but a small part would know the real cause of the commotion. This is usually the case in tumultuous meetings.

33. *And they drew Alexander.* Who this Alexander was, is not known. Grotius supposes that it was "Alexander the coppersmith," who had in some way done Paul much harm (2 Tim. iv. 14); and whom, with Philetus, Paul had excommunicated. He supposes that it was a device of the Jews to put forward one who had been of the Christian party, in order

of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander ^c beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice, about the space of two hours, cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!

c 1Tit.1.20. 2Tit.4.14.

to accuse Paul, and to attempt to cast the odium of the tumult on him. But it is not clear that the Alexander whom Paul had excommunicated was the person concerned in this transaction. All that appears in this narrative is, that Alexander was one who was known to be a Jew; and who wished to defend the Jews from being regarded as the authors of this tumult. It would be supposed by the hearer that the Christians were only a sect of the Jews, and the Jews wished doubtless to show that *they* had not been concerned in giving occasion to this tumult, but that it was to be traced wholly to Paul and his friends. ¶ *The Jews putting him forward.* That he might have a convenient opportunity to speak to the people. ¶ *Would have made his defence.* Our translation, by the phrase "*his defence*," would seem to imply that he was personally accused. But it was not so. The Greek is simply, 'was about to apologize to the people;' that is, to make a defence, not of himself particularly, but of the Jews in general. The translation should have been '*a defence*.'

34. *But when they knew.* When they perceived or ascertained. ¶ *That he was a Jew.* There was a general prejudice against the Jews. They were disposed to charge the whole difficulty on Jews—esteeming Christians to be but a sect of the Jews. They were, therefore, indignant and excited, and indiscriminate in their wrath, and unwilling to listen to any defence. ¶ *With one voice.* Unitedly, in one continued shout and clamour. ¶ *About the space of two hours.* The day, from sunrise to sunset, among the Greeks and Romans, was divided into twelve equal parts. John xi. 9. An *hour*, therefore, did not differ materially from an hour with us. It is not at all improbable that the tumult would continue for so long a time, before it would be possible to allay the excitement. ¶ *Cried out, &c.* This they at first did to silence Alexander. The excitement, however, was con-

35 And when the town-clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men ^a of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a

^a Eph. 2. 12.

tinued in order to evince their attachment to Diana, as would be natural in an excited and tumultuous mob of debased heathen worshippers.

35. *And when the town-clerk.* Ὁ γραμματεὺς. The scribe; the secretary. The word is often used in the New Testament, and is commonly translated *scribe*, and is applied to public notaries in the synagogues; to clerks, and to those who transcribed books, and hence to men skilled in the law or in any kind of learning. Comp. 2 Sam. viii. 17. 2 Kings xii. 11. Ezra vii. 6. 11, 12. Matt. v. 20; xii. 38; xiii. 52; xv. 1; xxiii. 34. 1 Cor. i. 20. It is, however, nowhere else applied to a heathen magistrate. It probably denoted a recorder; or a transcriber of the laws; or a chancellor. (*Keinöel, Doddridge.*) This officer had a seat in their deliberative assemblies; and on him it seems to have devolved to keep the peace. The Syriac, 'Prince of the city.' The Vulgate and Arabic, 'Scribe.' ¶ *Had appeased the people.* Καταστῆλας. Having restrained, quieted, tranquillized, so as to be able to address them. ¶ *What man is there.* Who is there that can deny this? It is universally known and admitted. This is the language of strong confidence, of reproof, and of indignation. It implied, that the worship of Diana was so well established, that there was no danger that it could be destroyed by a few Jews; and he therefore reproved them for what he deemed their unreasonable alarms. But he little knew the power of that religion which had been the innocent cause of all this tumult; nor that, at no very distant period, this then despised religion would overturn, not only the worship of Diana at Ephesus, but the splendid idolatry of the mighty Roman empire. ¶ *Is a worshipper.* Νεωκόρον. Margin. Temple-keeper. The word here used does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It is derived from νεῶς for ναῶς a temple, and κορεῖω, to sweep, to cleanse. But among the ancients, the office of keeping their temples was by no means as humble as that of sexton is with us. It was esteemed to be an office of honour and dignity to have charge of the temples of the gods, and to keep them in order. The name was also given to the cities that

¹ worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter?

36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought

¹ The temple-keeper.

were regarded as the peculiar patrons or worshippers of certain gods and goddesses. They esteemed it an honour to be regarded as the peculiar *keepers* of their temples and images; and as having adopted them as their tutelary divinities. Such was Ephesus in regard to Diana. It was esteemed a high honour that the city was known, and every where regarded as being *intrusted* with the worship of Diana, or with keeping the temple regarded by the whole world as peculiarly her own. See *Schleusner* on this word. ¶ *And of the image.* A special guardian of the image, or statue of Diana. ¶ *Which fell down, &c.* Which was feigned or believed to have been sent down from heaven. Of what this image was made is not known. Pliny says (*Hist. Nat. xvi. 79*) that it was made of a vine. Mucian (on Pliny) says, that the image was never changed, though the temple had been seven times rebuilt. It is probable that the image was so ancient that the maker of it was unknown, and it was therefore feigned to have fallen from heaven. It was for the interest of the priests to keep up this impression. Many cities pretended to have been favoured in a similar manner with images or statues of the gods, sent directly from heaven. The safety of Troy was supposed to depend on the *Palladium*, or image of Pallas Minerva, which was believed to have fallen from heaven. Numa pretended that the *ancilia*, or sacred shields, had descended from heaven. Thus Herodian expressly affirms, that "the Phenicians had no statue of the sun polished by the hand, but only a certain large stone, circular below, and terminated acutely above in the figure of a cone, of a black colour, and that they believe it to have fallen from heaven." It has been supposed that this image at Ephesus was merely a conical or pyramidal stone which fell from the clouds—a *meteorite*—and that it was regarded with superstitious reverence, as having been sent from heaven. See the *Edinburgh Ency. art. Meteorites.* ¶ *From Jupiter.* See Note, ch. xiv. 12.

36. *Seeing then, &c.* Since this is established and admitted. Since no one can call in question the zeal of the Ephesians on this subject, or doubt the sim-

to be quiet, and to do ^a nothing rashly.

37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither ^b robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and

a Prov. 14. 29.

b c. 25. 8.

cerity of their belief. And since there can be no danger that this well-established worship is to be destroyed by the efforts of a few evil-disposed Jews, there is no occasion for this tumult. ¶ *Be quiet.* Be appeased. The same Greek word which is used in ver. 35, "had *appeased* the people." ¶ *To do nothing rashly.* To do nothing in a heated, inconsiderate manner. There is no occasion for tumult and riot. The whole difficulty can be settled in perfect consistency with the maintenance of order.

37. *For ye, &c.* Demetrius and his friends. The blame was to be traced to them. ¶ *Which are neither robbers of churches.* The word *churches* we now apply to edifices reared for purposes of Christian worship. As no such churches had then been built, this translation is unhappy, and is not at all demanded by the original. The Greek word (*ἱεροστέλιου*) is applied properly to those who *commit sacrilege*, who plunder temples of their sacred things. The meaning here is, that Paul and his companions had not been guilty of robbing the temple of Diana, or any other temple. The charge of *sacrilege* could not be brought against them. Though they had preached against idols and idol worship, yet they had offered no violence to the temples of idolaters, nor had they attempted to strip them of the sacred utensils employed in their service. What they had done, they had done peaceably. ¶ *Nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.* They had not used harsh or reproachful language of Diana. This had not been charged on them, nor is there the least evidence that they had done it. They had opposed idolatry; had reasoned against it; and had endeavoured to turn the people from it. But there is not the least evidence that they had ever done it in harsh or reproachful language. And it shows that men should employ *reason*, and not harsh or reproachful language against any pervading evil; and that the way to remove it, is, to *enlighten* the minds of men, and to *convince* them of the error of their ways. Men gain nothing by bitter and reviling words;

the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, ¹ the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

39 But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall

¹ or, the court-days are kept

and it is much to obtain the testimony of even the enemies of religion—as Paul did of the chancellor of Ephesus—that no such words had been used in describing their crimes and follies.

38. *Have a matter against any man.* Have a complaint of injury; if injustice has been done them by any one. ¶ *The law is open.* See the margin. Ἄγοραῖς ἔγονται, i. e. ἡμέραι. There are *court days*; days which are open, or appointed for judicial trials, where such matters can be determined in a proper manner. Perhaps the courts were then held, and the matter might be immediately determined. ¶ *And there are deputies.* Roman proconsuls. Note, ch. xiii. 7. The cause might be brought before them with the certainty that it might be heard and decided. The Syriac reads this in the singular number—'Lo, the proconsul is in the city.' ¶ *Let them implead one another.* Let them *accuse* each other in the court; i. e. let them defend their own cause, and arraign one another. The laws are equal, and impartial justice will be done.

39. *But if ye inquire.* If you seek to determine any other matters than that pertaining to the alleged wrong which Demetrius has suffered in his business. ¶ *Other matters.* Any thing respecting public affairs; any thing pertaining to the government and the worship of Diana. ¶ *In a lawful assembly.* In an assembly convened, not by tumult and riot, but in conformity to law. This was a tumultuous assemblage, and it was proper in the public officer to demand that they should disperse; and that, if there were any public grievances to be remedied, it should be done in an assembly properly convened. It may be remarked here that the original word rendered *assembly*, is that which is usually in the New Testament rendered *church*. Ἐκκλησίαν. It is properly rendered by the word *assembly*—not denoting here a *mixed* or *tumultuous* assemblage, but one convened in the legal manner. The proper meaning of the word is, *that which is called out.* The *church*, the *Christian assembly* of the

be determined in a ¹ lawful assembly.

40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly. ^a

CHAPTER XX.

AND after the uproar ^b was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and

¹ or, ordinary. ^a 2Cor.1.8-10. ^b c.19.40.

faithful, is made up of those who are called out from the world.

40. *To be called in question.* By the government; by the Roman authority. Such a tumult, continued for so long a time, would be likely to attract the attention of the magistrates, and expose them to their displeasure. Popular commotions were justly dreaded by the Roman government; and such an assembly as this, convened without any good cause, would not escape their notice. There was a Roman law which made it capital for any one to be engaged in promoting a riot. *Sui cælum, et concursum fecerit, capite puniatur*: 'He who raises a mob, let him be punished with death.'

41 *Dismissed the assembly.* *Ἐν ἑκκλ. ἡσ. ἰ. 2v.* The word usually translated *church*. Here it is applied to the irregular and tumultuous assemblage which had convened in a riotous manner.

CHAPTER XX.

1. *The uproar.* The tumult excited by Demetrius and the workmen. After it had been quieted by the town-clerk. ch. xix. 40, 41. ¶ *Embraced them.* Saluted them; gave them parting expressions of kindness. Comp. Note, Luke vii. 45. Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 26. 1 Peter v. 14. The Syriac translates this, 'Paul called the disciples, and consoled them, and kissed them.' ¶ *To go to Macedonia.* On his way to Jerusalem, agreeably to his purpose, recorded ch. xix. 21.

2. *Over those parts.* The parts of country in and near Macedonia. He probably went to Macedonia by *Troas*, where he expected to find Titus (2 Cor. ii. 12); but not finding him there, he went by himself to Philippi, Thessalonica, &c., and then returned to Greece proper. ¶ *Into Greece.* Into Greece proper, of which

departed, for to go ^c into Macedonia.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much ^d exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And *there* abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait ^e for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

4 And there accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea; and

^c 1Cor.16.5. 1Tim.1.3. ^d 1Thess.2.3,11. ^e c.23.12;25.3. 2Cor.11.26.

Athens was the capital. While in Macedonia, he had great anxiety and trouble, but was at length comforted by the coming of Titus, who brought him intelligence of the liberal disposition of the churches of Greece in regard to the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem. 2 Cor. vii. 5-7. It is probable that the second epistle to the Corinthians was written during this time in Macedonia, and sent to them by Titus. See Note of Doddridge.

3. *And there abode.* Why he remained here is unknown. It is probable, that while in Greece, he wrote the epistle to the Romans. Comp. Rom. xv. 25-27. ¶ *Laid wait.* There was a design formed against him by the Jews, which they sought to execute. Why they formed this purpose, the historian has not informed us. ¶ *As he was about to sail.* It would seem from this, that the design of the Jews was to attack the ship in which he was about to sail, or to arrest him on ship-board. This fact determined him to take a much more circuitous route by land, so that the churches of Macedonia were favoured with another visit from him. ¶ *Into Syria.* On his way to Jerusalem. ¶ *He purposed, &c.* He resolved to avoid the snare which they had laid for him, and to return by the same way in which he had come into Greece.

4. *And there accompanied him.* It was usual for some of the disciples to attend the apostles in their journeys. ¶ *Into Asia.* It is not meant that they attended him from Greece through Macedonia; but that they went with him to Asia, having gone before him, and joined him at Troas. ¶ *Sopater of Berea.* Perhaps the same person who, in Rom. xvi. 21, is called *Sosipater*, and who is there said to have been a kinsman of Paul. ¶ *Aristarchus.*

of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus ^a and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and ^b Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus ^c and ^d Trophimus.

5 These going before, tarried for us at Troas.

6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of ^e unleavened bread, and came unto them at Troas ^f in five days; where we abode seven days.

^a c.19.29. ^b c.16.1. ^c Eph.6.21. Col.4.7. 2Tim. 4.12. Tit.3.12. ^d c.21.29. 2Tim.4.20. ^e Ex.23.15. ^f 2Tim. 4.13.

ch. xix. 29. ¶ *Gaius of Derbe.* Note, ch. xix. 29. ¶ *Tychicus.* This man was high in the confidence and affection of Paul. In Eph. vi. 21, 22, he styles him "a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord." ¶ *And Trophimus.* Trophimus was from Ephesus. ch. xx. 29. When Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy, he was at Miletum, sick. 2 Tim. iv. 20.

5. *These going before.* Going before Paul and Luke. Dr. Doddridge supposes that only Tychicus and Trophimus went before the others. Perhaps the Greek most naturally demands this interpretation. ¶ *Tarried for us.* The word "us" here, shows that Luke had again joined Paul as his companion. In ch. xvi. 12, it appears that Luke was in Philippi, in the house of Lydia. Why he remained there, or why he did not attend Paul in his journey to Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, &c. is not known. It is evident, however, that he here joined him again. ¶ *At Troas.* Note, ch. xvi. 8.

6. *After the days of unleavened bread.* After the seven days of the passover, during which they ate only unleavened bread. See Ex. xii. ¶ *In five days.* They crossed the Ægean sea. Paul, when he crossed it on a former occasion, did it in two days (ch. xvi. 11, 12); but the navigation of the sea is uncertain, and they were now probably hindered by contrary winds.

7. *And upon the first day of the week.* Showing thus, that this day was then observed by Christians as holy time. Comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Rev. i. 10. ¶ *To break bread.* Evidently to celebrate the Lord's supper. Comp. ch. ii. 46. So the Syriac understands it, by translating it, 'to break the eucharist,' i. e. the eucharistic bread. It is probable that the apostles and early Christians celebrated the Lord's supper on every Lord's-day. ¶ *And continued*

7 And upon the first ^e day of the week, when the disciples came together to break ^h bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights in the upper ⁱ chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Euty-

^g 1Cor.16.2. Rev.1.10. ^h c.2.42.46. 1Cor.10.16; 5 1.20-34. ⁱ c.1.13.

his speech until midnight. The discourse of Paul continued until the breaking of day. ver. 11. But it was interrupted about midnight by the accident that occurred to Eutyclus. The fact that Paul was about to leave them on the next day, probably to see them no more, was the principal reason why his discourse was so long continued. We are not to suppose, however, that it was one continued or set discourse. No small part of the time might have been passed in hearing and answering questions, though Paul was the chief speaker. The case proves that such seasons of extraordinary devotion may, in peculiar circumstances, be proper. Occasions may arise where it will be proper for Christians to spend a much longer time than usual in public worship. It is evident, however, that such seasons do not often occur.

8. *And there were many lights.* Why this circumstance is mentioned is not apparent. It, however, meets one of the slanders of the early enemies of Christianity, that Christians in their assemblies were accustomed to extinguish all the lights, and to commit every kind of abomination. Perhaps the mention of many lights here is designed to intimate that it was a place of public worship, as not only the Jews, but the Gentiles were accustomed to have many lights burning in such places. ¶ *In the upper chamber.* Note, ch. i. 13.

9. *And there sat in a window.* The window was left open, probably to avoid the malice of their enemies, who might be disposed otherwise to charge them with holding their assemblies in darkness for purposes of iniquity. The window was a mere opening in the wall to let in light, as there was no glass known at that time; and as the shutters of the window were not closed, there was nothing to prevent Eutyclus from falling down. ¶ *The*

chus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, and fell ^a on him, and embracing *him*, said, ^b Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young

^a 1Kings 17.21. 2Kings 4.34.

^b Matt.9.24.

third loft. The third story. ¶ *And was taken up dead.* Some have supposed that he was merely stunned with the fall, and that he was still alive. But the obvious, and therefore the safest interpretation is, that he was actually killed by the fall, and was miraculously restored to life. This is an instance of sleeping in public worship that has some apology. The late hour of the night, and the length of the services, were the excuse. But, though the thing is often done now, yet how seldom is a sleeper in a church furnished with an excuse for it. No practice is more shameful, disrespectful, and abominable, than that so common of sleeping in the house of God.

10. *And fell on him, &c.* Probably stretching himself on him as Elisha did on the Shunammite's son. 2 Kings iv. 33—35. It was an act of tenderness and compassion, evincing a strong desire to restore him to life. ¶ *Trouble not yourselves.* They would doubtless be thrown into great consternation by such an event. Paul therefore endeavoured to compose their minds by the assurance that he would live. ¶ *For his life is in him.* He is restored to life. This has all the appearance of having been a miracle. Life was restored to him as Paul spoke.

11. *Come up again.* To the upper room. ver. 8. ¶ *And had broken bread, and eaten.* Had taken refreshment. As this is spoken of Paul only, it is evidently distinguished from the celebration of the Lord's supper.

12. *Not a little comforted.* By the fact that he was alive; perhaps also strengthened by the evidence that a miracle had been wrought.

13. *Sailed unto Assos.* There were several cities of this name. One was in Lycia; one in the territory of Eolis;

man alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 And he went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

15 And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyll-

one in Mysia; one in Lydia; and another in Epirus. The latter is the one intended here. It was between Troas and Mitylene. The distance to it from Troas by sea was much greater than by land, and accordingly Paul chose to go to it on foot. ¶ *Minding himself.* Choosing or preferring to go on foot. Most of his journeys were probably performed in this way.

14. *Came to Mitylene.* This was the capital of the island of Lesbos. It was distinguished by the beauty of its situation, and the splendour and magnificence of its edifices. The island on which it stood, Lesbos, was one of the largest in the Ægean sea, and the seventh in the Mediterranean. It is a few miles distant from the coast of Æolia, and is about one hundred and sixty-eight miles in circumference. The name of the city now is *Castro*.

15. *Over-against.* Opposite to. Into the neighbourhood of; or near to it. ¶ *Chios, called also Coos,* an island in the Archipelago, between Lesbos and Samos. It is on the coast of Asia Minor, and is now called *Scio*. It will long be remembered as the seat of a dreadful massacre of almost all its inhabitants by the Turks in 1823. ¶ *At Samos.* This was also an island of the Archipelago, lying off the coast of Lydia, from which it is separated by a narrow strait. These islands were celebrated among the ancients for their extraordinary wines. ¶ *Trogyllium.* This was the name of a town and promontory of Ionia in Asia Minor, between Ephesus and the mouth of the river Meander, opposite to Samos. The promontory is a spur of mount Mycale. ¶ *Miletus.* Called also Miletum. It was a city and seaport, and the ancient capital of Ionia. It was originally composed of a

lium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he hastened, if it were possible for him, to be ^a at Jerusalem the day of ^b Pentecost.

17 And from Miletus he sent to

^a c.18.21; 24.17.

^b c.2.1. 1Cor.16.8.

colony of Cretans. It became extremely powerful, and sent out colonies to a great number of cities on the Euxine sea. It was distinguished for a magnificent temple dedicated to Apollo. It is now called by the Turks *Melas*. It was the birth-place of Thales, one of the seven wise men of Greece. It was about forty or fifty miles from Ephesus.

16. *To sail by Ephesus.* The word *by* in our translation is ambiguous. We say to go *by* a place, meaning either to take it in our way, to go *to* it, or to go *past* it. Here it means the latter. He intended to sail *past* Ephesus without going to it. ¶ *For he hastened, &c.* Had he gone to Ephesus, he would probably have been so delayed in his journey that he could not reach Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost. ¶ *The day of Pentecost.* Note, ch. ii. 1.

17. *He sent to Ephesus.* Perhaps a distance of forty miles. ¶ *The elders of the church.* Who had been appointed while he was there to take charge of the church. Note, ch. xv. 2.

18. *And when they were come unto him.* The discourse which follows is one of the most tender, affectionate, and eloquent which is any where to be found. It is strikingly descriptive of the apostle's manner of life while with them; evinces his deep concern for their welfare; is full of tender and kind admonition; expresses the firm purpose of his soul to live to the glory of God, and his expectation to be persecuted still; and is a most affectionate and solemn farewell. No man can read it without being convinced that it came from a heart full of love and kindness; and that it evinces a great and noble purpose to be entirely employed in one great aim and object—the promotion of the glory of God, in the face of danger and of death. ¶ *Ye know.* From your own observation. He had been with them three years, and could make this solemn appeal to themselves, that he had led a faithful and devoted life. How happy is it, when a minister can thus ap-

Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day^c that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all^d humility of mind, and with many

^c c.19.1,10.

^d 1Cor.15.9,10.

peal to those with whom he has laboured, in proof of his own sincerity and fidelity! How comforting to himself, and how full of demonstration to a surrounding world, of the truth and power of the gospel which is preached. We may further remark, that this appeal furnishes strong proof of the purity and holiness of Paul's life. The elders at Ephesus must have had abundant opportunity to know him. They had seen him, and heard him publicly, and in their private dwellings. A man does not make such an appeal unless he has a consciousness of integrity, nor unless there is conclusive *proof* of his integrity. It is strong evidence of the holiness of the character of the apostles, and proof that they were not impostors, that they could thus appeal with the utmost assurance to those who had every opportunity of knowing them. ¶ *From the first day.* He was with *them* three years. ver. 31. ¶ *Into Asia.* Asia Minor. They would probably know not only how he had demeaned himself while with them, but also how he had conducted in other places near them. ¶ *After what manner I have been with you.* How I have lived and acted. What has been my manner of life. What *had* been his mode of life, he specifies in the following verses. ¶ *At all seasons.* At all times.

19. *Serving the Lord.* In the discharge of the appropriate duties of his apostolic office, and in private life. To discharge aright our duties in any vocation, is serving the Lord. Religion is often represented in the Bible as a *service* rendered to the Lord. ¶ *With all humility.* Without arrogance, pride, or a spirit of dictation; without a desire to "lord it over God's heritage;" without being elated with the authority of the apostolic office, the vanity of the miracles which he was enabled to perform, or the success which he attended his labours. What an admirable model for all who are in the ministry, for all who are endowed with talents and learning, and for all who meet with remarkable success in their work. The

tears, ^a and temptations, ^b which befell me by ^c the lying in wait of the Jews :

^a Phil. 3. 18.

^b 2 Cor. 4. 8-11.

^c ver. 3.

proper effect of such success, and of such talent, will be to produce true humility. Eminent success in the work of the ministry tends to produce lowliness and humbleness of mind; and the greatest endowments are usually connected with the most simple and childlike humility. ¶ *And with many tears.* Paul, not unfrequently, gives evidence of the tenderness of his heart, and his regard for the souls of men, and his deep solicitude for the salvation of sinners. ver. 31. Phil. iii. 18. 2 Cor. ii. 4. The *particular* thing, however, here specified as producing weeping, was the opposition of the Jews. But it cannot be supposed that those tears were shed from an apprehension of personal danger. It was rather because the opposition of the Jews impeded his work, and retarded his progress in winning souls to Christ. A minister of the gospel will, (1.) Feel, and deeply feel for the salvation of his people. He will weep over their condition when he sees them going astray, and in danger of perishing. He will, (2.) Be especially affected with opposition, because it will retard his work, and prevent the progress and the triumph of the gospel. It is not because it is a *personal* concern, but because it is the cause of his Master. ¶ *And temptations.* Trials, arising from their opposition. We use the word *temptation* in a more limited sense, to denote inducements offered to one to lead him into sin. The word in the Scriptures most commonly denotes *trials* of any kind. ¶ *Which befell me.* Which happened to me; which I encountered. ¶ *By the lying in wait, &c.* By their snares and plots against my life. Comp. ver. 3. Those snares and plans were designed to blast his reputation, and to destroy his usefulness.

20. *I kept back nothing, &c.* No doctrine, no admonition, no labour. Whatever he judged would promote their salvation, he had faithfully and fearlessly delivered. A minister of the gospel must be the judge of what will be profitable to the people of his charge. His aim should be to promote their real welfare—to preach that which will be *profitable*. His object will not be to please their fancy; to gratify their taste; to flatter their pride; or to promote his own popularity. “All Scripture is *profitable*” (2 Tim. iii. 16); and it will be his aim to

20 *And* how ^d I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have

^d ver. 27.

declare that only which will tend to promote their real welfare. Even if it be unpalatable; if it be the language of reproof and admonition; if it be doctrine to which the heart is by nature opposed; if it run counter to the native prejudices and passions of men; yet, by the grace of God, it should be, and will be delivered. No doctrine that will be profitable should be kept back; no plan, no labour, that may promote the welfare of the flock, should be withheld. ¶ *But have shewed you.* Have announced or declared to you. The word here used (*ἀναγγεῖλαι*) is most commonly applied to preaching in public assemblies, or in a public manner. ¶ *Have taught you publicly.* In the public assembly; by public preaching. ¶ *And from house to house.* Though Paul preached in public, and though his time was much occupied in manual labour for his own support (ver. 34), yet he did not esteem his *public* preaching to be all that was required of him; nor his daily occupation to be an excuse for not visiting from house to house. We may observe here, (1.) That Paul's example is a warrant and an implied injunction for family visitation by a pastor. If proper in Ephesus, it is proper still. If practicable in that city, it is in other cities. If it was useful there, it will be elsewhere. If it furnished to him consolation in the retrospect when he came to look over his ministry, and if it was *one* of the things which enabled *him* to say, “I am pure from the blood of all men,” it will be so in other cases. (2.) The design for which ministers should visit should be a *religious* design. Paul did not visit for mere ceremony, nor for idle gossip, or chit-chat; nor to converse on the mere news or politics of the day. His aim was, to show the way of salvation, and to teach in private what he taught in public. (3.) How much of this is to be done is, of course, to be left to the discretion of every minister. Paul, in private visiting, did not neglect public instruction. The latter he evidently considered to be his main or chief business. His high views of the ministry are evinced in his life, and in his letters to Timothy and Titus. Yet, while public preaching is the main, the prime, the leading business of a minister, and while his first efforts should be directed to pre-

taught you publicly, and ^a from house to house,

21 Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance ^b toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

a 2Tim.4.2.

b Mark 1.15. Luke 24.47.

paration for that, he may and should find time to enforce his public instructions by going from house to house; and often he will find that his most *immediate* and *apparent* success will result from such family instructions. (4.) If it is his duty to visit, it is the duty of his people to receive him as becomes an ambassador of Christ. They should be willing to listen to his instructions; to treat him with kindness, and to aid his endeavours in bringing a family under the influence of religion.

21. *Testifying.* Bearing witness to the necessity of repentance towards God. Or *teaching* them the nature of repentance, &c., and exhorting them to repent and believe. Perhaps the word *testifying* includes both ideas of giving evidence, and of urging with great earnestness and affection that repentance and faith were necessary. See 1 Tim. v. 21. 2 Tim. ii. 14; where the word here used, and here translated *testify*, is there translated, correctly, *charge*, in the sense of strongly *urging*, or entreating with great earnestness. ¶ *And to the Greeks.* To all who were not Jews. The *Greeks* properly denoted those who lived in Greece, and who spoke the Greek language. But the phrase, 'Jews and Greeks,' among the Hebrews, denoted the whole human race. He urged the necessity of repentance and faith in all. Religion makes no distinction, but regards all as sinners, and as needing salvation by the blood of the Redeemer. ¶ *Repentance toward God.* Note, Matt. iii. 2. Repentance is to be exercised "toward God," because, (1.) Sin has been committed *against* him, and it is proper that we express our sorrow to the Being whom we have offended; and, (2.) Because God only can pardon. Sincere repentance exists only where there is a willingness to make acknowledgment to the very Being whom we have offended, or injured. ¶ *And faith.* Note, Mark xvi. 16. ¶ *Toward.* Ἐς. In regard to; in; confidence in the work and merits of the Lord Jesus. This is required, because there is no other one who can save from sin. Note, ch. iv. 12.

22. *Bound in the spirit.* Strongly

2 A

22 And now, behold, I go ^c bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing ^d the things that shall befall me there :

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, say-

c c.19.21.

d Jam.4.14.

urged or constrained by the influences of the Holy Spirit on my mind. Not by any desire to see the place where my fathers worshipped, and not urged merely by reason, but by the convictions and mighty promptings of the Holy Spirit to do my duty in this case. The expression "bound in the spirit" (δεδεμένος τῷ Πνεύματι) is one of great strength and emphasis. The word δεῖω, *to bind*, is usually applied to confinement by cords, fetters, or bands (Matt. xiii. 30; xiv. 5; xxi. 2); and then denotes any strong obligation (Rom. vii. 2), or any thing that strongly urges, or impels. Acts xxviii. 5. When we are strongly urged by the convictions of duty, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, we should not shrink from danger or from death. Duty is to be done at all hazards. It is ours to follow the directions of God; *results* we may safely and confidently leave with him. ¶ *Not knowing the things that shall befall me there.* He knew that calamities and trials of some kind awaited him (ver. 23), but he did not know, (1.) Of what particular kind they would be; nor, (2.) Their issue, whether it should be life or death. We should commit our way unto God, not knowing what trials may be before us in life; but knowing that, if we are found faithful at the post of duty, we have nothing to fear in the issue.

23. *Save that.* Except that. This was all that he knew, that bonds and afflictions were to be his portion. ¶ *The Holy Ghost witnesseth.* Either by direct revelation to him, or by the predictions of inspired men whom Paul might meet. An instance of the latter mode occurs in ch. xxi. 11. It is probable that the meaning here is, that the Holy Ghost had deeply impressed the mind of Paul by his direct influences, and by his experience in every city, that bonds and trials were to be his portion. Such had been his experience in every city where he had preached the gospel by the direction of the Holy Ghost, that he regarded it as his certain portion that he was thus to be afflicted. ¶ *In every city.* In almost every city where Paul had been, he had been subjected to these trials. He had been persecuted,

ing^a that bonds and afflictions¹ abide me.

24 But none^b of these things

^a c.9.16; 21.11.
Rom.8.35,37. 2Cor.4.16.

¹ or, wait for me.

^b c.21.13.

stoned, and scourged. So uniform was this, so constant had been his experience in this way, that he regarded it as his certain portion to be thus afflicted; and he approached Jerusalem, and every other city, with a confident expectation that such trials awaited him there. ¶ *Saying.* In his experience; by direct revelation; and by the mouth of prophets. ch. xxi. 11. When Paul was called to the apostleship, it was predicted that he would suffer much. ch. ix. 16. ¶ *Bonds.* Chains. That I would be bound, as prisoners are who are confined. ¶ *Abide me.* See the margin. They remain or wait for me; i. e. I must expect to suffer them.

24. *Move me.* Alarm me; or deter me from my purpose. Gr. 'I make an account of none of them.' I do not regard them as of any moment, or as worth consideration, in the great purpose to which I have devoted my life. ¶ *Neither count I my life.* I do not consider my life as so valuable as to be retained by turning away from bonds and persecutions. I am certain of bonds and afflictions; I am willing also, if it be necessary, to lay down my life in the prosecution of the same purpose. ¶ *Dear unto myself.* So precious or valuable as to be retained at the sacrifice of duty. I am willing to sacrifice it if it be necessary. This was the spirit of the Saviour, and of all the early Christians. Duty is of more importance than life; and when either duty or life is to be sacrificed, life is to be cheerfully surrendered. ¶ *So that.* This is my main object, to finish my course with joy. It is implied here, (1.) That this was the great purpose which Paul had in view. (2.) That if he should even lay down his life in this cause, it would be a finishing his course with joy. In the faithful discharge of duty, he had nothing to fear. Life would be ended with peace whenever God should require him to finish his course. ¶ *Finish my course.* Close my career as an apostle and a Christian. Life is thus represented as a *course*, or *race* that is to be run. 2 Tim. iv. 7. Heb. xii. 1. 1 Cor. ix. 24. Acts xiii. 25. ¶ *With joy.* With the approbation of conscience and of God; with peace in the recollection of the past. Man should strive so to live that he will have nothing to regret

move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might^c finish my course with joy, and the

^c 2Tim.4.7.

when he lies on a bed of death. It is a glorious privilege to finish life with joy. It is most sad and awful when the last hours are imbittered with the reflection that life has been wasted, or that the course has been evil. The only way in which the course of life may be finished with joy, is by meeting faithfully every duty, and encountering, as Paul did, every trial with a constant desire to glorify God. ¶ *And the ministry.* That I may fully discharge the duty of the apostolic office, the preaching of the gospel. In 2 Tim. iv. 5, he charges Timothy to *make full proof of his ministry.* He here shows that this was the ruling principle of his own life. ¶ *Which I have received of the Lord Jesus.* Which the Lord Jesus has committed to me. Acts ix. 15—17. Paul regarded his ministry as an office intrusted to him by the Lord Jesus himself. On this account he deemed it to be peculiarly sacred, and of high authority. Gal. i. 12. Every minister has been intrusted with an office by the Lord Jesus. He is not his own; and his great aim should be, to discharge fully and entirely the duties of that office. ¶ *To testify the gospel.* To bear witness to the good news of the favour of God. This is the great design of the ministry. It is to bear witness to a dying world of the good news that God is merciful, and that his favour may be made manifest to sinners. From this verse we may learn, (1.) That we all have a course to run; a duty to perform. Ministers have an allotted duty; and so have men in all ranks and professions. (2.) We should not be deterred by danger, or the fear of death, from the discharge of that duty. We are safe only when we are doing the will of God. We are really in danger only when we neglect our duty, and make the great God our enemy. (3.) We should so live as that the end of our course may be joy. It is, at best, a solemn thing to die; but death may be a scene of triumph and of joy. (4.) It matters little when, or where, or how we die, if we die in the discharge of our duty to God. He will order the circumstances of our departure; and he can sustain us in the last conflict. Happy is that life which is spent in doing the will of God, and peaceful that death which

ministry ^a which I have received ^b of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of

^a 2Cor.4.1.

^b Gal.1.1.

closes a life of toil and trial in the service of the Lord Jesus.

25. *I know that ye all.* Perhaps this means simply, 'I have no expectation of seeing you again; I have every reason to suppose that this is my final interview with you.' He expected to visit Ephesus no more. The journey to Jerusalem was dangerous. Trials and persecutions he knew awaited him. Besides, it is evident that he designed to turn his attention to other countries, and to visit Rome; and probably had already formed the purpose of going into Spain. See Acts xix. 21. Comp. Rom. xv. 23—28. From all these considerations it is evident that he had no expectation of being again at Ephesus; it is probable, however, that he did again return to that city. See Note, ch. xxviii. 31. ¶ *Among whom I have gone preaching.* Among whom I have preached. The parting of a minister and people is among the most tender and affecting of the separations that occur on earth. ¶ *The kingdom of God.* Making known the nature of the reign of God on earth by the Messiah. See Note, Matt. iii. 2.

26. *Wherefore.* Διό. In view of the past, of my ministry and labours among you, I appeal to your own selves to testify that I have been faithful. ¶ *I take you to record.* Gr. I call you to witness; I appeal to you to testify. If any of you are lost, if you prove unfaithful to God, I appeal to yourselves that the fault is not mine. It is well when a minister can make this appeal, and call his hearers to bear testimony to his own faithfulness. Ministers who preach the gospel with fidelity may thus appeal to their hearers; and in the day of judgment may call on them to witness that the fault of the ruin of the soul is not to be charged to them. ¶ *That I am pure.* I am not to be charged with the guilt of your condemnation, as owing to my unfaithfulness. This does not mean that he set up a claim to absolute perfection; but that, in the matter under consideration, he had a conscience void of offence. ¶ *The blood of all men.* The word *blood* is used often in the sense of *death*, of *blood shed*; and hence of

God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day that I *am* pure ^c from the blood of all *men*.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel ^d of God.

^c 2Cor.7.2.

^d Eph.1.11.

the guilt or crime of putting one to death, or condemnation for it. Matt. xxiii. 35; xxvii. 25. Acts v. 28; xviii. 6. It here means, that if they should die the second death, if they should be lost for ever, *he* would not be to blame. He had discharged his duty, in faithfully warning and teaching them; and now if they were lost, the fault would be their own, not his. ¶ *All men.* All classes of men—Jews and Gentiles. He had warned and instructed all alike. Ministers may have many fears that their hearers will be lost. Their aim, however, should be, (1.) To save them, if possible; and, (2.) If they *are* lost, that it should be by no neglect or fault of theirs.

27. *For.* This verse contains a reason for what had been said in the previous verse. It shows *why* Paul regarded himself as innocent if they should be lost. ¶ *I have not shunned.* I have not kept back; I have not been deterred by fear, by the desire of popularity, by the fact that the doctrines of the gospel are unpalatable to men, from declaring them fully. The proper meaning of the word translated here, "I have not shunned" (ὕπεστέλιζμην), is to *disguise* any important truth; to *withdraw* it from public view; to *decline* publishing it from fear, or an apprehension of the consequences. Paul means that he had not *disguised* any truth; he had not *withdrawn* or kept it from open view, by any apprehension of the effect which it might have on their minds. Truth may be disguised or kept back. (1.) By avoiding the subject altogether from timidity, or an apprehension of giving offence if it is openly proclaimed; or, (2.) By giving it too little prominence, so that it shall be lost in the multitude of other truths; or, (3.) By presenting it amidst a web of metaphysical speculations, by entangling it with other subjects; or, (4.) By making use of other terms than the Bible does, for the purpose of involving it in a mist, so that it cannot be understood. Men may resort to this course, (1.) Because the truth itself will be unpalatable; (2.) Because they may apprehend the loss of reputation or support, (3.) Because they may not love the truth

28 Take heed ^a therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock,

^a Col. 4. 17. 1 Tim. 4. 16.

themselves, and choose to conceal its prominent and offensive points; (4.) Because they may be afraid of the rich, the great, and the gay, and apprehend that they shall excite their indignation; and, (5.) By a love of metaphysical philosophy, and a constant effort to bring every thing to the test of their own reason. Men often preach a *philosophical explanation* of a doctrine instead of the *doctrine itself*. They deserve the credit of ingenuity, but not that of being open and bold proclaimers of the truth of God. ¶ *The whole counsel.* Πᾶσαν τὴν βουλὴν. The word counsel (βουλὴ) denotes properly consultation, deliberation; and then will or purpose. Luke xxiii. 51. Acts ii. 23. It means here the will or purpose of God, as revealed in regard to the salvation of men. Paul had made a full statement of that plan—of the guilt of men, of the claims of the law, of the need of a Saviour, of the provisions of mercy, and of the state of future rewards and punishments. Ministers ought to declare *all* that counsel, because God commands it; because it is needful for the salvation of men; and, because the message is not theirs, but God's, and they have no right to change, to disguise, or to withhold it. And if it is the duty of ministers to *declare* that counsel, it is the duty of a people to *listen* to it with respect and candour, and with a desire to know the truth, and to be saved by it. *Declaring* the counsel of God will do no good, unless it is *received* into honest and humble hearts, and with a disposition to know what God has revealed for salvation.

28. *Take heed therefore.* Attend to; be on your guard against the dangers which beset you, and seek to discharge your duty with fidelity. ¶ *To yourselves.* To your own piety, opinions, and mode of life. This is the first duty of a minister; for, without this, all his preaching will be vain. Comp. Col. iv. 17. 1 Tim. iv. 14. Ministers are beset with peculiar dangers and temptations, and against them they should be on their guard. In addition to the temptations which they have in common with other men, they are exposed to those peculiar to their office—arising from flattery, and ambition, and despondency, and worldly-mindedness. And just in proportion to the importance of their office, is the importance of the injunction of Paul, to take heed to

over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you ^b overseers, to feed

^b Heb. 13. 17.

themselves. ¶ *And to all the flock.* The church; the charge intrusted to them. The church of Christ is often compared to a *flock*. See Notes on John x. 1—20; also John xxi. 15—17. The word *flock* here refers particularly to the *church*, and not to the congregation in general, for it is represented to be that which was purchased with the blood of the atonement. The command here is, (1.) To *take heed* to the church: i. e. to instruct, teach, and guide it; to guard it from enemies (ver. 29), and to make it their special object to promote its welfare. (2.) To take heed to ALL the flock—the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the old and the young. It is the duty of ministers to seek to promote the welfare of each individual of their charge—not to pass by the poor because they are poor; and not to be afraid of the rich because they are rich. A shepherd regards the interest of the tenderest of the fold as much as the strongest; and a faithful minister will seek to advance the interest of *all*. To do this, he should *know all* his people; should be acquainted, as far as possible, with their peculiar wants, character, and dangers, and should devote himself to their welfare as his first and main employment. ¶ *Over the which the Holy Ghost.* Though they had been appointed, doubtless, by the church, or by the apostles, yet it is here represented as having been done by the Holy Ghost. It was by him, (1.) Because he had called and qualified them for their work; and, (2.) Because they had been set apart in accordance with his direction and will. ¶ *Overseers.* Ἐπισκόπους. Bishops. The word properly denotes those who are appointed to oversee, or inspect any thing. This passage proves that the name was applicable to elders; and that in the time of the apostles, the name *bishop* and *presbyter*, or *elder*, was given to the same class of officers, and, of course, that there was no distinction between them. One term was originally used to denote *office*, the other *age*, and both were applied to the same persons in the church. The same thing occurs in Titus i. 5—7, where those who in ver. 5 are called elders, are in ver. 7 called bishops. See also 1 Tim. iii. 1—10. Phil. i. 1. ¶ *To feed.* Ποιμαίνειν. This word is properly applied to the care which a shepherd exercises over his flock. See Notes, John xxi. 15,

^a the church of God, which he hath purchased ^b with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my

^a Prov. 10.21. Jer. 3.15. Jno. 21.15-17. 1Pet. 5.2,3.

^b Eph. 1.14. Col. 1.14. Heb. 9.12,14. 1Pet. 1.18,19. Rev. 5.9.

departing shall grievous wolves ^c enter in among you, not sparing ^d the flock.

^c Matt. 7.15. 2Pet. 2.1.

^d Jer. 13.20; 23.1. Ezek. 34.2,3. Zech. 11.17.

16. It applies not only to the act of *feeding* a flock, but also to that of protecting, guiding, and guarding it. It here denotes not merely the duty of properly *instructing* the church, but also of *governing* it; of securing it from enemies (ver. 29), and of directing its affairs so as to promote its edification and peace. ¶ *The church of God.* This is one of the three passages in the New Testament in regard to which there has been a long controversy among critics, which is not yet determined. The controversy is, whether this is the correct and genuine reading. The other two passages are, 1 Tim. iii. 16; and 1 John v. 7. The MSS. and versions exhibit three readings: *the church of GOD* (τοῦ Θεοῦ); *the church of THE LORD* (τοῦ Κυρίου); and *the church of THE LORD and GOD* (Κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ). The Latin vulgate reads it *God*. The Syriac, *the Lord*. The Arabic, *the Lord God*. The Ethiopic, *the Christian family of God*. The reading which now occurs in our text is found in no ancient MSS., except the Vatican codex; and occurs nowhere among the writings of the fathers, except in Athanasius, in regard to whom also there is a various reading. It is retained, however, by Beza, Mill, and Whitby, as the genuine reading. The most ancient MSS. and the best, read *the church of the Lord*, and this probably was the genuine text. It has been adopted by Griesbach and Wetstein; and many important reasons may be given why it should be retained. See those reasons stated at length in Kuinöel in loco; see also Griesbach and Wetstein. It may be remarked, that a change from Lord to God might easily be made in the transcribing, for in ancient MSS. the words are not written at length, but are abbreviated. Thus, the name *Christ* (Χριστός) is written ΧΟΣ; the name *God* (Θεός) is written ΘΟΣ; the name *Lord* (Κυρίος) is written ΚΟΣ; and a mistake, therefore, of a single letter would lead to the variations observable in the manuscripts. Comp. in this place the Note of Mill in his Greek Testament, who thinks that the name *God* should be retained. The authority however is so doubtful, that it should not be used as a proof text on the divinity of Christ; and is not necessary, as there are so many

undisputed passages on that subject. ¶ *Which he hath purchased.* The word here used (παραποιήσατο) occurs but in one other place in the New Testament. 1 Tim. iii. 13, "For they that have used the office of deacon well, *purchase* to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith." The word properly means to *acquire* or *gain* any thing; or to *make it ours*. This may be done by a price, or by labour, &c. The noun (παραποιήσις) derived from this verb is several times used in the New Testament, and denotes *acquisition*. 1 Thess. v. 9, "God hath appointed us to *obtain* [unto the obtaining or acquisition of] salvation." 2 Thess. ii. 14, "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the *obtaining* of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. ii. 9. Tit. ii. 14. Eph. i. 14. In this place, it means that Christ had *acquired, gained, or procured* the church for himself by paying his own life as the price. The church is often represented as having thus been bought with a *price*. 1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23. 2 Pet. ii. 1. ¶ *With his own blood.* With the sacrifice of his own life; for blood is often put for life, and to shed the blood is equivalent to taking the life. See Note, Rom. iii. 25. The doctrines taught here are, (1.) That the death of Christ was an atoning sacrifice; that he offered himself to purchase a people to his own service. (2.) That the church is, therefore, of peculiar value—a value to be estimated by the worth of the price paid for it. Comp. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. (3.) That this fact should make the purity and salvation of the church an object of special solicitude with the ministers of the gospel. They should be deeply affected in view of that blood which has been shed for the church; and they should guard and defend it as having been bought with the highest price in the universe. The chief consideration that will make ministers faithful and self-denying is, that the church has been bought with a price. If the Lord Jesus so loved it; if he gave himself for it, they should be willing to deny themselves, to watch, and toil, and pray, that the great object of his death—the purity and the salvation of that church—may be obtained.

29. *For I know this.* By what he had

30 Also of ^a your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

¶ 1 Therefore watch, ^b and re-

^a 1Jno.2.19. Jude 4,&c. ^b 2Tim.4.5.

seen in other places; by his knowledge of human nature, and of the dangers to which they were exposed; and by the guidance of inspiration. ¶ *After my departure.* His presence had been the means of guarding the church, and preserving it from these dangers. Now that the founder and guide of the church was to be removed, they would be exposed to dissensions and dangers. ¶ *Grievous wolves.* Heavy (*βαρείς*), strong, mighty, dangerous wolves—so strong that the feeble flock would not be able to resist them. The term *wolves* is used to denote the enemies of the flock—false, and hypocritical, and dangerous teachers. Comp. Matt. x. 16. Note, vii. 16. ¶ *Enter in among you.* From abroad; doubtless referring particularly to the *Jews*, who might be expected to distract and divide them. ¶ *Not sparing the flock.* Seeking to destroy the church. The Jews would regard it with peculiar hostility, and would seek to destroy it in every way. Probably they would approach them with great professed friendship for them, and expressing a desire only to defend the laws of Moses.

30. *Also of your own selves.* From your own church; from those who profess to be Christians. ¶ *Speaking perverse things.* Crooked, perverted, distracting doctrines (*διεστραμμένον*). Comp. Note, Acts xiii. 10. They would proclaim doctrines tending to distract and divide the church. The most dangerous enemies which the church has had, have been nurtured in its own bosom, and have consisted of those who have perverted the true doctrines of the gospel. Among the Ephesians, as among the Corinthians (ch. i. 11—13), there might be parties formed; there might be men influenced by ambition, like Diotrephes (3 John 9), or like Phygellus or Hermogenes (2 Tim. i. 15), or like Hymeneus and Alexander. 1 Tim. i. 20. Men under the influence of ambition, or from the love of power or popularity, form parties in the church, produce divisions and distractions, and greatly retard its internal prosperity, and mar its peace. The church of Christ would have little to fear from external enemies if it nurtured no foes in its own bosom; and all the power

member that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn ^c every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word

^c Col.1.28.

of persecutors is not so much to be dreaded as the counsels and plans, the parties, strifes, heart-burnings, and contentions which are produced by those who have power, among the professed friends of Christ.

31. *Therefore watch.* Matt. xxiv. 42. In view of the dangers which beset yourselves (ver. 28), the danger from men not connected with the church (ver. 29), and the danger that shall arise from the lovers of power among yourselves (ver. 30), be on your guard. Observe the approach of danger, and set yourselves against it. ¶ *Remember.* Recall my counsels and admonitions in reference to these dangers. ¶ *By the space of three years.* In ch. xix. 10, we are told that Paul spent two years in the school of Tyrannus. In ch. xix. 8, it is said that he was teaching in the synagogue at Ephesus three months. In addition to this, it is not improbable that he spent some months more in Ephesus in instructing the church in other places. Perhaps, however, by the phrase three years, he meant to use merely a round number, denoting about three years; or, in accordance with the Jewish customs, part of each of the three years—one whole year, and a considerable portion of the two others. Comp. Note, Matt. xii. 40. ¶ *I ceased not.* I continued to do it. ¶ *To warn.* To admonish; to place before the mind (*νοθεύων*); setting the danger and duty of each individual before him. ¶ *Every one.* He had thus set them an example of what he had enjoined. ver. 28. He had admonished each individual, whatever was his rank or standing. It is well when a minister can refer to his own example as an illustration of what he meant by his precepts. ¶ *Night and day.* Continually; by every opportunity. ¶ *With tears.* Expressive of his deep feeling and his deep interest in their welfare. Note on ver. 19.

32. *And now, brethren.* About to leave them, probably to see them no more, he committed them to the faithful care and keeping of God. Amidst all the dangers of the church, when human strength fails or is withdrawn, we may commit that church to the safe keeping and tender care of God. ¶ *I commend you.* I commit you; I place you (*παρατίθεμι*) in

of his grace, which ^a is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance ^b among all them which are sanctified.

^a Jno. 17. 17. ^b c. 26. 18. Col. 1. 12. Heb. 9. 15. 1 Pet. 1. 4.

his hands, and under his protection. Note, Acts xiv. 23. ¶ *And to the word of his grace.* That is, to his gracious word; to his merciful promise. To his doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, which has been conferred on us by grace. Paul refers, doubtless, to the *gospel*—including its promises of support, its consoling truths, and its directions to seek all needful help and comfort in God. ¶ *Which is able.* Which has power. ἡ δύναμις. Which word, or gospel, has power to build you up. Heb. iv. 12, “For the word of God is quick [living, life-giving, ζῶν], and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,” &c. Comp. Isa. xlix. 2. Jer. xxiii. 29. “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord: and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” It is implied here, that the gospel is not a dead letter; that it has *power* to accomplish a great work; and that it is *adapted* to the end in view, the conversion and sanctification of the soul. There is no danger in representing the gospel as mighty, and as fitted by infinite wisdom to secure the renovation and salvation of man. Comp. Rom. i. 16. 1 Cor. i. 18. 2 Cor. x. 4. ¶ *To build you up.* The word used here is properly applied to a house which is reared and completed by slow degrees, and by toil. It here means to establish, make firm, or permanent; and hence to instruct, to establish in doctrine, and in hope. It here means that the word of God was able to confirm and establish them in the hopes of the gospel, amidst the dangers to which they would be exposed. ¶ *And to give you an inheritance.* To make you heirs; or to make you joint partakers with the saints of the blessings in reserve for the children of God. Those blessings are often represented as an inheritance, or heirship, which God will confer on his adopted children. Matt. xix. 29; xxv. 34. Mark x. 17. Heb. vi. 12. Rev. xxi. 7. Eph. i. 11; v. 5. Col. i. 12; iii. 24. Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iii. 29. ¶ *Among all them which are sanctified.* With all who are holy; with all the saints. Note, John x. 36. Those who shall be saved are made holy. They who receive a part in the inheritance beyond the grave, shall have it only among the sanctified and the pure. They must,

33 I ^c have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, ye yourselves ^d know, that these hands have ministered

^c 1 Sam. 12. 3. 1 Cor. 9. 12. 2 Cor. 7. 2. ^d c. 18. 3. 1 Cor. 4. 12. 1 Thess. 2. 9. 2 Thess. 3. 8.

therefore, be pure themselves, or they can have no part in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

33. *I have coveted.* I have not desired. I have not made it an object of my living among you to obtain your property. Thus (2 Cor. xii. 14) he says, “I seek not yours, but you.” Paul had power to demand support in the ministry as the reward of his labour. 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. Yet he did not choose to exercise it, lest it should bring the charge of avarice against the ministry. 1 Cor. ix. 12. 15. Paul also had power in another respect. He had a vast influence over the people. The early Christians were disposed to commit their property to the disposal of the apostles. See Acts iv. 34, 35. 37. The heathen had been accustomed to devote their property to the support of religion. Of this propensity, if the object of Paul had been to make money, he might have availed himself, and have become enriched. Deceivers often thus impose on people for the purpose of amassing wealth; and one of the incidental but striking proofs of the Christian religion, is here furnished in the appeal which the apostle Paul made to his hearers, that this had *not* been his motive for action. If it had been, how easy would it have been for them to have contradicted him! and who, in such circumstances, would have dared to make such an appeal? The circumstances of the case, therefore, prove that the object of the apostle was *not* to amass wealth. And this fact is an important proof of the truth of the religion which he defended. What should have induced him to labour and toil in this manner, but a conviction of the truth of Christianity? And if he really believed it was true, it is, in his circumstances, a strong proof that this religion is from heaven. See this proof stated in Faber's “Difficulties of Infidelity,” and in Lord Lyttleton's “Letter on the conversion of St. Paul.” ¶ *Or apparel.* Raiment. Changes of raiment among the ancients, as at present among the orientals, constituted an important part of their property. See Note, on Matt. vi. 19.

34. *Yea, ye yourselves know.* By your own acquaintance with my manner of life. In Corinth he had lived and labour-

unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have showed you all things,

ed with Apollos (Note, ch. xviii. 3); and he refers elsewhere to the fact, that he had supported himself, in part at least, by his own labour. 1 Cor. iv. 12. 1 Thess. ii. 9. 2 Thess. iii. 8. We may hence learn that it is no discredit to a minister to labour. Whatever it may be to a people who put him under a necessity to toil for his support, yet the example of Paul shows that a man should rejoice in the privilege of preaching the gospel, even if it is done while he is obliged to resort to labour for his daily bread. It is well when a minister of the gospel can make an appeal to his people like this of Paul, and say, "I have coveted no man's gold, or silver, or apparel." Every minister should so live that he can make this appeal to their own consciences of the sincerity and disinterestedness of his labours from the pulpit; or when called to separate from them as Paul did; or when on a dying bed. Every minister of the gospel, when he comes to lie down to die, will desire to be able to make this appeal, and to leave a solemn testimony there, that it was not for gold, or ease, or fame, that he toiled in the ministerial office. How much more influence can such a man have, than he who has been worldly-minded; who has sought to become rich; and the only memorials of whose life is, that he has sought "the fleece, not the flock," and that he has gained the *property*, not the *souls* of men. And every Christian, when he dies, should and will desire to leave a testimony as pure, that he has been disinterested, self-denying, and laborious in the cause of the Lord Jesus.

35. *I have showed you.* I have taught you by instruction and example. I have not merely *discoursed* about it, but have *showed* you how to do it. ¶ *All things.* Or, in respect to all things. In every thing that respects preaching and the proper mode of life, I have for three years set you an example, illustrating the design, nature, and duties of the office by my own self-denials and toil. ¶ *How that.* Or *that.* Ὅτι. I have showed you *that* ye should by so labouring support the weak. ¶ *So labouring.* Labouring as I have done. Setting this example, and ministering in this way to the wants of others. ¶ *To support the weak.* To provide for the wants of the sick and feeble

how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord

a Rom.5.11. Eph.4.23. 1Thess.5.14.

members of the flock, who are unable to labour for themselves. The *weak* here denote the poor, the needy, the infirm. ¶ *And to remember.* To call to mind for encouragement, and with the force of a command. ¶ *The words of the Lord Jesus.* These words are nowhere recorded by the evangelists. But they did not pretend to record *all* his sayings and instructions. Comp. John xxi. 25. There is the highest reason to suppose, that many of his sayings which are not recorded would be treasured up by those who heard them; would be transmitted to others; and would be regarded as a precious part of his instructions. Paul evidently addresses them as if they had heard this before, and were acquainted with it. Perhaps he had himself reminded them of it. This is one of the Redeemer's most precious sayings; and it seems even to have a peculiar value, from the fact that it is *not* recorded in the regular and professed histories of his life. It comes to us *recovered*, as it were, from the great mass of his unrecorded sayings; *rescued* from that oblivion to which it was hastening if left to mere tradition, and placed in permanent form in the sacred writings by the act of an apostle, who had never seen the Saviour before his crucifixion. It is a precious relic—a memento of the Saviour—and the effect of it is, to make us regret that more of his words were not recovered from an uncertain tradition, and placed in a permanent form by an inspired penman. God, however, who knows what is requisite to guide us, has directed the words which are needful for the welfare of the church, and has preserved by inspiration the doctrines which are adapted to convert and bless man. ¶ *It is more blessed to give.* It is a higher privilege; it tends more to the happiness of the individual, and of the world. The giver is more blessed or happy than the receiver. This appears, (1.) Because it is a privilege to give to the wants of others; it is a condition for which we should be thankful when we are in a situation to promote their felicity. (2.) Because it tends to promote the happiness of the benefactor himself. There is pleasure in the act of giving when it is done with pure motives. It promotes our own peace; is followed by happiness in the recollection of it;

Jesus, how he said, It ^a is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled ^b down, and prayed with them all.

37 And they all wept sore, and

^a Luke 14.12-14.

^b c.21.5.

and will be followed by happiness for ever. That is the most truly happy man, who is most benevolent. He is the most miserable, who has never known the luxury of doing good, but who lives to gain all he can, and to hoard all he gains. (3.) It is blessed in the reward that shall result from it. Those who give from a pure motive, God will bless. They shall be rewarded, not only in the peace which they shall experience in this life, but in the higher bliss of heaven. Matt. xxv. 34-36. We may also remark, that this is a sentiment truly great and noble. It is worthy of the Son of God. It is that on which he himself acted, when he came to *give* pardon to the guilty; comfort to the disconsolate and the mourner; peace to the anxious sinner; sight to the blind; hearing to the deaf; life to the dead; and heaven to the guilty and the lost. Acting on this, he *gave* his own tears to weep over human sorrows and human guilt; he *gave* his own labours and toils to instruct and save man; he *gave* his own life a sacrifice for sin on the cross; and he *gave* his Spirit to awaken and save those for whom he died. Loving to give, he has freely given us all things. Loving to give, he delights in the same character in his followers, and seeks that they who have wealth, and strength, and influence, should be willing to give all to save the world. Imitating his great example, and complying with his command, the church shall yet learn more and more to *give* its wealth to bless the poor and needy; its sons and its daughters to bear the gospel to the benighted heathen; and its undivided and constant efforts to save a lost world.—Here closes this speech of Paul; an address of inimitable tenderness and beauty. Happy would it be if every minister could bid *such* an adieu to his people, when called to part from them; and happy if, at the close of life, every Christian could leave the world with a like consciousness that he had been faithful in the discharge of his duty. Thus dying, it will be blessed to leave the world; and thus would the example of the saints live in the memory of survi-

^c fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him;

38 Sorrowing most of all for the ^d words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

^e Gen.46.29.

^d ver.25.

vors long after they themselves have ascended to their rest.

36. *He kneeled down.* The usual attitude of prayer. It is the proper posture of a suppliant. It indicates reverence and humility; and is represented in the Scriptures as the common attitude of devotion. 2 Chron. vi. 13. Dan. vi. 10. Luke xxii. 41. Acts vii. 60; ix. 40; xxi. 5. Rom. iv. 11. Phil. ii. 10. Eph. iii. 14. Mark i. 40.

37. *Wept sore.* Wept much. Greek, "There was a great weeping of all." ¶ *And fell on Paul's neck.* Embraced him, as a token of tender affection. The same thing Joseph did when he met his aged father Jacob. Gen. xli. 29. ¶ *And kissed him.* This was the common token of affection. Note, Matt. xxvi. 48. Luke xv. 20. Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. xvi. 20.

38. *Sorrowing most of all, &c.* This was a most tender and affectionate parting-scene. It can be more easily imagined than described. We may learn from it, (1.) That the parting of ministers and people is a most solemn event, and should be one of much tenderness and affection. (2.) The effect of true religion is to make the heart more tender; to make friendship more affectionate and sacred; and to unite more closely the bonds of love. (3.) Ministers of the gospel should be prepared to leave their people with the same consciousness of fidelity, and the same kindness and love, which Paul evinced. They should live such lives as to be able to look back upon their whole ministry as pure and disinterested; and as having been employed in guarding the flock, and in making known to them the whole counsel of God. So parting, they may part in peace. And so living, and acting, they will be prepared to give up their account with joy, and not with grief. May God grant to every minister the spirit which Paul evinced at Ephesus, and enable each one, when called to leave his people by death or otherwise, to do it with the same consciousness of fidelity which Paul evinced, when he left his people to see their face no more!

CHAPTER XXI.

AND it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara :

2 And finding a ship sailing over

CHAPTER XXI.

1. *After we were gotten from them.* After we had left the elders at Miletus. ch. xx. 38. They were on their way to Jerusalem. ¶ *Unto Coos.* This was a small island in the Grecian Archipelago, a short distance from the south-western point of Asia Minor. It is now called *Stan-co*. It was celebrated for its fertility, and for the wine and silk-worms which it produced. ¶ *Unto Rhodes.* This was an island in the Levant. On the island was a city of the same name, which was principally distinguished for its brazen Colossus, which was built by Chares of Lyndus. It stood across the mouth of the harbour, and was so high that vessels could pass between its legs. It stood fifty-six years, and was then thrown down by an earthquake. It was reckoned as one of the seven wonders of the world. When the Saracens took possession of this island, they sold this prostrate image to a Jew, who loaded 900 camels with the brass of it. This was A. D. 600, about 900 years after it had been thrown down. The ancient name of the island was Asteria. Its name *Rhodes* was given from the great quantity of roses which it produced. ¶ *Unto Patara.* This was a maritime city of Lycia, in Asia Minor, over-against Rhodes.

2. *Into Phenicia.* See Note, ch. xi. 19. Phenicia was on their way to Jerusalem. ¶ *Set forth.* Sailed.

3. *Had discovered Cyprus.* Note, ch. iv. 36. ¶ *Into Syria.* Note, Matt. iv. 24. ¶ *And landed at Tyre.* Note, Matt. xi. 21. ¶ *To unlade her burden.* Her cargo. Tyre was formerly one of the most commercial cities of the world ; and it is probable, that in the time of Paul its commercial importance had not entirely ceased.

4. *And finding disciples.* Christians. This is the first mention of there being Christians at Tyre, but there is no improbability in supposing that the gospel had been preached there, though it is not expressly recorded by Luke. ¶ *Who said to Paul.* Comp. ver. 12. Their deep interest in his welfare, and their apprehen-

unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre : for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

4 And finding disciples, we tar-

sion of his danger, was the reason why they admonished him not to go. ¶ *Through the spirit.* There is some difficulty in understanding this. In solving this difficulty, we may remark, (1.) That it is evident that the Holy Spirit is meant, and that Luke means to say that this was spoken by his inspiration. The Holy Spirit was bestowed on Christians at that time in large measures, and many appear to have been under his inspiring guidance. (2.) It was not understood by Paul as a positive *command*—for he should not go up to Jerusalem—for had it been, it would not have been disobeyed. Paul evidently understood it as expressive of their earnest wish that he should not go, as apprizing him of danger, and as a kind expression in regard to his own welfare and safety. Comp. ver. 13. Paul was in better circumstances to understand this than we are, and his interpretation was doubtless correct. (3.) It is to be understood, therefore, simply as an *inspired prophetic warning*, that if he went, he went at the risk of his life ; a prophetic warning joined with their individual personal wishes, that he would not expose himself to this danger. The meaning evidently is, that they said by inspiration of the Spirit, that he should not go unless he was willing to encounter danger, and the hazard of life as a consequence, for they foresaw that the journey would be attended with this hazard. Grotius renders it, “that he should not go, *unless he was willing to be bound.*” Michaelis and Stolzius, “They gave him prophetic warning, that he should not go to Jerusalem.” Doddridge, “If he tendered his own liberty and safety, not to go up to Jerusalem, since it would certainly expose him to very great hazard.” The inspiration in the case was that of admonition and warning, not of positive command. Paul was simply apprized of the danger ; and then left to the free determination of his own will. He chose to encounter the danger of which he was thus apprized. He did not despise the intimations of the Spirit ; but he judged that his duty to God called him thus to encounter the

ried there seven days: who said ^a to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way: and they all brought us on our way with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and we kneeled ^b down on the shore, and prayed.

a ver. 12. b c. 20. 36.

hazards of the journey. We may be apprized of danger in a certain course, either by our friends or by the word of God, and still it may be our duty to meet it. Our duty is not to be measured by the fact that we shall experience *dangers*, in whatever way that may be made known to us. It is in following the will of God; and *encountering* whatever trials may be in our way.

5. *Had accomplished those days.* When those days were passed. ¶ *They all brought us on our way.* They attended us. Note, ch. xv. 3. Rom. xv. 24. 1 Cor. xvi. 6. 11. 3 John 6. This was an expression of tender attachment, and of a deep interest in the welfare of Paul and his fellow-travellers. ¶ *We kneeled down.* Note, ch. xx. 36. ¶ *On the shore.* Any place may be proper for prayer. Note, John iv. 21—24. God is every where, and can as easily hear the prayer of the humble on the sea-shore as in the most magnificent temple. This is an instance, as well as that in ch. xx. 36, where the apostle evidently prayed with the church without a form of prayer. No man can believe that he thus poured forth the desires of his heart at parting, and commended them to God, in a *prescribed form of words*. Besides that there is not the least evidence that such a form was then used in the Christian church, scenes like this show more clearly than abstract arguments could do, that such a form was not needed, and would not be used. Paul and his fellow Christians, on the sand of the sea-shore, would pour forth the gushing emotions of their souls in language such as their circumstances would suggest, and such as such a scene would demand. And it is presumed to be impossible that any man can read this narrative in a dispassionate manner without believing that they offered an *extempore* prayer.

7. *We came to Ptolemais.* This was a city situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, on the north angle of a bay

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished *our* course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8 And the next *day*, we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cesarea: and we enter-

which extends, in a semi-circle of three leagues, as far as the point of Mount Carmel. At the south and west sides the city was washed by the sea; and was surrounded by triple walls. It was in the tribe of Asher (Judg. i. 31), and was originally called *Acccho*; but was called *Ptolemais* in honour of one of the *Ptolemies*, who beautified and adorned it. The Christian crusaders gave it the name of Acre, or St. John of Acre, from a magnificent church which was built in it, and which was dedicated to the apostle John. It is still called *Akka* by the Turks. The Syriac and Arabic render it *Acccho* in this place. It sustained several sieges during the crusades, and was the last fortified place wrested from the Christians by the Turks. It sustained a memorable siege under Bonaparte, and since then it has been much increased and strengthened. Its present population is estimated at from 18,000 to 20,000. ¶ *And saluted the brethren.* Embraced them; gave them expressions of affection and regard.

8. *We that were of Paul's company.* From this it would appear that they had been attended thus far by some persons who were going only to Ptolemais. This clause, however, is wanting in many MSS., and has been omitted by Bengel, Griesbach, Knapp, and others, as spurious. It is also wanting in the Syriac and the Vulgate. ¶ *Unto Cesarea.* See Note, ch. viii. 40. ¶ *Into the house of Philip.* One of the seven deacons. ch. vi. 5. After his conversation with the eunuch of Ethiopia, he went to Cesarea, and probably there abode. ¶ *The evangelist.* This word properly means one who announces good news. In the New Testament it is applied to a preacher of the gospel, or one who declares the glad tidings of salvation. It occurs only in two other places. Eph. iv. 11. 2 Tim. iv. 5. What was the precise rank of those who bore this title in the early Christian church, cannot perhaps be determined

ed into the house of Philip ^a the evangelist, ^b which was *one* of the seven; ^c and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which ^d did prophesy.

10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus. ^e

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and

^a c. 8. 26, 40. ^b Eph. 4. 11. 2 Tim. 4. 5. ^c c. 6. 5.
^d Joel 2. 28. c. 2. 17. ^e c. 11. 28.

It is evident, however, that it is used to denote the office of preaching the gospel; and as this title is applied to *Philip*, and not to any other of the seven deacons, it would seem probable that he had been intrusted with a special commission to *preach*, and that *preaching* did not pertain to him *as a deacon*, and does not properly belong to that office. The business of a deacon was, to take care of the poor members of the church. ch. vi. 1—6. The office of preaching was distinct from this, though, as in this case, it might be conferred on the same individual.

9. *Which did prophesy.* See Note, ch. ii. 17; xi. 27. That females sometimes partook of the prophetic influence, and foretold future events is evident from various places in the New Testament. See Note, ch. ii. 17.

10. *There came down.* Note, ch. xv. 1. *¶ Named Agabus.* See Note, ch. xi. 28.

11. *He took Paul's girdle.* The loose, flowing robes, or outer garments, which were worn in eastern countries, were bound by a *girdle*, or *sash*, around the body, when they ran, or laboured, or walked. Such a girdle was, therefore, an indispensable part of dress. *¶ And bound his own hands and feet.* As emblematic of what would be done by the Jews to Paul. It was common for the prophets to perform actions which were emblematic of the events which they predicted. The design was to make the prediction more forcible and impressive, by representing it to the eye. Thus Jeremiah was directed to bury his girdle by the Euphrates, to denote the approaching captivity of the Jews. Jer. xiii. 4. Thus he was directed to make bands and yokes, and to put them around his neck, as a sign to Edom and Moab, &c. Jer. xxvii. 2, 3. Thus the act of the potter was emblematic of the destruction that was com-

said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So ^f shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, ^g 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 ^h not to be

^f ver. 33. c. 20. 23. ^g Matt. 16. 22, 23. ^h 2 Tim. 4. 6.

ing upon the nation of the Jews. Jer. xviii. 4. So Isaiah walked naked and barefoot as a sign of the captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia. Isa. xx. 3, 4. Comp. Ezek. iv., xii., &c. *¶ So shall the Jews, &c.* This was fulfilled. See ver. 33, and ch. xxiv. *¶ Into the hands of the Gentiles.* To be tried; for the Romans then had jurisdiction over Judea.

13. *What mean ye.* Gr. What do ye. A tender and affectionate, but firm reproach. *¶ To weep and to break my heart?* To afflict me, and distract my mind by alarms, and by the expressions of tenderness. His mind was fixed on going to Jerusalem; and he felt that he was prepared for whatever awaited him. Expressions of tenderness among friends are proper. Tears may be inevitable at parting from those whom we love. But such expressions of tenderness and love ought not to be allowed to interfere with the convictions of duty in their minds. If they have made up their minds that a certain course is proper, and have resolved to pursue it, we ought neither to attempt to divert them from it, nor to distract their minds by our remonstrances or our tears. We should resign them to *their* convictions of what is demanded of them, with affection and prayer, but with cheerfulness. We should lend them all the aid in our power, and then commend them to the blessing and protection of God. These remarks apply especially to those who are engaged in the missionary enterprise. It is trying to part with a son, a daughter, or a beloved friend, in order that they may go to proclaim the gospel to the benighted and dying heathen. The act of parting—*for life*; and the apprehension of the perils which they may encounter on the ocean, and in heathen lands, may be painful. But if they, like Paul, have looked at it calmly,

bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will ^a of the Lord be done.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

^a Matt. 6.10; 26.42.

16 There went with us also *certain* of the disciples of Cesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, ^b with whom we should lodge.

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received ^c us gladly.

18 And the *day* following Paul

^b Prov. 16.31.

^c c. 15.4.

candidly, and with much prayer; if they have come to the deliberate conclusion that it is the will of God that they should devote their lives to this service, we ought not to weep, and to break their hearts. We should cheerfully and confidently commit them to the protection of the God whom they serve, and remember that they are seeking his glory, and that the parting of Christians, though for life, will be short. Soon, in a better world, they will be united again, to part no more; and the blessedness of that future meeting will be greatly heightened by all the sorrows and self-denials of separation here, and by all the benefits which such a separation may be the means of conveying to a dying world. That mother will meet, with joy, in heaven, the son from whom, with many tears, she was sundered, when he entered on a missionary life; and surrounded with many ransomed heathen, heaven will be made more blessed, and all eternity more happy. ¶ *But also to die.* This was the true spirit of a martyr. This spirit reigned in the hearts of all the early Christians. ¶ *For the name of the Lord Jesus.* For his sake; in making his name known.

14. *Would not be persuaded.* To remain. He was resolved to go. ¶ *We ceased.* We ceased remonstrating with him, and urging him to remain. ¶ *The will of the Lord be done.* They were now assured that it was the will of God that he should go. And they were now ready to submit to that will. This is an instance and an evidence of true piety. It was the expression of a wish that whatever God might judge to be necessary for the advancement of his cause, might take place, even though it should be attended with many trials. They commended their friend to the protection of God, confident that whatever should occur would be right. Comp. Note, Matt. vi. 10; xxvi. 42.

15. *After those days.* After what had occurred, as related in the previous verses. ¶ *We took up our carriages.* This is a

2 B

most unhappy translation. The word *carriage* we apply now exclusively to a vehicle for conveying any thing—as a coach, chariot, gig, cannon carriage, &c. The original word means simply, that they prepared themselves; made themselves ready; put their baggage in order, &c. Ἀποσκευασμένοι. They prepared for the journey. The English word *carriage* was formerly used in the sense of *that which is carried*, baggage, burden, vessels, furniture, &c. Thus it was used in the time that our translation was made; and in this sense it is to be understood in 1 Sam. xvii. 22, “And David left his *carriage* (baggage) in the hand of the keeper of the carriage,” &c. See ver. 20, margin. Isa. x. 23, “At Michmash he hath laid up his *carriages*,” [his baggage, &c.]

16. *One Mnason of Cyprus.* The original in this place would be better translated, “And brought us to Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple,” &c. It is evident that, though Mnason was originally of Cyprus, yet he was now an inhabitant of Jerusalem, and was well known to the disciples at Cesarea. It is possible that he might have been at Cesarea, and accompanied Paul to Jerusalem; but the more correct interpretation of the passage is, that Paul and his fellow-travellers were conducted to his house in Jerusalem, and that he was not with them in the journey. ¶ *Of Cyprus.* Note, ch. iv. 36. ¶ *An old disciple.* An early convert to Christianity—perhaps one who was converted before the crucifixion of the Saviour. ¶ *With whom we should lodge.* In whose house we were to take up our abode. The rites of hospitality were shown in a distinguished manner by the early Christians.

17. *The brethren.* Christians. ¶ *Received us gladly.* They had been long absent. They had been into distant regions, and had encountered many dangers. It was a matter of joy that they had now returned in safety.

18. *Unto James.* James the Less. Note,

went in with us unto James; ^a and all the elders were present.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what ^b things God had wrought among the Gentiles by ^c his ministry.

^a c. 15. 13, &c. Gal. 1. 19. ^b Rom. 15. 18, 19. ^c c. 20. 24. 2 Cor. 12. 12.

ch. xv. 13. He resided at Jerusalem. Comp. Gal. i. 19. It is not improbable that he was the only one of the apostles then at Jerusalem; and there is reason to believe that the church at Jerusalem was left under his particular care. It was natural, therefore, that Paul and his travelling companions should take an early opportunity to see him. James was the cousin of our Lord, and in Gal. i. 19, he is called the Lord's brother. On all accounts, therefore, he was entitled to, and would receive particular respect from the early disciples.

19. *Had saluted them.* With the usual tokens of respect and affection. ¶ *He declared particularly, &c.* As an evidence that God had been with him. It is not improbable that there might have been some suspicion in regard to Paul among the disciples at Jerusalem, and he might have heard that they were prejudiced against him. This prejudice would be removed by his stating what had actually occurred under his ministry.

20. *They glorified the Lord.* They gave praise to the Lord for what he had done. They saw new proofs of his goodness and mercy, and they rendered him thanks for all that had been accomplished. There was no jealousy that it had been done by the instrumentality of Paul. True piety will rejoice in the spread of the gospel, and in the conversion of sinners, by whatever instrumentality it may be effected. ¶ *Thou seest, brother.* The language of tenderness in this address, recognising Paul as a fellow-labourer and fellow Christian, implies a wish that Paul would do all that could be done to avoid giving offence, and to conciliate the favour of his countrymen. ¶ *How many thousands.* The number of converts at this time must have been very great. Twenty-five years before this, three thousand had been converted at one time (ch. ii.), and afterwards the number had swelled to some more thousands. ch. iv. 4. The assertion, that there were, then, "many thousands," implies that the work so signally begun on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, had not ceased, and that many more had been converted to the

20 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord; and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous ^d of the law:

^d c. 22. 3. Rom. 10. 2.

Christian faith. ¶ *Which believe.* Who are Christians. They are spoken of as *believers*, or as having faith in Christ, in contradistinction from those who rejected him, and whose characteristic trait it was that they were *unbelievers*. ¶ *And they are all zealous of the law.* They still observe the law of Moses. The reference here is, to the law respecting circumcision, sacrifices, distinctions of meats and days, festivals, &c. It may seem remarkable that they should still continue to observe those rites, since it was the manifest design of Christianity to abolish them. But we are to remember, (1.) That those rites had been appointed by God, and that they were trained to their observance. (2.) That the apostles conformed to them while they remained in Jerusalem, and did not deem it best to set themselves violently against them. ch. iii. 1. Luke xxiv. 55. (3.) That the question about their observance had never been agitated at Jerusalem. It was only among the Gentile converts that the question had risen, and there it *must* arise, for if they were to be observed, they must have been *imposed* upon them by authority. (4.) The decision of the council (ch. xv.) related only to the *Gentile* converts. It did not touch the question, whether those rites were to be observed by the *Jewish* converts. (5.) It was to be presumed, that as the Christian religion became better understood—that as its large, free, and catholic nature became more and more developed, the peculiar institutions of Moses would be laid aside of course, without agitation, and without tumult. Had the question been agitated at Jerusalem, it would have excited tenfold opposition to Christianity, and would have rent the Christian church into factions, and greatly retarded the advance of the Christian doctrine. We are to remember also, (6.) That, in the arrangement of Divine Providence, the time was drawing near which was to destroy the temple, the city, and the nation; which was to put an end to sacrifices, and *effectually* to close for ever the observance of the Mosaic rites. As this destruction was so

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise ^a *their* children, neither to walk after their customs.

a Gal.5.3.

near, and as it would be so effectual an *argument* against the observance of the Mosaic rites, the Great Head of the church did not suffer the question of their obligation to be needlessly agitated among the disciples at Jerusalem.

21. *And they are informed of thee.* Reports respecting the conduct of Paul would be likely to be in circulation among all at Jerusalem. His remarkable conversion; his distinguished zeal; his success among the Gentiles, would make his conduct a subject of special interest. Evil-minded men among the Jews, who came up to Jerusalem from different places where he had been, would be likely to represent him as the decided enemy of the laws of Moses, and these reports would be likely to reach the ears of the Jewish converts. The reports, as they gained ground, would be greatly magnified, until suspicion might be excited among the Christians at Jerusalem, that he was, as he was reputed to be, the settled foe of the Jewish rites and customs. ¶ *That thou teachest all the Jews, &c.* From all the evidence which we have of his conduct, this report was incorrect and slanderous. The truth appears to have been, that he did not enjoin the observance of those laws on the Gentile converts; that the effect of his ministry on them was, to lead them to suppose that their observance was not necessary—contrary to the doctrines of the Judaizing teachers (see ch. xv.); and that he argued with the Jews themselves, where it could be done, against the *obligation* of those laws and customs, since the Messiah had come. They depended on that observance for justification and salvation. This Paul strenuously opposed; and this he defended at length in the epistles which he wrote. See the epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Hebrews. Yet these facts might be easily misunderstood and perverted, so as to give rise to the slanderous report, that he was every where the enemy of Moses and the law. ¶ *Which are among the Gentiles.* Who live in heathen countries. The Jews were ex-

22 What is it therefore? The multitude must needs come ^b together: for they will hear that thou art come.

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

b c.19.32.

tensively scattered, and settled in all the large towns and cities of the Roman empire. ¶ *To forsake Moses.* The law and authority of Moses. That is, to regard his laws as no longer binding. ¶ *To walk after the customs.* To observe the institutions of the Mosaic ritual. Note, ch. vi. 14. The word *customs* denotes the *rites* of the Mosaic economy—the offering of sacrifices, incense, the oblations, anointings, festivals, &c. which the law of Moses prescribed.

22. *What is it therefore?* What is to be done? What is it proper to do, to avoid the effects of the evil report which has been circulated? What they deemed it proper to do, is suggested in the following verses. ¶ *The multitude.* The multitude of Jews. ¶ *Must needs come together.* There will be inevitably a tumultuous assemblage. It will be impossible to prevent that. The reasons were, because their minds were exceedingly agitated that one of their own countrymen had, as they understood, been advising *apostasy* from the religion of their fathers; because it had been extensively done in many parts of the world, and with great success; and because Paul, having, as they believed, himself apostatized from the national religion, had become very conspicuous, and his very presence in Jerusalem, as in other places, would be likely to excite a tumult. It was, therefore, the part of friendship to him, and to the cause, to devise some proper place to prevent, if possible, the anticipated excitement.

23. *We have four men.* There are with us four men. It is evident that James and the elders meant to say, that these men were connected with them in the Christian church; and the fact shows that the Christians at Jerusalem did not disregard the institutions of Moses, and had not been so far enlightened in the doctrines of Christianity as to forsake yet the ceremonial rites of the Jews. ¶ *Which have a vow on them.* Which have made a vow. See Notes, ch. xviii. 18. From the mention of shaving the head (in ver. 24), it is evident that the vow

24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave ^a their heads: and all may know, that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

a Num. 6.2,13,18. c.18.18.

which they had taken was that of the *Nazarite*; and that as the time of their vow was about expiring, they were about to be shaven, in accordance with the custom usual on such occasions. * See Note, ch. xviii. 18. These persons Paul could join, and thus show decisively that he did not intend to undervalue or disparage the laws of Moses, when those laws were understood as mere ceremonial observances.

24. *Them take.* Take with you. Join yourself with them. ¶ *And purify thyself with them.* Join them in observing the forms of purification prescribed by the law of Moses in the observance of the vow of the *Nazarite*. The *purifying* here refers to the vows of sanctity which the *Nazarites* were to observe. They were to abstain from wine and strong drink; they were to eat no grapes, moist or dried; they were to come near no dead body, nor to make themselves "unclean" from their father, mother, brother, or sister, when they died (Num. vi. 3—7); and they were to present an offering when the days of the vow were completed. Num. vi. 8. ¶ *And be at charges with them.* Share with them the expense of the sacrifices and offerings required when the vow is completed. Those offerings were a ram of a year old for a burnt-offering, a sheep of the same age for a sin-offering, a ram for a thank-offering, a basket of unleavened cakes, and a libation of wine. See Num. vi. 13—20. ¶ *That they may shave their heads.* The shaving of the head, or the cutting off the hair which had been suffered to grow during the continuance of the vow (Num. vi. 5), was an observance indicating that the vow had been performed. Paul was requested to join with them in the expense of the sacrifices and offerings, that thus the whole of the ceremonies having been observed, their heads might be shaved as an indication that every part of the vow had been complied with. ¶ *And all may know.* By the fact of your observance of one of the rites of the Mosaic religion, all may have

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we ^b have written, and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

b c.15.20,29.

evidence that it is not your purpose or practice to speak contemptuously of those rites, or to undervalue the authority of Moses. ¶ *Are nothing.* Are untrue, or without any foundation. ¶ *Walkest orderly.* That you live in accordance with the real requirements of the law of Moses. To *walk* in the Scriptures often denotes *to live, to act, to conduct*, in a certain manner. All, probably, that they wished Paul to show by this was, that he was not an enemy of Moses. They who gave this counsel were Christians, and they could not wish him to do any thing which would imply that *he* was not a Christian.

25. *As touching the Gentiles.* In regard to the Gentile converts. It might be expedient for Paul to do what could not be enjoined on the Gentiles. They could not *command* the Gentile converts to observe those ceremonies, while yet it might be proper, for the sake of peace, that the converts to Christianity from among the Jews should regard them. The conduct of the Christians at Jerusalem in giving this advice, and of Paul in following it, may be easily vindicated. If it be objected, as it has been by infidels, that it looks like double-dealing; that it was designed to *deceive* the Jews in Jerusalem, and to make them believe that Paul actually conformed to the ceremonial law, when his conduct among the Gentiles showed that he did not; we may reply, (1.) That the observance of that law was not necessary in order to justification; (2.) That it would have been improper to have enjoined its observance on the Gentile converts as necessary, and therefore it was never done; (3.) That when the Jews urged its observance as necessary to justification and salvation, Paul strenuously *opposed* this view of it every where; (4.) Yet, that as a matter of expediency, he did not oppose its being observed either by the Jews, or by the converts made among the Jews. In fact, there is other evidence besides the case before us, that Paul himself continued to observe some at least

26 Then Paul took ^a the men; and the next day purifying himself with them, entered ^b into the temple, to signify the accomplishment ^c of the days of purification,

^a 1 Cor. 9. 20.

^b c. 24. 18.

^c Num. 6. 13.

of the Jewish rites, and his conduct in public at Jerusalem, was in strict accordance with his conduct in other places. See ch. xviii. 8. The sum of the whole matter is this, that when the observance of the Jewish ceremonial law was urged as necessary to justification and acceptance with God, Paul resisted it; when it was demanded that its observance should be enjoined on the Gentiles, he opposed it: in all other cases he made *no* opposition to it, and was ready himself to comply with it, and willing that others should also. ¶ *We have written.* ch. xv. 20. 29.

26. *Then Paul took the men.* Took them to himself; united with them in observing the ceremonies connected with their vow. To transactions like this he refers in 1 Cor. ix. 20, "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law." Thus, it has always been found necessary in propagating the gospel among the heathen, not to offend them needlessly; but to conform to their innocent customs in regard to dress, language, modes of travelling, sitting, eating, &c. Paul did nothing more than this. He violated none of the dictates of honesty and truth. ¶ *Purifying himself with them.* Observing the ceremonies connected with the rite of purification. Note, ver. 24. This means evidently that he *entered* on the ceremonies of the separation according to the law of the Nazarite. ¶ *To signify.* Greek, Signifying or making known. That is, he announced to the priests in the temple his purpose of observing this vow with the four men, according to the law respecting the Nazarite. It was proper that such an announcement should be made beforehand, in order that the priests might know that all the ceremonies required had been observed. ¶ *The accomplishment, &c.* The fulfilling, the completion. That is, he announced to them his purpose to observe all the days, and all the rites of purification required in the law, in order that an offering might be properly made. It does not mean that the days *had been* accomplished, but that it was his intention to observe them, so that it would be proper to offer the

until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews ^d which were of Asia, when they

^d ch. 24. 18.

usual sacrifice. Paul had not, indeed, engaged with them *in the beginning* of their vow of separation; but he might come in with hearty intention to share with them. It cannot be objected that he meant to impose on the priests, and to make them believe that he had observed the whole vow with them; for it appears from their own writings (*Bereshith Rabba* 90, and *Koheleth Rabba* 7), that in those instances where the Nazarites had not sufficient property to enable them to meet the whole expense of the offerings, other persons, who possessed more, might become sharers of it, and thus be made parties to the vow. See Jahn's *Archæology*, § 395. This circumstance will vindicate Paul from any intention to take an improper advantage, or to impose on the priests or the Jews. All that he announced was, his intention to *share* with the four men in the offering which they were required to make; to divide the expenses with them; and thus to show his *approval* of the thing, and his accordance with the law which made such a vow proper, as he had before done in a voluntary manner, when it could not be pretended that it was for double-dealing, or imposition. ch. xviii. 18. ¶ *Until that an offering, &c.* The sacrifices required of all those who had observed this vow. Note ver. 24. Num. vi. 13. It is a complete vindication of Paul in this case, that he did no more here than he had done in a voluntary manner (ch. xviii. 18.), and as appears then in a secret manner, showing that he was still in the practice of observing this rite of the Mosaic institution. Nor can it be proved that Paul ever, in any way, or at any time, spoke against the vow of the Nazarite, or that a vow of a similar kind in spirit would be improper for a Christian in any circumstances.

27. *And when the seven days were almost ended.* Gr. As the seven days were about to be fulfilled. Ἐμελλόντων συμπληροῦσθαι. The seven days which were to complete the observance of the vow. ver. 26. Perhaps the whole observance in this case was intended to be but seven days, as the *time* of such a vow was voluntary. The translation, "were almost ended," is not quite correct. The Greek implies no more than that the period of the seven

saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid ^a hands on him.

28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: this is the man that ^b 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 this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before

^a c. 26. 21.

^b c. 6. 13, 14; 24. 5, 6.

days was *about to be accomplished*, without implying it was near the close of them when he was seized. By comparing the following places, ch. xxi. 18. 26; xxii. 30; xxiii. 12. 32; xxiv. 1. 11, it appears that the time of his seizure must have been near the beginning of those days. (*Doddridge*.) ¶ *The Jews which were of Asia*. Who resided in Asia Minor, but who had come up to Jerusalem for purposes of worship. Comp. Notes on ch. ii.

28. *Men of Israel*. Jews. All who are the friends of the law of Moses. ¶ *This is the man*, &c. This implies that they had before given information to the Jews at Jerusalem that there was such a man; and they now exulted in the fact, that they had found him. They, therefore, called on all these to aid in securing and punishing him. ¶ *That teacheth*, &c. See Notes, ch. vi. 13, 14. ¶ *Against the people*. The people of the Jews. That is, they pretended that he taught, that the customs and laws of the Jewish nation were not binding, and endeavoured to prejudice all men against them. ¶ *And the law*. The law of Moses. ¶ *And this place*. The temple. Every thing against the law would be interpreted also as being against the temple, as most of the commandments of the law were celebrated there. It is possible also that Paul might have declared that the temple was to be destroyed. Comp. ch. vi. 13, 14. ¶ *And further, brought Greeks*, &c. The temple was surrounded by various areas called *courts*. Notes, Matt. xxi. 12. The outermost of these courts was called the court of the Gentiles, and into that it was lawful for the Gentiles to enter. But the word "temple" here refers, doubtless, to the parts of the area appropriated especially to the Israelites, and which it was unlawful for a Gentile to enter. See the area marked G. G. G. G. in the plan of the temple. Matt. xxi. 12. ¶ *And hath polluted*, &c. He defiled the temple by

with him, in the city, Trophimus ^c an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

31 And as they were about to ^d kill him, tidings came unto the

^c c. 20. 4.

^d 1 Cor. 11. 23, &c.

thus introducing a Gentile. No greater defilement, in their view, could scarcely be conceived. No more effective appeal could be made to the passions of the people than this.

29. *In the city*. In Jerusalem. As he was with Paul, it was *inferred* that he would attend him every where. ¶ *Trophimus*. He had accompanied Paul on his way from Ephesus. ch. xx. 4. ¶ *Whom they supposed*, &c. This is a most striking illustration of the manner in which accusations are often brought against others. They had *seen* him with Paul in the city; they *inferred*, therefore, that he had been with him in the temple. They did not even pretend that they had *seen* him in the temple; but the inference was enough to inflame the angry and excitable passions of the multitude. So in the accusations which men now often make of others. They *see* one thing, they *infer* another; they could *testify* to one thing, but they *conclude* that another thing will also be true, and that *other thing* they charge on them as the truth. If men would state facts as they are, no small part of the slanderous accusations against others would cease. An end would be made of most of the charges of falsehood, and error, and heresy, and dishonesty, and double-dealing, and immorality. If a statement is made, it should be of the thing as it was. If we attempt to state what a man has done, it should not be what we *suppose* he had done. If we attempt to state what he believes, it should not be what we *suppose* he believes.

30. *The city was moved*. Was agitated; was thrown into commotion. ¶ *Drew him out of the temple*. Under the pretence that he had defiled it. The evident design was to put him to death. ver. 31. ¶ *The doors were shut*. The doors leading into the courts of the temple.

31. *And as they were about to kill him*. Gr. *They seeking* to kill him. This was

chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar :

32 Who ^a immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them : and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound ^b with two chains ; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multi-

a c.23.27;24.7.

b ver. 11. c.20.23. Eph.6.20.

evidently done in a popular tumult, as had been done in the case of Stephen. ch. vii. They could not pretend that they had a right to do it by law. ¶ *Tidings came.* The news, or rumour came ; he was told of it. ¶ *The chief captain of the band.* This band or body of Roman soldiers was stationed in the tower Antonia, on the north of the temple. This tower was built by John Hyrcanus, high-priest of the Jews, and was by him called *Baris*. It was beautified, and strengthened by Herod the Great, and was called *Antonia*, in honour of his friend, Mark Antony. Josephus describes this castle as consisting of four towers, one of which overlooked the temple, and which he says was seventy cubits high. Jewish Wars, b. v. ch. 5, § 8. In this tower a guard of Roman soldiers was stationed, to secure the temple, and to maintain the peace. The commander of this cohort is here called "the chief captain." Reference is made to this guard several times in the New Testament. Matt. xxvii. 65, 66. John xviii. 12. Acts v. 26. The word translated "chief captain" (*χιλιάρχου*), denotes properly one who commanded a thousand men. The *band* (*σπειρα*) was the tenth part of a legion, and consisted sometimes of four hundred and twenty-five soldiers, at others of five hundred, and at others of six hundred, according to the size of the legion. The name of this captain was Claudius Lysias. ch. xxiii. 26. ¶ *In an uproar.* That the whole city was in commotion.

32. *Centurions.* Captains of a hundred men.

33. *To be bound with two chains.* To show to the enraged multitude that he did not intend to rescue any one from justice, but to keep the peace. Paul's

tude ; and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle. ^c

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers, for the violence ^d of the people.

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away ^e with him !

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto

c c.23.10,16

d Ps.55.9. Hab.1.3.

e Luke 23.

18. Jno.19.15. c.22.22. 1Cor.4.13.

being thus bound would convince them of his determination that justice should be done in the case. Probably he was bound between two soldiers, his right arm to the left arm of the one, and his left arm to the right arm of the other. See Note, ch. xii. 6. Or, if his hands and feet were bound, it is evident that it was so done that he was able still to walk. ver. 37, 38. This was in accordance with the prediction of Agabus, ch. xxi. 11.

34. *Into the castle.* The castle or tower of Antonia, where the guard was kept. Note on ver. 31. Comp. ch. xxiii. 10. 16.

35. *Upon the stairs.* The stairs which led from the temple to the tower of Antonia. Josephus says (Jewish Wars, b. v. ch. 5, § 8), that the tower of Antonia "was situated at the corner of two cloisters of the court of the temple, of that on the west, and of that on the north ; it was erected on a rock of fifty cubits [seventy-five feet] in height, and was on a great precipice. On the corner where it joined to the two cloisters of the temple, it had passages down to them both, through which the guards went several ways among the cloisters with their arms, on the Jewish festivals," &c. It was on these stairs, as the soldiers were returning, that the tumult was so great, or the crowd so dense, that they were obliged to bear him along to rescue him from their violence. ¶ *The violence of the people.* The rush of the multitude.

36. *Away with him!* That is, to death. Comp. Luke xxiii. 18.

37. *May I speak unto thee?* May I have the privilege of making my defence before thee ; or of stating the case truly, the cause of my accusation, of this tumult, &c. ¶ *Canst thou speak Greek?*

thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

38 Art not thou that ¹ Egyptian, which before these days madest an

¹ This Egyptian rose A.D. 55. c.5.36.

Implying that if he could, he might be permitted to speak to him. The Greek language was that which was then almost universally spoken, and it is not improbable that it was the native tongue of the chief captain. It is evident that he was not a Roman by birth, for he says (ch. xxii. 28) that he had obtained the privilege of citizenship by paying a great sum. The language which the Jews spoke, was the Syro-chaldaic; and as he took Paul to be an Egyptian Jew (ver. 38.), he supposed from that circumstance also, that he was not able to speak the Greek language.

38. *Art not thou that Egyptian.* That Egyptian was probably a Jew, who resided in Egypt. Josephus has given an account of this Egyptian, which strikingly accords with the statement here recorded by Luke. See Josephus' *Antiq.* b. xx. ch. viii. § 6, and *Jewish War*, b. ii. ch. xiii. § 5. The account which he gives is, that this Egyptian, whose name he does not mention, came from Egypt to Jerusalem, and said that he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go with him to the Mount of Olives. He said further, that he would show them from thence how the walls of Jerusalem would fall down; and he promised them that he would procure for them an entrance through those walls when they were fallen down. Josephus adds (*Jewish War*), that he got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him, "these he led round about *from the wilderness* to the mount, which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place." But Felix, who was apprized of his movements, marched against him with the Roman soldiers, and discomfited him, and slew four hundred of them, and took two hundred alive. "But the Egyptian escaped himself out of the fight, but did not appear any more." It was natural that the Roman tribune should suppose that Paul was this Egyptian, and that his return had produced this commotion and excitement among the people. ¶ *Madest an uproar.* Producing a sedition, or a rising among the people. Greek, "That Egyptian, who before these days having risen up." ¶ *Into the wilderness.* This corresponds remarkably with the account of Josephus. He indeed mentions that

he led them to the Mount of Olives, but he expressly says that "he led them round about from the wilderness." This wilderness was the wild and uncultivated mountainous tract of country, lying to the east of Jerusalem, and between it and the river Jordan. See Note, *Matt.* iii. 1. It is also another striking coincidence showing the truth of the narrative, that neither Josephus nor Luke mention the *name* of this Egyptian, though he was so prominent and acted so distinguished a part. ¶ *Four thousand men.* There is here a remarkable discrepancy between the chief captain and Josephus. The latter says that there were thirty thousand men. In regard to this, the following remarks may be made. (1.) This cannot be alleged to convict Luke of a false statement, for his record is, that the *chief captain* made this statement, and it cannot be proved that Luke has put into his mouth words which he did not utter. All that he is responsible for is, a correct *report* of what the Roman tribune *said*, not for the truth or falsehood of his statement. It is certainly *possible* that that might have been the common estimate of the number then, and that the account given by Josephus might have been made from more correct information. Or it is possible, certainly, that the statement by Josephus is incorrect. (2.) If Luke were to be held responsible for the statement of the number, yet it remains to be shown that he is not as correct a historian as Josephus. Why should Josephus be esteemed infallible, and Luke false? Why should the accuracy of Luke be tested by Josephus, rather than the accuracy of Josephus by Luke? Infidels usually *assume* that Josephus and other profane historians are infallible, and then endeavour to convict the sacred writers of falsehood. (3.) The narrative of Luke is the more probable of the two. It is more probable that the number was only four thousand, than that it was thirty thousand. For Josephus says, that four hundred were killed, and two hundred taken prisoners; and that thus they were dispersed. Now, it is scarcely credible, that an army of thirty thousand desperadoes and cut-throats would be dispersed by so small a slaughter and captivity. But if the number was originally but four thousand, it is entirely credible that the loss of six hundred would discourage and

uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers ?

39 But Paul said, ^a I am a man *which am* a Jew of Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, ^b a citizen of no mean city : and I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

40 And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned ^c with the hand unto

a c.9.11; 22.3.

b c.22.25.

c c.12.17.

dissipate the remainder. (4.) It is possible that the chief captain refers only to the *organized Sicarii*, or murderers that the Egyptian led with him, and Josephus to the *multitude* that afterwards joined them, the rabble of the discontented and disorderly that joined them on their march. Or, (5.) There may have been an error in transcribing Josephus. It has been supposed that he originally wrote four thousand, but that ancient copyists, mistaking the Δ delta, *four*, for Λ lambda, *thirty*, wrote thirty thousand, instead of four thousand. Whichever of these solutions be adopted is not material. ¶ *Which were murderers.* Σικαρίων. *Sicarii*. This is originally a Latin word, and is derived from *Sica*, a short sword, or sabre, or crooked knife, which could be easily concealed under the garment. Hence it came to denote assassins, and to be applied to banditti, or robbers. It does not mean that they *had* actually committed murder, but that they were desperadoes and banditti, and were drawn together for purposes of plunder and of blood. This class of people was exceedingly numerous in Judea. See Notes, Luke x. 30.

39. *A Jew of Tarsus.* A Jew by birth. See Note, ch. ix. 11. ¶ *Of no mean city.* Not obscure, or undistinguished. He could claim an honourable birth, so far as the place of his nativity was concerned. See Note, ch. ix. 11. Tarsus was much celebrated for its learning, and was at one time the rival of Alexandria and Athens. Xenophon calls it *a great and flourishing city*. Anabasis. Josephus (Antiq. b. i. ch. vi. § 6) says, that *it was the metropolis, and most renowned city among them [the Cilicians]*.

40. *License.* Liberty ; permission. ¶ *On the stairs.* Note, ver. 35. ¶ *Beckoned with the hand.* Waving the hand as a sign that he was about to address them, and to produce silence, and atten-

tion. See ch. xii. 17. ¶ *In the Hebrew tongue.* The language which was spoken by the Jews, which was then a mixture of the Chaldee and Syriac, called *Syro-chaldaic*. This language he doubtless used on this occasion in preference to the Greek, because it was understood better by the multitude, and would tend to conciliate them if they heard him address them in their own language. The following chapter should have been connected with this. The division here is unnatural.

CHAPTER XXII.

MEN, ^a brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence, ^c *which I make* now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence : and he saith,)

d c.7.2.

e 1Pet.3.15.

CHAPTER XXII.

1. *Men, brethren, and fathers.* This defence was addressed to the Jews ; and Paul commenced it with an expression of sincere respect for them. Stephen began his defence with the same form of address. Note, ch. vii. 2. ¶ *My defence.* Against the charges brought against me. Those charges were, that he had endeavoured to prejudice men every where against the Jews, and the law, and the temple. ch. xxi. 28. In order to meet this charge, Paul stated (1.) That he had been born a Jew, and had enjoyed all the advantages of a Jewish education (ver. 3.); (2.) He recounted the circumstances of his conversion, and the reason why he believed that he was called to preach the gospel (ver. 4—16); (3.) He proceeded to state the reasons why he went among the Gentiles, and evidently designed to vindicate his conduct there (ver. 17—21); but at this point, at the name *Gentiles*, his defence was interrupted by the enraged multitude, and he was not permitted to proceed. What *would* have been his defence, therefore, had he been suffered to finish it, it is impossible to know with certainty. On another occasion, however, he was permitted to make a *similar* defence, and perhaps to complete the train of thought which he had purposed to pursue here. See ch. xxvii.

2. *The Hebrew tongue.* Note, ch. xxi. 40.

3 I am ^a verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, at the feet of ^b Gamaliel, *and* taught according ^c to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was ^d zealous towards God, as ye ^e all are this day.

4 And I persecuted ^f this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high-priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, ^g 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

^a c.21.39, 2Cor.11.22, Phil.3.5. ^b c.5.34. ^c c.26.5.
^d Gal.1.14. ^e c.21.20, Rom.10.2.

3. *Born in Tarsus.* Note, ch. xxi. 39. ¶ *Brought up in this city.* In Jerusalem, sent there for the advantage of more perfect instruction in the law. ¶ *At the feet of Gamaliel.* As a scholar, or disciple of Gamaliel. The phrase *to sit at the feet of one*, is expressive of the condition of a disciple or learner. Comp. Deut. xxxiii. 3. Luke x. 39. It is probable that the expression arose from the fact that the learners occupied a lower place or seat than the teacher. The phrase is expressive of humility and a lower condition. On the character and rank of Gamaliel. see Note on ch. v. 34. Paul mentions his having been instructed in this manner, in order to show that he was entitled to the full privilege of the Jew, and that he had had every opportunity to become fully acquainted with the nature of the law. ¶ *According to the perfect manner.* Κατὰ ἀκριβείαν. By strict diligence, or exact care; or in the utmost rigour and severity of that instruction. No pains were spared to make him understand and practise the law of Moses. ¶ *The law of the fathers.* The law of our fathers; i. e. the law which they received, and handed down to us. Paul was a Pharisee; and the law in which he had been taught was not only the *written law* of Moses, but the *traditional law* which had been handed down from former times. Note, Matt. iii. 6. ¶ *And was zealous towards God.* Gal. i. 14. He had a constant burning zeal for God and his law, which

nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me saw ^h indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

^f c.8.3;26.9-13, Phil.3.6, 1Tim.1.13. ^g c.9.2,&c.
^h Dan.10.7.

was expressed not only by scrupulous adherence to its forms, but by persecuting all who opposed it. ver. 4, 5.

4. *And I persecuted.* ch. viii. 3. ¶ *This way.* Those who were of this mode of worshipping God; that is, Christians. Note, Acts ix. 2. ¶ *Unto the death.* Intending to put them to death. He did not probably put any to death himself; but he committed them to prison, he sought their lives, he was the agent employed in arresting them; and when they were put to death, he tells us that he gave his voice against them (Acts xxvi. 10); that is, he joined in, and approved of their condemnation. ¶ *Delivering into prisons, &c.* ch. viii. 3.

5. *As also the high-priest, &c.* Note, ch. ix. 2. ¶ *All the estate of the elders.* Greek. All the presbytery; that is, the whole body of the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. ¶ *Unto the brethren.* The Jewish brethren, who were at Damascus. Paul here speaks as a Jew, and regards his countrymen as his brethren.

6. *As I made my journey.* As I was on my journey. ¶ *About noon.* ch. xxvi. 13. "At mid-day." This circumstance is omitted by Luke in his account in ch. ix. Paul mentions it, as being the more remarkable since it occurred at mid-day, to show that he was not deluded by any meteoric or natural appearances, which usually occur at night.

6—11. See Notes, ch. ix. 3—7.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 And one Ananias, ^a a devout man according to the law, having a good ^b report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The ^c God of our fathers hath chosen ^d thee, that

^a c.9.17. ^b c.10.22. 1Tim.3.7. Heb.11.2. ^c c.3.13;5.30. ^d ch.c.9.15. Gal.1.15. ^e ver.18. 1Cor.9.1;15.8.

11. *The glory of that light.* The splendour, the intense brilliancy of the light. See this and its effects explained in the Note on ch. ix. 8.

12, 13. See Notes, ch. ix. 17, 18.

14. *Shouldst know his will.* His will in the plan of salvation, and in regard to your future life. ¶ *And see that Just One.* The Messiah. Note, ch. iii. 14. As Paul was to be an apostle, and as it was the peculiar office of an apostle to bear witness to the person and deeds of the Lord Jesus (Note, ch. i. 21, 22.) it was necessary that he should see him, that thus he might be a competent witness of his resurrection. ¶ *Shouldst hear the voice of his mouth.* Shouldst hear and obey his commands.

15. *For thou shalt be his witness, &c.* As an apostle to testify to all men that the Messiah has come; that he has died; that he has risen; and that he is the Saviour of the world. ¶ *Of what thou hast seen and heard.* Of the remarkable proof which has been furnished you of the divine mission and character of the Lord Jesus.

16. *And now why tarriest thou?* Why dost thou delay, or wait any longer? These words are not recorded by Luke in ch. ix., where he has given an account of the conversion of Paul; but there is nothing here contradictory to his statement. ¶ *And wash away thy sins.* Receive baptism, as an act expressive of the washing away of sins. It cannot be intended that the external rite of baptism was sufficient to make the soul pure, but that it was an ordinance divinely appointed as expressive of the washing away of sins, or of purifying the heart. Comp. Heb. x. 22 Sinners are represented in the Scriptures as *defiled* or *polluted* by sin To

thou shouldst know his will, and see ^e that Just ^f One, and shouldst hear the voice ^g of his mouth.

15 For thou ^h shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash ⁱ away thy sins, calling ^j on the name of the Lord,

17 And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;^k

^f c.3.14;7.51. ^g 1Cor.11.23. Gal.1.12. ^h c.23.11; 26.16,&c. ⁱ Heb.10.22. 1Pet.3.21. ^j Rom.10.13. 1Cor.1.2. ^k 2Cor.12.2.

wash away the sins, denotes the purifying of the soul from this polluted influence. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Rev. i. 5; vii. 14. Isa. i. 16. Ps. li. 2. 7. ¶ *Calling on the name of the Lord.* For pardon and sanctification. Rom. x. 13, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It was proper that this calling on the name of the Lord should be connected with the ordinance of baptism. That ordinance was expressive of a purifying which the Lord only could produce. It is proper that the rite of baptism should be attended with extraordinary prayer; and that he who is to be baptized should make it the occasion of peculiar and very solemn religious exercises. The external rite will avail nothing without the pardoning mercy of God.

17. *When I was come again to Jerusalem.* That is, three years after his conversion. See Gal. i. 17, 18. ¶ *While I prayed in the temple.* Paul, like the other converts to Christianity from among the Jews, would naturally continue to offer his devotions in the temple. We meet with repeated instances of their continuing to comply with the customs of the Jewish people. ¶ *I was in a trance.* Greek, Ecstasy. Note, ch. x. 10. Perhaps he here refers to what he elsewhere mentions (2 Cor. xii. 1—5,) which he calls "visions and revelations of the Lord." In that place he mentions his being "caught up to the third heaven" (ver. 2.) and "into paradise," where he heard words which it was "not possible for a man to utter." ver. 4. It is not certain, however, that he refers in this place to that remarkable occurrence. The narrative would rather imply that the Lord Jesus appeared to him in the temple in a remarkable manner, in a vision, and gave

18 And saw ^a him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they ^b know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I ^c also

^a ver. 14.

^b ver. 4.

^c c. 7. 58.

was standing by, and consenting ^d unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

21 And he said unto me, Depart: for ^e I will send thee far hence, unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lift up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for ^f it is not fit that he should live.

^d c. 8. 1. ^e c. 13. 2, 47. Rom. 1. 5; 12. 13; 15. 16. Gal. 2. 7, 8. Eph. 3. 7, 8. 1 Tim. 2. 7. ^f c. 25. 24.

him a direct command to go to the Gentiles. Paul had now stated the evidence of his conversion, which appears to have been satisfactory to them: at least they made no objection to his statement; he had shown by his being in the temple his respect for their institutions; and he *now* proceeds to show that in his other conduct he had been directed by the same high authority by which he had been called into the ministry, and that the command had been given to him in their own temple and in their own city.

18. *And saw him.* Evidently the Lord Jesus. ver. 14. He had received his commission from him, and he now received a distinct command to go to the Gentiles. ¶ *For they will not receive.* The inhabitants of Jerusalem, probably including both Jews and Christians. The *Jews* would not listen to him, because he had become, in their view, an apostate, and they would hate and persecute him. The *Christians* would not be likely to receive him, for they would remember his former persecutions, and would be suspicious of him, because he had been so long in Arabia, and had not sooner connected himself with them. See Note on ch. ix.

26. "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple."

19. *And I said, Lord.* This shows that it was the Lord Jesus, whom Paul saw in a trance in the temple. The term *Lord* is usually applied to him in the Acts. Note, ch. i. 24. ¶ *They know.* Christians know; and they will therefore be not likely to receive to their fellowship their former enemy and persecutor. ¶ *Beat in every synagogue.* Beating, or scourging, was often done in the synagogue. See Note, Matt. x. 17. Comp. Acts xxvi. 11. It was customary for those

who were converted to Christianity, still to meet with the Jews in their synagogues, and to join with them in their worship.

20. *The blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed.* See ch. vii. 58; viii. 1. ¶ *I was standing by.* ch. vii. 58. ¶ *And consenting unto his death.* ch. viii. 1. ¶ *And kept the raiment.* The outer robes or garments which were usually laid aside, when they engaged in running or labour. See ch. vii. 58. All this showed, that though Paul was not engaged in stoning Stephen, yet he was with them in spirit, and fully accorded with what they did. These circumstances are mentioned here by him, as *reasons* why he knew that he would not be received by Christians as one of their number, and why it was necessary, therefore, for him to turn to the gentile world.

21. *And he said unto me, Depart.* Because the Christians at Jerusalem would not receive him. ¶ *Far hence.* Paul travelled far in the heathen nations. A large part of his time in the ministry was spent in remote countries, and in the most distant regions then known. See Rom. xv. 19.

22. *And they gave him audience.* They heard him patiently. ¶ *Unto this word.* The word *Gentiles.* ¶ *Away with such a fellow.* Greek, Take such a man from the earth; i. e. put him to death. It is language of strong indignation and abhorrence. The reasons of their indignation were, not that they supposed that the Gentiles could not be brought into covenant with God, for they would themselves compass sea and land to make one proselyte; but they were, (1.) That they believed that Paul taught that they might be saved without conforming to the law of Moses; and, (2.) His speech implied that the Jews were more hardened than the Gentiles, and that he had a greater

23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for

you to scourge a man that is a Roman,^a and uncondemned?

26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained

^a c.16.37; 15.16.

prospect of success in bringing them to God than he had in regard to the Jews.

23. *Cast off their clothes.* Their outer garments. Probably they did it now intending to stone him. ch. vii. 58. ¶ *And threw dust into the air.* As expressive of their abhorrence and indignation. This was a striking exhibition of rage and vindictive malice. Paul was guarded by Roman soldiers, so that they could not injure him; and their only way of expressing their wrath was by menaces and threats, and by these tokens of furious indignation. Thus Shimei expressed his indignation against David by cursing him, and throwing stones at him, and casting dust. 2 Sam. xvi. 13.

24. *The castle.* The tower of Antonia. He would be there removed entirely from the wrath of the Jews. ¶ *Should be examined.* Ἀνετάζω. The word *examine* with us commonly means to inquire, to question, to search for, or to look carefully into a subject. The word here used is commonly applied to *metals* whose nature is tested, or *examined* by fire; and then it means to subject to torture or torments, in order to extort a confession, where persons were accused of crime. It was often resorted to among the ancients. The usual mode has been by the *rack*, but various kinds of torments have been invented in order to extort confessions of guilt from those who were accused. The whole practice has been one of the most flagrant violations of justice, and one of the foulest blots on human nature. In this case, the tribune saw that Paul was accused violently by the Jews; he was ignorant of the Hebrew language, and had not probably understood the address of Paul; he supposed from the extraordinary excitement that Paul must have been guilty of some flagrant offence, and he therefore resolved to subject him to torture, to extort from him a confession.

2 C

¶ *By scourging.* By the scourge or whip. Comp. Heb. xi. 36. This was one mode of torture, in order to extort a secret from those who were accused.

25. *Bound him with thongs.* With cords, preparatory to scourging. ¶ *Is it lawful, &c.* It was directly contrary to the Roman law, to bind and scourge a Roman citizen. See Note, on ch. xvi. 36, 37.

28. *With a great sum obtained I this freedom.* This freedom, or privilege of Roman citizenship. From this it would seem, that the privilege of being a Roman citizen might be purchased. Perhaps he refers, however, to the expenses which were necessarily attendant in passing through the proper *forms* of becoming a Roman citizen. The argument of the tribune in this case is this:—*I obtained this privilege at a great price. Whence did you Paul, thus poor and persecuted, obtain the means of becoming a Roman citizen?* Paul had informed him that he was a native of Tarsus (ch. xxi. 39); and the chief captain supposed that that was not a free city, and that Paul could not have derived the privilege of citizenship from his birth. ¶ *But I was free-born.* I was born a Roman citizen, or I am such in virtue of my birth. Various opinions have been formed on the question, in what way or for what reasons Paul was entitled to the privilege of a Roman citizen. Some have supposed that Tarsus was a Roman colony, and that he thus became a Roman citizen. But of this there does not appear to be sufficient proof. Pliny says (5 27) that it was a *free city*. The city of Tarsus was endowed with the privileges of a free city by Augustus Cesar, after it had been greatly afflicted and oppressed by wars. (*Appian.*) Dio Chrysost. says to the people of Tarsus, “he (Augustus) has conferred on you every thing which any

I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have ¹ examined him: and 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 ^a he would have known the certainty

¹ or, tortured him. ^a c.13.18.

one could bestow on his friends and companions, a country (i. e. a free country), laws, honour, authority over the river (Cydranus), and the neighbouring sea." Free cities were permitted in the Roman empire to use their own laws and customs, to have their own magistrates, and they were free from being subject to Roman guards. They were required only to acknowledge the supremacy and authority of the Roman people, and to aid them in their wars. Such a city was Tarsus, and having been born there, Paul was entitled to these privileges of a free man. Many critics have supposed that this privilege of Roman citizenship had been conferred on some of the ancestors of Paul, in consequence of some distinguished military service. Such a conferring of the rights of citizenship was not unusual, and possibly might have occurred in this case. But there is no direct historical proof of it; and the former fact, that he was born in a free city, will amply account for his affirmation that he was free-born.

29. *Then straightway.* Immediately. They saw that by scourging him they would have violated the Roman law, and exposed themselves to its penalty. ¶ *Which should have examined him.* Who were about to torture him by scourging him. ver. 24. ¶ *Because he had bound him.* Preparatory to scourging him. The act of *binding* a Roman citizen, with such an intent, untried and uncondemned, was unlawful. Prisoners who were to be scourged were usually bound by the Romans to a pillar or post; and a similar custom prevailed among the Jews. That it was unlawful to bind a man, with this intent, who was uncondemned, appears from an express declaration in Cicero (against Verres). "It is a heinous sin to *bind* a Roman citizen; it is wickedness to *beat* him; it is next to parricide to kill him, and what shall I say to crucify him?"

30. *On the morrow.* After he had arrested Paul. Paul was still a prisoner;

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.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AND Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I ^b have lived in all good

^b c.24.16. 2Cor.1.12. Heb.13.18.

and if suffered to go at liberty among the Jews, his life would have been in danger. ¶ *And commanded the chief priests, &c.* Summoned a meeting of the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. He did this, as he was prevented from scourging Paul, in order to know what he had done, and that he might learn from the Jews themselves the nature of the charge against him. This was necessary for the safety of Paul, and for the ends of justice. This should have been done without any attempt to *torture* him in order to extort a confession. ¶ *And brought Paul down.* From the elevated castle or tower of Antonia. The council assembled commonly in the house of the high-priest. ¶ *And set him before them.* He brought the prisoner to their bar, that they might have an opportunity to accuse him, and that thus the chief captain might learn the real nature of the charge against him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1. *And Paul, earnestly beholding.* ΑΤΕ-
VΙΣΤΑΣ. Fixing his eyes intently on the council. The word denotes a fixed and earnest gazing; a close observation. See Luke iv. 20. Note, Acts iii. 4. Paul would naturally look with a keen and attentive observation on the council. He was arraigned before them, and he would naturally observe the appearance, and endeavour to ascertain the character of his judges. Besides, it was by this council that he had been formerly commissioned to persecute the Christians. ch. ix. 1, 2. He had not seen them since that commission was given. He would naturally, therefore, regard them with an attentive eye. The result shows, also, that Paul looked at them to see what was the character of the men there assembled, and what was the proportion of Pharisees and Sadducees. ver. 6. ¶ *The council.* Gr. The sanhedrim. ch. xxii. 30. It was the great council composed of seventy elders, to whom was intrusted the affairs of the nation. See Note, Matt. ii. 4.

conscience before God until this day.

2 And the high-priest Anani-

as commanded them that stood by him to smite him ^a on the mouth.

^a Jno. 18.22.

† *Men and brethren.* Gr. 'Men, brethren;' the usual form of beginning an address among the Jews. See ch. ii. 29. He addressed them still as his *brethren*. † *I have lived in all good conscience.* I have conducted myself so as to maintain a good conscience. I have done what I believed to be right. This was a bold declaration, after the tumult, and charges, and accusations of the previous day (ch. xxii.); and yet it was strictly true. His persecutions of the Christians had been conducted *conscientiously*. Acts xxvi. 9, "I verily thought with myself," says he, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Of his conscientiousness and fidelity in *their* service, they could bear witness. Of his conscientiousness *since*, he could make a similar declaration. And he, doubtless, meant to say, that as he had been conscientious in persecution, so he had been in his conversion, and in his subsequent course. And as they *knew* that his former life had been with a good conscience, they ought to *presume* that he had maintained the same character still. This was a remarkably bold appeal to be made by an accused man, and it shows the strong consciousness which Paul had of his innocence. What would have been the drift of Paul's discourse in proving this, we can only conjecture. He was interrupted (ver. 2); but there can be no doubt that he would have pursued such a course of argument as should tend to establish his innocence. † *Before God.* Gr. To God. τῷ Θεῷ. He had lived to God, or with reference to his commands, so as to keep a conscience pure in his sight. The same principle of conduct he states more at length in ch. xxiv. 16: "And herein do I excuse myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." † *Until this day.* Including the time *before* his conversion to Christianity, and after. In both conditions he was conscientious; in one, conscientious in persecution and error, though he deemed it to be right; in the other, conscientious in the truth. The mere fact, that a man is conscientious, does not prove that he is right, or innocent. See Note on John xvi. 2.

2. *And the high-priest Ananias.* This Ananias was, doubtless, the son of Nebedinus (Jos. Ant. xx. ch. v. § 3), who was

high-priest when Quadratus, who preceded Felix, was president of Syria. He was sent bound to Rome by Quadratus, at the same time with Ananias, the prefect of the temple, that they might give an account of their conduct to Claudius Cesar. Josephus, Ant. b. xx. ch. vi. § 2. But in consequence of the intercession of Agrippa the Younger, they were dismissed, and returned to Jerusalem. Ananias, however, was not restored to the office of high-priest. For, when Felix was governor of Judea, this office was filled by Jonathan, who succeeded Ananias. Josephus, Ant. b. xx. ch. x. Jonathan was slain in the temple itself, by the instigation of Felix, by assassins who had been hired for the purpose. This murder is thus described by Josephus (Ant. b. xx. ch. viii. § 5): "Felix bore an ill-will to Jonathan, the high-priest, because he frequently gave him admonitions about governing the Jewish affairs better than he did, lest complaints should be made against him, since he had procured of Cesar the appointment of Felix as procurator of Judea. Accordingly, Felix contrived a method by which he might get rid of Jonathan, whose admonitions had become troublesome to him. Felix persuaded one of Jonathan's most faithful friends, of the name Doras, to bring the robbers upon him, and to put him to death." This was done in Jerusalem. The robbers came into the city as if to worship God, and with daggers, which they had concealed under their garments, they put him to death. After the death of Jonathan the office of high-priest remained vacant, until king Agrippa appointed Ismael, the son of Fabi, to the office. Josephus, Ant. b. xx. ch. viii. § 8. It was during this interval, while the office of high-priest was vacant, that the events which are here recorded took place. Ananias was then at Jerusalem; and as the office of high-priest was vacant, and as he was the last person who had borne the office, it was natural that he should discharge, probably by common consent, its duties, so far at least as to preside in the sanhedrim. Of these facts, Paul would be doubtless apprized; and hence what he said (ver. 5) was strictly true, and is one of the evidences that Luke's history accords precisely with the peculiar circumstances which then existed.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou* whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten ^a contrary to the law?

^a Lev. 19. 35. Deut. 25. 1, 2. Jno. 7. 51.

When Luke here calls Ananias "the high-priest," he evidently intends not to affirm that he was actually such; but to use the word as the Jews did, as applicable to one who *had* been in that office, and who, on that occasion, when the office was vacant, performed its duties. ¶ *To smite him on the mouth.* To stop him from speaking; to express their indignation at what he had said. The anger of Ananias was excited, because Paul affirmed, that all that he had done had been with a good conscience. Their feelings had been excited to the utmost; they regarded him as certainly guilty; they deemed him to be an apostate; and they could not bear it that he, with such coolness and firmness, declared, that *all* his conduct had been under the direction of a good conscience. The injustice of the command of Ananias is apparent to all. A similar instance of violence occurred on the trial of the Saviour. John xviii. 22.

3. *God shall smite thee.* God shall punish thee. God is just; and he will not suffer such a manifest violation of all the laws of a fair trial to pass unavenged. This was a remarkably bold and fearless declaration. Paul was surrounded by enemies. They were seeking his life. And he must have known that such declarations would have only excited their wrath, and made them more thirsty for his blood. That he could thus address the president of the council, was not only strongly characteristic of the man, but was also a strong proof that he was conscious of innocence, and that justice was on his side. This expression of Paul, "God shall smite thee," is not to be regarded in the light of an *imprecation*, or as an expression of angry feeling, but of a *prediction*, or of a strong conviction on the mind of Paul, that a man so hypocritical and unjust as Ananias was, could not escape the vengeance of God. Ananias was slain, with Hezekiah his brother, during the agitation that occurred in Jerusalem when the robbers, or *Sicarii*, under their leader, Manahem, had taken possession of the city. He attempted to conceal himself in an aqueduct, but was drawn forth and killed. See Josephus,

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high-priest?

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high-priest: for it is written, ^b Thou

^b Ex. 22. 28. Eccl. 10. 20. 2Pet. 2. 10. Jude 8.

Jewish Wars, b. ii. ch. xvii. § 8. Thus Paul's prediction was fulfilled. ¶ *Thou whited wall.* This is evidently a proverbial expression, meaning *thou hypocrite*. His hypocrisy consisted in his pretending to sit there to do justice; and yet, in commanding the accused to be smitten in direct violation of the law, he thus showed that his character was not what, by his sitting there, he professed it to be, but that of one determined to carry the purposes of his party, and of his own feelings. Our Saviour used a similar expression, to describe the hypocritical character of the Pharisees (Matt. xxiii. 27), when he compares them to whited sepulchres. A whited wall is a wall or enclosure that is covered with lime or gypsum, and that thus appears to be different from what it is, and thus aptly describes the hypocrite. Seneca (de Providentia, ch. 6) uses a similar figure to describe hypocrites: "They are sordid, base, and like their walls adorned only externally." See also Seneca, Epis. 115. ¶ *For sittest thou, &c.* The law required that justice should be done, and in order to that, it gave every man an opportunity of defending himself. See Note, John vii. 51. Prov. xviii. 13. Lev. xix. 15, 16. Ex. xxiii. 1, 2. Deut. xix. 15, 18. ¶ *To judge me after the law.* As a judge to hear and decide the case according to the rules of the law of Moses. ¶ *Contrary to the law.* In violation of the law of Moses (Lev. xix. 35), "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment."

4. *Revilest thou, &c.* Dost thou reproach or abuse the high-priest of God? It is remarkable that they who knew that he was *not* the high-priest, should have offered this language. He was, however, in the place of the high-priest, and they might have pretended that respect was due to the office.

5. *Then said Paul, I wist not.* I know not; I was ignorant of the fact, that he was high-priest. Interpreters have been greatly divided on the meaning of this expression. Some have supposed that Paul said it in *irony*; as if he had said, 'Pardon me, brethren, I did not consider that this was the high-priest. It did not occur to me, that a man who could con-

shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

duct thus, could be God's high-priest.' Others have thought (as Grotius) that Paul used these words for the purpose of mitigating their wrath, and as an acknowledgment that he had spoken hastily, and that it was contrary to his usual habit, which was not to speak evil of the ruler of the people. As if he had said, 'I acknowledge my error and my haste. I did not *consider* that I was addressing him whom God had commanded me to respect.' But this interpretation is not probable, for Paul evidently did not intend to retract what he had said. Dr. Doddridge renders it, "I was not aware, brethren, that it was the high-priest," and regards it as an apology for having spoken in haste. But the obvious reply to this interpretation is, that if Ananias was the high-priest, Paul could not but be aware of it. Of so material a point, it is hardly possible that he could be ignorant. Others suppose, that as Paul had been long absent from Jerusalem, and had not known the changes which had occurred there, he was a stranger to the person of the high-priest. Others suppose that Ananias did not occupy the usual seat which was appropriated to the high-priest, and that he was not clothed in the usual robes of office, and that Paul did not recognise him the high-priest. But these interpretations are not probable. It is wholly improbable that, on such an occasion, the high-priest, who was the presiding officer in the sanhedrim, should not be known to the accused. The true interpretation, therefore, I suppose is, that which is derived from the fact that Ananias was *not* then properly the high-priest; that there was a vacancy in the office, and that he presided by courtesy, or in virtue of his having been formerly invested with that office. The meaning then will be, 'I did not regard or acknowledge him as the high-priest. I did not address him *as such*, since that is not his true character. Had he been truly the high-priest, even if he had thus been guilty of manifest injustice, I would not have used the language which I did. The *office*, if not the *man*, would have claimed respect. But as he is *not* truly and properly clothed with that office, and as he was guilty of manifest injustice, I did not believe that he was to be shielded in his injustice by the law which commands me to show respect to the proper ruler of the people.' If this be the true interpretation, it shows

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees,

that Luke, in this account, accords entirely with the truth of history. The character of Ananias, as given by Josephus; the facts which he has stated in regard to him, all accord with the account here given, and show that the writer of the "Acts of the Apostles" was acquainted with the history of that time, and has correctly stated it. ¶ *For it is written.* Ex. xxii. 28. Paul adduces this to show that it was his purpose to observe the law; that he would not intentionally violate it; and that, if he had known Ananias to be high-priest, he would have been restrained by his regard for the law from using the language which he did. ¶ *Of the ruler of thy people.* This passage had not any peculiar reference to the high-priest, but it inculcated the general spirit of respect for those in office, whatever that office was. As the office of high-priest was one of importance and authority, Paul declares here that he would not be guilty of showing disrespect for it, or of using reproachful language towards it.

6. *But when Paul perceived.* Probably by his former acquaintance with the men who composed the council. As he had been brought up in Jerusalem, and had been before acquainted with the sanhedrim (ch. ix. 2), he would have an acquaintance, doubtless, with the character of most of those present, though he had been absent from them for fourteen years. Gal. ii. 1. ¶ *The one part, &c.* That the council was divided into two parties, Pharisees and Sadducees. This was commonly the case, though it is uncertain which had the majority. In regard to the opinions of these two sects, see Notes on Matt. iii. 7. ¶ *He cried out, &c.* The reasons why Paul resolved to take advantage of their difference of opinion were, probably, (1.) That he saw that it was impossible to expect *justice* at their hands; and he, therefore, regarded it as prudent and proper to consult his safety. He saw, from the conduct of Ananias, and from the spirit manifested (ver. 4), that they, like the other Jews, had prejudged the case, and were driven on by blind rage and fury. (2.) His object was to show his innocence to the chief captain. To ascertain that, was the purpose for which he had been arraigned. Yet that, perhaps, could be most directly and satisfactorily shown by bringing out, as he knew he could do, the real spirit

and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, ^a I am a Pharisee, the son of

a c.26.5. Phil.3.5.

which actuated the whole council, as a spirit of party-strife, contention, and persecution. Knowing, therefore, how sensitive they were on the subject of the resurrection, he seems to have resolved to do what he would *not* have done had they been disposed to hear him according to the rules of justice, to abandon the *direct* argument for his defence, and to enlist a large part, perhaps a majority of the council, in his favour. Whatever may be thought of the propriety of this course, it cannot be denied that it was a master-stroke of policy, and that it evinced a profound knowledge of human nature. ¶ *I am a Pharisee.* That is, I was of that sect among the Jews. I was born a Pharisee, and I ever continued while a Jew to be of that sect. In the main he agreed with them still. He did not mean to deny that he was a Christian, but that so far as the Pharisees differed from the Sadducees, he was in the main with the former. He agreed with *them*, not with the Sadducees, in regard to the doctrine of the resurrection, and the existence of angels and spirits. ¶ *The son of a Pharisee.* What was the name of his father is not known. But the meaning is, simply, that he was entitled to all the immunities and privileges of a Pharisee. He had, from his birth, belonged to that sect, nor had he ever departed from the great cardinal doctrines which distinguished that sect—the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Comp. Phil. iii. 5. ¶ *Of the hope and resurrection of the dead.* That is, of the hope that the dead will be raised. This is the real point of the persecution and opposition to me. ¶ *I am called in question.* Gr. I am judged; that is, I am persecuted, or brought to trial. Orobio charges this upon Paul as an artful manner of declining persecution, unworthy the character of an upright and honest man. Chubb, a British Deist of the seventeenth century, charges it upon Paul as an act of gross “dissimulation, as designed to conceal the true ground of all the troubles that he had brought upon himself; and as designed to deceive and impose upon the Jews.” He affirms also, that “St. Paul probably invented this pretended charge against himself, to draw over a party of the unbelieving Jews unto him.” See Chubb’s Posthumous Works, vol. ii. p. 238. Now,

a Pharisee: of ^b the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

b c.24.15,21; 26.6; 28.20.

in reply to this, we may observe, (1.) That there is not the least evidence that Paul denied that he had been, or was then, a Christian. An attempt to deny this, after all that they knew of him, would have been vain; and there is not the slightest hint that he attempted it. (2.) The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was the *main* and *leading* doctrine which he had insisted on, and which had been to him the cause of much of his persecution. See ch. xvii. 31, 32. 1 Cor. xv. Acts xiii. 34; xxvi. 6, 7. 23. 25. (3.) Paul defended this by an argument which he deemed invincible, and which constituted, in fact, the principal evidence of its truth—the fact that the Lord Jesus *had* been raised. That fact had given demonstration to the doctrine of the Pharisees, that the dead would rise. As Paul had every where proclaimed the fact that Jesus had been raised up, and as this had been the occasion of his being opposed, it was true that he had been persecuted on account of that doctrine. (4.) The real ground of the opposition which the Sadducees made to him, and of their opposition to his doctrine was, the additional zeal with which he urged this doctrine, and the additional argument which he brought for the resurrection of the dead. Perhaps the cause of the opposition of this great party among the Jews—the Sadducees—to Christianity, was the strong confirmation which the resurrection of Christ gave to the doctrine which they so much hated—the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. It thus gave a triumph to their opponents among the Pharisees; and Paul, as a leading and zealous advocate of that doctrine, would excite their special hatred. (5.) All that Paul said, therefore, was strictly true. It was because he advocated this doctrine that he was opposed. That there were *other* causes of opposition to him might be true also; but still this was the main and prominent cause of the hostility. (6.) With great propriety, therefore, he might address the Pharisees, and say, ‘Brethren, the great doctrine which has distinguished you from the Sadducees, is at stake. The great doctrine which is at the foundation of all our hopes—the resurrection of the dead, the doctrine of our fathers, of the Scriptures, of our sect, is in danger.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees ^a say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

^a Matt. 22. 23. Mark 12. 18. Luke 20. 27.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find ^b no evil in this man: but if a spirit ^c or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not ^d fight against God.

^b c. 25. 25; 26. 31.

^c c. 22. 17, 18.

^d c. 5. 39.

Of that doctrine I have been the advocate. I have never denied it. I have endeavoured to establish it, and have every where defended it, and have devoted myself to the work of putting it on an imperishable basis among the Jews and the Gentiles. For my zeal in that, I have been opposed. I have excited the ridicule of the Gentile, and the hatred of the Sadducee. I have thus been persecuted and arraigned; and for my zeal in this, in urging the argument in defence of it, which I have deemed most irrefragable—the resurrection of the Messiah, I have been persecuted and arraigned, and now cast myself on your protection against the mad zeal of the enemies of the doctrine of our fathers. Not only, therefore, was this an act of policy and prudence in Paul, but what he affirmed was strictly true, and the effect was as he had anticipated.

7. *A dissension.* A dispute, or difference. ¶ *And the multitude.* The council. Comp. ch. xiv. 4. The Pharisees embraced, as he desired and expected, his side of the question, and became his advocates, in opposition to the Sadducees, who were arrayed against him.

8. *For the Sadducees say.* They believe. ¶ *No resurrection.* Of the dead. By this doctrine they also understood that there was no future state, and that the soul did not exist after death. See Note, Matt. xxii. 23. ¶ *Neither angel.* That there are no angels. They deny the existence of good or bad angels. See Note, Matt. iii. 7. ¶ *Nor spirit.* Nor soul. That there was nothing but matter. They were materialists, and supposed that all the operations which we ascribe to mind, could be traced to some modification of matter. The Sadducees, says Josephus (*Jewish War*, b. ii. ch. viii. § 14), “take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades.” “The doctrine of the Sadducees is this,” says he (*Ant.* b. xviii. ch. i. § 4), “that souls die with the bodies.” The opinion that the soul is material, and that there is nothing but matter

in the universe, has been held by many philosophers, ancient and modern, as well as by the Sadducees. ¶ *Confess both.* Acknowledge, or receive both as true; i. e. that there is a future state, and that there are spirits distinct from matter, as angels, and the disembodied souls of men. The two points in dispute were, (1.) Whether the dead would be raised and exist in a future state; and, (2.) Whether mind was distinct from matter. The Sadducees denied both, and the Pharisees believed both. Their belief of the latter point was, that spirits existed in two forms—that of angels, and that of souls of men distinct from the body.

9. *A great cry.* A great clamour, and tumult. ¶ *The scribes.* The learned men. They would naturally be the chief speakers. ¶ *Of the Pharisees' part.* Who were Pharisees; or who belonged to that party. The scribes were not a distinct sect, but might be either Pharisees or Sadducees. ¶ *We find no evil in this man.* No opinion which is contrary to the law of Moses; and no conduct in spreading the doctrine of the resurrection which we do not approve. The importance of this doctrine, in their view, was so great as to throw into the back ground all the *other* doctrines that Paul might hold; and provided this were propagated, they were willing to vindicate and sustain him. A similar testimony was offered to the innocence of the Saviour by Pilate. John xix. 6. ¶ *But if a spirit or an angel, &c.* They here referred, doubtless, to what Paul had said in ch. xxii. 17, 18. He had declared that he had gone among the Gentiles in obedience to a command which he received in a vision in the temple. As the Pharisees held to the belief of spirits and angels, and to the doctrine that the will of God was often delivered to men by their agency, they were ready now to admit that he had received such a communication, and that he had gone among the Gentiles in obedience to it, to defend their great doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. We are not to suppose that the Pharisees had be-

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.

11 And the night following, the

^a Ps.46.1,7. c.18.9; 27.23,24. ^b c.28.30,31.Rom.1.15. ^c ver.21.30. c.25.3.

come the friends of Paul, or of Christianity. The true solution of their conduct doubtless is, that they were so inflamed with hatred against the Sadducees, that they were willing to make use of *any* argument against their doctrine. As the testimony of Paul might be turned to their account, they were willing to vindicate him. It is remarkable too, that they *perverted* the statement of Paul in order to oppose the Sadducees. Paul had stated distinctly (ch. xxii. 17, 18.) that he had been commanded to go by *the Lord*, meaning the Lord Jesus. He had said nothing of "a spirit, or an angel." Yet they would unite with the Sadducees so far as to maintain that he had received no such command from the Lord Jesus. But they might easily vary his statements, and suppose that an "angel or a spirit" had spoken to him, and thus made use of his conduct as an argument against the Sadducees. Men are not always very careful about the exact correctness of their statements, when they wish to humble a rival. ¶ *Let us not fight against God.* See Note, ch. v. 39. These words are wanting in many MSS. and in some of the ancient versions. The Syriac reads it, "if a spirit or an angel have spoken to him, what is there in this?" i. e. what is there unusual or wrong.

10. *A great dissension.* A great tumult, excitement, or controversy. ¶ *Into the castle.* Note, ch. xxi. 34.

11. *The Lord stood by him.* Evidently the Lord Jesus. See Note, ch. i. 24. Comp. ch. xxii. 18. The appearance of the Lord in this case was a proof that he approved the course which Paul had taken before the sanhedrim. ¶ *Be of good cheer.* It would not be remarkable if Paul, by these constant persecutions, should be somewhat dejected in mind. The issue of the whole matter was as yet doubtful. In these circumstances, it must have been peculiarly consoling to him to hear these words of encouragement from the Lord Jesus, and this assurance that

Lord stood ^a by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.^b

12 And when it was day, certain ^c of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves ¹ under a curse, saying, that they would

¹ or, with an oath of execration.

the object of his desires should be granted, and that he would be permitted to bear the same witness of him in Rome. Nothing else can comfort and sustain the soul in trials, and persecutions, but evidence of the approbation of God, and the promises of his gracious aid. ¶ *Bear witness also at Rome.* This had been the object of his earnest wish (Rom. i. 10; xv. 23, 24), and this promise of the Lord Jesus was fulfilled. ch. xxviii. 30, 31. The promise which was here made to Paul was not *directly* one of deliverance from the present persecution, but it *implied* that, and made it certain.

12. *Certain of the Jews.* Some of the Jews. They were more than forty in number. ver. 13. ¶ *Banded together.* Made an agreement, or compact. They conspired to kill him. ¶ *And bound themselves under a curse.* See the margin. The Greek is, "they anathematized themselves;" that is, they bound themselves by a solemn oath. They invoked a curse on themselves, or devoted themselves to destruction, if they did not do it. Light-foot remarks, however, that they could be absolved from this vow by the Rabbins, if they were unable to execute it. Under various pretences they could easily be freed from such oaths, and it was common to take them; and if there was any difficulty in fulfilling them, they could easily apply to their religious teachers, and be absolved. ¶ *That they would neither eat nor drink.* That is, that they would do it as soon as possible. This was a common form of an oath, or curse, among the Jews. Sometimes they only vowed abstinence from particular things, as from meat, or wine. But in this case, to make the oath more certain, and binding, they vowed abstinence from all kinds of food and drink till they had killed him. Who these were—whether they were Sadducees or not—is not mentioned by the sacred writer. It is evident, however, that the minds of the Jews were greatly inflamed against Paul,

neither eat nor drink ^a till they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief ^b 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

^a Ps.31.13.

^b Hos.4.9.

council, signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready ^c to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he ^d went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

^c Ps.21.11; 37.32,33.

^d 2Sam.17.17.

and as they saw him in the custody of the Roman tribune, and as there was no prospect that *he* would punish him, they resolved to take the matter into their own hands. Michaelis conjectures that they were of the number of the *Sicarii*, or cut-throats, with which Judea then abounded. See Note on ch. xxi. 38. It is needless to remark that this was a most wicked oath. It was a deliberate purpose to commit murder; and it shows the desperate state of morals among the Jews at that time, and the infuriated malice of the people against the apostle.

13. Which had made this conspiracy. This oath (*συνμορία*), this agreement, or compact. This large number of desperate men, bound by so solemn an oath, would be likely to be successful; and the life of Paul was therefore in peculiar danger. The manner in which they purposed to accomplish their design is stated in ver. 15.

14. And they came, &c. Probably by a deputation. ¶ *To the chief priests and elders.* The members of the great council, or sanhedrim. It is probable that the application was made to the party of the Sadducees, as the Pharisees had shown their determination to defend Paul. They would have had no prospect of success had they attacked the castle, and they, therefore, devised this ingenious mode of obtaining access to Paul, where they might easily despatch him. ¶ *Under a great curse.* Greek, "We have anathematized ourselves with an anathema." We have made the vow as solemn as possible.

15. Ye, with the council. With the concurrence or request of the sanhedrim. It was only by such a request that they had any hope that the chief captain would remove Paul from the castle. ¶ *Signify to the chief captain.* Send a message or request to him. ¶ *That he bring him down unto you.* That he bring him from the castle to the usual place of the meet-

ing of the sanhedrim. As this was at some distance from the castle, or tower of Antonia, where Paul was, they supposed it would be easy to waylay him, and take his life. ¶ *To-morrow.* This is wanting in the Syriac, Vulgate, and Ethiopic versions. It is, however, probably the correct reading of the text, as it would be necessary to convene the council, and make the request of the tribune, which might require the whole of one day. ¶ *As though ye would inquire, &c.* This request appeared so reasonable that they did not doubt that the tribune would grant it to the council. And though it was obviously a false and wicked pretence, yet these conspirators knew the character of the persons to whom they addressed themselves so well, that they did not doubt that they would prevail on the council to make the request. Public justice must have been deeply fallen, when it was known that such an iniquitous request could be made with the certain prospect of success. ¶ *Or ever he come near.* Before he comes near to the sanhedrim. The great council will thus not be suspected of being privy to the deed. We will waylay him, and murder him *in the way.* The plan was well laid; and nothing but the interposition of Providence could have prevented its execution.

16. Paul's sister's son. This is all we know of the family of Paul. Nor do we know for what purpose he was at Jerusalem. It is possible that Paul might have a sister residing there; though, as Paul had been sent there formerly for his education, it seems more probable that this young man was sent there for the same purpose. ¶ *Entered into the castle.* Paul had the privileges of a Roman citizen, and as no well-founded charge had been laid against him, it is probable that he was not very closely confined, and that his friends might have free access to him.

17 Then ^a Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought *him* to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner ^b called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?

20 And he said, The Jews have ^c agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though

^a Prov.22.3. Matt.10.16. ^b c.23.17. Eph.3.1; 4.1. Phil.9. ^c ver.12.

17. *Called one of the centurions.* Who might at that time have had special charge of the castle, or been on guard. Paul had the most positive assurance that his life would be spared, and that he would yet see Rome; but he always understood the divine promises and purposes as being consistent with his own efforts, and with all proper measures of prudence and diligence in securing his own safety. He did not rest merely on the divine promise without any effort of his own; but he took encouragement from those promises to put forth his own exertions for security and for salvation.

18. *And prayed me.* And asked me.

19. *Took him by the hand.* As an expression of kindness and civility. He did it to draw him aside from the multitude, that he might communicate his message privately.

20. *And he said, &c.* In what way this young man had received intelligence of this, we can only conjecture. It is not improbable that he was a student under some one of the Jewish teachers, and that he might have learned it of him. It is not at all probable that the purpose of the forty men would be very closely kept. Indeed it is evident that *they* were not themselves very anxious about concealing their oath, as they mentioned it fully to the chief priests and elders. ver. 14.

21. *Waiting for a promise from thee.* Waiting for your consent to bring him down to them.

23. *And he called unto him two centuri-*

they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not thou yield ^d unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou* tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me.

23 And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten,

^d Ex.23.2.

ons, &c. Each centurion had under him one hundred men. The chief captain resolved to place Paul beyond the power of the Jews, and to protect him as became a Roman citizen. ¶ *Two hundred soldiers.* These foot-soldiers were designed only to guard Paul till he was safely out of Jerusalem. The horsemen only were intended to accompany him to Cesarea. See ver. 32. ¶ *And horsemen.* These were commonly attached to foot-soldiers. In this case, however, they were designed to attend Paul to Cesarea. ¶ *And spear-men.* Δεξιολόβοις. This word is found nowhere else in the New Testament, and occurs in no classic writer. It properly means *those who take, or apprehend by the right hand*; and might be applied to those who *apprehend prisoners*, or to those who hold a spear or dart in the right hand for the purpose of throwing it. Some have conjectured that it should be read δεξιολόβοις—those who cast or throw [a spear] with the right hand. So the Vulgate, the Syriac, and the Arabic understand it. They were probably those who were armed with spears or darts, and who attended on the tribune as a guard. ¶ *At the third hour of the night.* At nine o'clock. This was in order that it might be done with secrecy, and to elude the band of desperadoes that had resolved to murder Paul. If it should seem that this guard was very numerous for one man, it should be remembered, (1.) That the number of those who had conspired against him was also large, and,

and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

24 And provide *them* beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix *sendeth* greeting.

27 This man ^a 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 ^b when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

29 Whom I perceived to be ac-

a c.21.33; 24.7. b c.22.30.

cused of questions ^c of their law, but to have nothing ^d laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

30 And when ^e it was told me, how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave ^f commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what *they had* against him. Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

33 Who, when they came to Cesarea, and delivered the epistle ^g to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what

c c.18.15; 25.19. d c.26.31. e ver. 20,21. f 24.8; 25.6. g ver.25-30.

(2.) That they were men accustomed to scenes of blood, of desperate characters, and who had solemnly sworn that they would take his life. In order, therefore, to deter them effectually from attacking the guard, it was made very numerous and strong, and nearly five hundred men were appointed to guard Paul as he left Jerusalem.

24. *And provide them beasts.* One for Paul, and one for each of his attendants. The word translated *beasts* (ζῴων) is of a general character, and may be applied either to horses, to camels, or to asses. The latter were most commonly employed in Judea. ¶ *Unto Felix the governor.* The governor of Judea. His place of residence was Cesarea, about sixty miles from Jerusalem. See Note, ch. viii. 40. His name was Antonius Felix, and was a freedman of Antonia, the mother of the emperor Claudius. He was high in the favour of Claudius, and was made by him governor of Judea. Josephus calls him Claudius Felix. He had married three wives in succession that were of royal families, one of whom was Drusilla, afterwards mentioned in ch. xxiv.

24. who was sister to king Agrippa. Tacitus (Hist. v. 9) says, that he governed with all the authority of a king, and the baseness and insolence of a slave. "He was an unrighteous governor, a base, mercenary, and bad man." (Clarke.) See

his character further described in the Note on ch. xxiv. 25.

26. *Unto the most excellent governor Felix.* The most honoured, &c. This was a mere title of office ¶ *Greeting.* A term of salutation in an epistle wishing health, joy, and prosperity.

27. *Should have been killed of them.* Was about to be killed by them. The life of Paul had been twice endangered in this manner. ch. xxi. 30; xxiii. 10. ¶ *With an army.* With a band of soldiers. ver. 10.

29. *Questions of their law.* So he understood the whole controversy to be. ¶ *Worthy of death.* By the Roman law. He had been guilty of no crime against the Roman people. ¶ *Or of bonds.* Of chains, or of confinement.

31. *To Antipatris.* This town was anciently called Cafar-Saba. Josephus says (Antiq. xiii. 23.), that it was about seventeen miles from Joppa. It was about twenty-six miles from Cesarea, and of course about thirty-five from Jerusalem. Herod the Great changed its name to Antipatris, in honour of his father Antipater. It was situated in a fine plain, and watered with many springs and fountains.

32. *They left the horsemen.* As they were then beyond the danger of the conspirators, the soldiers who had guarded them thus far returned to Jerusalem.

34. *Of what province he was.* Greek,

province he was. And when he understood that *he was* of Cilicia; ^a

35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers ^b are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in ^c Herod's judgment-hall.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AND after five days, Ananias ^d the high-priest descended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator

^a c. 21. 39. ^b c. 24. 1, &c. 25. 16. ^c Matt. 27. 27.
^d c. 23. 2; 25. 2.

Of what heparchy (ἑπαρχίας) he was. He knew from the letter of Lysias that he was a Roman, but he was not informed of what place or province he was. This he doubtless did in order to ascertain whether he properly belonged to his jurisdiction. Roman provinces were districts of country which were intrusted to the jurisdiction of procurators. How far the jurisdiction of Felix extended is not certainly known. It appears, however, that it included Cilicia. ¶ *Was of Cilicia.* Tarsus, the birth-place of Paul, was in this province. ch. xxi. 39.

35. *In Herod's judgment-hall.* Greek, In the pretorium of Herod. The word here used denoted formerly the *tent* of the Roman prætor; and as that was the place where justice was administered, it came to be applied to halls, or courts of justice. This had been reared probably by Herod the Great as his palace, or as a place for administering justice. It is probable also, that prisons, or places of security, would be attached to such places.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1. *And after five days.* This time was occupied, doubtless, in their receiving the command to go to Cesarea, and in making the necessary arrangements. This was the twelfth day after his arrival at Jerusalem. See ver. 11. ¶ *Ananias, the high-priest.* See Note, ch. xxiii. 2. ¶ *Descended.* Came down from Jerusalem. This was the usual language when a departure from Jerusalem was spoken of. See Note, ch. xv. 1. ¶ *With a certain orator named Tertullus.* Appointed to accuse Paul. This is a Roman name, and this man was doubtless a Roman. As the Jews were, to a great extent, ignorant of the Roman customs and laws, and of their mode of administering justice, it is not improbable that they were in the habit of employing Roman lawyers to plead their causes. ¶ *Who informed the governor against Paul.* Who acted as the accuser,

named Tertullus, who informed ^e the governor against Paul.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse *him*, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds ^f are done unto this nation by thy providence,

3 We accept *it* always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

^e Ps. 11. 2. ^f Ps. 12. 2.

or who managed their cause before the governor.

2. *And when he was called forth.* When Paul was called forth from prison. See ch. xxiii. 35. ¶ *We enjoy great quietness.* This was said in the customary style of flatterers and orators, to conciliate his favour, and is strikingly in contrast with the more honest, and straightforward introduction in the reply of Paul. ver. 10. Though it was said for flattery, and though Felix was in many respects an unprincipled man, yet it was true that his administration had been the means of producing much peace and order in Judea, and that he had done many things that tended to promote their welfare. In particular, he had arrested a band of robbers, with Eleazar at their head, whom he had sent to Rome to be punished (Jos. Ant. b. xx. ch. viii.); he had arrested the Egyptian false prophet, who had led out four thousand men into the wilderness, and who threatened the peace of Judea (see Note, ch. xxii. 38); and he had repressed a sedition which arose between the inhabitants of Cesarea and of Syria. Jos. Jewish Wars, b. ii. ch. xiii. § 2. ¶ *Very worthy deeds.* Acts that tended much to promote the peace and security of the people. He referred to those which have just been mentioned as having been accomplished by Felix, particularly his success in suppressing riots and seditions - and as, in the view of the Jews, the case of Paul was another instance of a similar kind, he appealed to him with the more confidence that he would suppress that also. ¶ *By thy providence.* By thy foresight, skill, vigilance, prudence.

3. *We accept it always.* We admit that it is owing to your vigilance, and we accept your interposition to promote peace, with gratitude. ¶ *Always, and in all places.* Not merely in your presence, but we always acknowledge that it is owing to your vigilance that the land is secure.

4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, ^a and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

6 Who also hath gone about to profane ^b the temple: whom we

^a Luke 23.2. c.6.13; 16.20; 17.6; 21.28. 1Pet.2.12,19. b c.19.37; 21.28.

“What we now do in your presence, we do also in your absence; we do not commend you merely when you are present.” (*Wetstein.*) ¶ *Most noble Felix.* This was the title of office. ¶ *With thankfulness.* In this, there was probably sincerity, for there was no doubt that the peace of Judea was owing to Felix. But at the same time that he was an energetic and vigilant governor, it was also true that he was proud, and avaricious, and cruel. Josephus charges him with injustice and cruelty in the case of Jonathan, the high-priest (*Ant. b. xx. ch. viii. § 5*); and Tacitus (*Hist. b. v. ch. 9*), and Suetonius (*Life of Claudius, ch. 28*), concur in the charge.

4. *Be not further tedious unto thee.* By taking up your time with an introduction, and with commendation.

5. *We have found this man a pestilent fellow.* Δοιμὸν. This word is commonly applied to a plague, or pestilence, and then to a man who corrupts the morals of others, or who is turbulent, and an exciter of sedition. Our translation somewhat weakens the force of the original expression. Tertullus did not say that he was a pestilent fellow, but that he was the very pestilence itself. In this he referred to their belief, that he had been the cause of extensive disturbances every where among the Jews. ¶ *And a mover of sedition.* An exciter of tumult. This they pretended he did by preaching doctrines contrary to the laws and customs of Moses, and exciting the Jews to tumult and disorder. ¶ *Throughout the world.* Throughout the Roman empire, and thus leading the Jews to violate the laws, and to produce tumults, riots, and disorder. ¶ *And a ringleader.* Πρωτοστάτην. This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is properly a military word, and denotes one who stands first in an army, a standard-bearer, a leader, or commander. The meaning is, that Paul had been

took, and would have judged ^c according to our law:

7 But the chief ^d captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,

8 Commanding his accusers ^e to come unto thee: by examining of whom, thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him.

c Jno.13.31.

d c.21.33.

e c.23.30.

so active, and so prominent in preaching the gospel, that he had been a leader or the principal person in extending the sect of the Nazarenes. ¶ *Of the sect.* The original word here (αἰρεσισεως) is the word from which we have derived the term *heresy*. It is, however, properly translated *sect*, or *party*, and should have been so translated in ver. 14. See Note, ch. v. 17. ¶ *Of the Nazarenes.* This was the name usually given to Christians by way of contempt. They were so called because Jesus was of Nazareth.

6. *Who also hath gone about.* Who has endeavoured. ¶ *To profane the temple.* This was a serious, but unfounded charge. It arose from the gross calumny of the apostle, when they pretended that he had introduced Greeks into that sacred place. ch. xxi. 28. To this charge the apostle replies in ver. 18. ¶ *And would have judged.* That is, would have condemned and punished. ¶ *According to our law.* Their law, which forbade the introduction of strangers into the temple.

7. *But the chief captain, &c.* Tertullus pretends that they would have judged Paul righteously, if Lysias had not interposed; but the truth was, that without regard to law or justice, they would have murdered him on the spot.

8. *Commanding his accusers, &c.* ch. xxiii. 30. ¶ *By examining of whom.* That is, the Jews who were then present. Tertullus presented them as his witnesses of the truth of what he had said. It is evident that we have here only the summary or outline of the speech which Tertullus made. It is incredible that a Roman rhetorician would have, on such an occasion, delivered an address so brief, so meagre, and so destitute of display as this. But it is doubtless a correct summary of his address, and contains the leading points of the accusation. It is customary for the sacred writers, as for other writers, to give only the outline of discourses

9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I

¹ Felix, made Procurator over Judea, A. D. 53.

and arguments. Such a course was inevitable, unless the New Testament had been swelled to wholly undue proportions.

9. *And the Jews also assented.* The Jews who had accompanied Tertullus to Cesarea. They had gone as the accusers of Paul, and they bore testimony, when called upon, to the truth of all that the orator had said. Whether they were examined individually or not, is not declared. In whatever way their testimony was arrived at, they confirmed unanimously the accusation which he had brought against Paul.

10. *Had beckoned unto him to speak.* Either by a nod or by the hand. ¶ *Hast been of many years.* Felix and Cumanus had been joint-governors of Judea; but after Cumanus had been condemned for his bad administration of the affairs, the government fell entirely into the hands of Felix. This was about seven years before Paul was arraigned before him, and might be called *many years*, as he had been long enough there to become acquainted with the customs and habits of the Jews; and it might also be called *long* in comparison with the short time which any of his immediate predecessors had held the office. See Josephus, Ant. b. xx. ch. vi, vii. ¶ *A judge.* This word is evidently used here in the sense of *magistrate*, or one appointed to administer the affairs of government. To determine litigated matters was, however, one part of his office. It is remarkable that Paul did not begin his speech as Tertullus had done, by any flattering address, or by any of the arts of rhetoric. He founded his plea on the justice of his cause, and on the fact, that Felix had had so much experience in the affairs of Judea that he was well qualified to understand the merits of the case, and to judge impartially. Paul was well acquainted with his character (see Note, ch. xxiv. 25), and would not by flattering words declare that which was not strictly true. ¶ *I do the more cheerfully, &c.* Since you are so well acquainted with the customs and habits of the Jews, I the more readily submit the case to your disposal. This address indicated great confidence in the justice of his cause;

know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer ^a for myself:

11 Because that thou mayest

^a 1Pet. 3.15.

and was the language of a man, bold, fearless, and conscious of his innocence.

11. *Because that thou mayest understand.* Gr. 'Thou being able to know.' That is, he could understand or know, by taking the proper evidence. Paul does not mean to say that Felix could understand the case, *because* he had been many years a judge of that nation. That fact would qualify him to judge correctly, or to understand the customs of the Jews. But the fact, that he had been but twelve days in Jerusalem, and had been orderly and peaceable there, Felix could ascertain only by the proper testimony. The first part of Paul's defence (ver. 11—13) consists in an express denial of what they alleged against him. ¶ *Are yet but twelve days.* Beza reckons these twelve days in this manner: The first was that on which he came to Jerusalem. ch. xxi. 15. The second he spent with James and the apostles. ch. xxi. 18. Six days were spent in fulfilling his vow. ch. xxi. 21. 26. On the ninth day the tumult arose, being the seventh day of his vow, and on this day he was rescued by Lysias. ch. xxi. 27; xxii. 29. The tenth day he was before the sanhedrim. ch. xxii. 30; xxiii. 10. On the eleventh the plot was laid to take his life, and on the same day, at evening, he was removed to Cesarea. The days on which he was confined at Cesarea are not enumerated, since his design in mentioning the number of days was, to show the improbability that, in that time, he had been engaged in producing a tumult; and it would not be pretended that he had been so engaged while confined in a prison at Cesarea. The defence of Paul here is, that but twelve days occurred from the time that he went to Jerusalem till he was put under the custody of Felix; and that during *so short a time* it was wholly improbable that he would have been able to excite sedition. ¶ *For to worship.* This farther shows that the design of Paul was not to produce sedition. He had gone up for the peaceful purpose of devotion, and not to produce riot and disorder. That this was his design in going to Jerusalem, or at least a part of his purpose, is indicated by the passage in Acts xx. 16. It should be observed, however, that our translation con-

understand that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to ^a Jerusalem for to worship.

12 And they neither ^b found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city.

a c.21.15.

b c.25.8; 28.17.

veys an idea which is not necessarily in the Greek—that this was the *design* of his going to Jerusalem. The original is, ‘Since I went up to Jerusalem *worshipping*’ (προσκυνῶσων); i. e. he was actually engaged in devotion when the tumult arose. But his main design in going to Jerusalem was, to convey to his suffering countrymen there the benefactions of the Gentile churches. See ver. 17. Rom. xv. 25, 26.

12. And they neither found me, &c. The first charge of Tertullus against Paul was (ver. 5), that he was “a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition.” The charge of his being a *pest* was so general, that Paul did not think it necessary to attempt to refute it. To the *specification*, that he was a mover of sedition, he replies by a firm denial, and by a solemn declaration that they had not found him in any synagogue, or in the city, or in the temple, either disputing or exciting a tumult. His conduct there had been entirely peaceable; and they had no right to suppose that it had been otherwise any where.

13. Neither can they prove the things, &c. That is, that I am a mover of sedition, or a disturber of the peace of the people. This appeal he boldly makes; he challenges investigation; and as they did not offer to specify any acts of disorder or tumult excited by him, this charge falls of course.

14. But this I confess, &c. The next specification in the charge of Tertullus was (ver. 5), that he was “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.” To this, Paul replies in this, and the two following verses. Of this reply we may observe, (1.) That he does not stoop to notice the contempt implied in the use of the word *Nazarenes*. He was engaged in a more important business than to contend about the *name* which they chose to give to Christians. (2.) He admits that he belonged to that sect or class of people. That he was a Christian, he neither denied, nor was disposed to deny. (3.) He

13 Neither can they prove ^c the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so ^d worship I the God of ^e my fathers, believing all things which are ^f written in the law and ^g the prophets;

c 1Pet.3.16. d Mic.4.5. e 2Tim.1.3. f Luke 24.27. c.26.22; 28.23. g Matt.22.40. Luke 16.16. Jno.1.45. c.13.15. Rom.3.21.

maintains that in this way he is still worshipping the God of his fathers. Of this, the fact that he was engaged in worship *in the temple*, was sufficient proof. (4.) He shows them that he believed only what was written in the law and the prophets; that this involved the main doctrine of their religion—the hope of the resurrection of the dead (ver. 15); and that it was his constant and earnest desire to keep a pure conscience in all things. ver. 16. These are the points of his defence to this second charge, and we shall see that they fully meet and dispose of the accusation. ¶ *After the way*. After the manner or mode of worship. ¶ *Which they call heresy*. This translation does not express to us the force of the original. We have attached to the word *heresy* an idea which is not conveyed by the Greek word, and now commonly understand by it, *error of doctrine*. In Paul’s answer here, there is an explicit reference to their charge, which does not appear in our version. The charge of Tertullus was, that he was the ringleader of the *sect* (της αἰρέσεως) of the Nazarenes. ver. 5. To this, Paul replies, ‘After the way which they call *sect* (αἵρεσις), not *error of doctrine*, but after a way which they maintain is producing *division* or *schism*) so worship I the God of my fathers.’ Paul was not ashamed to be called a follower of that *sect* or *party* among the Jewish people. Nor should we be ashamed to worship God in a mode that is called *heresy* or *schism*, if we do it in obedience to conscience and to God. ¶ *So worship I*. I continue to worship. I have not departed from the characteristic of the Jewish people, the proper and public acknowledgment of the God of the Jews. ¶ *The God of my fathers*. My fathers’ God; Jehovah; the God whom my Jewish ancestors adored. There is something very touching in this, and fitted to find its way to the heart of a Jew. He had introduced no new object of worship (comp. Deut. xiii. 1—5); he had not become a follower of a false or foreign God; and *this* fact

15 And have hope ^a toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection ^b of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

16 And herein do I exercise my-

^a c.23.6, &c. 26.6,7; 28,20, &c.

^b Dan.12.2. Jno.5.

28,29. 1Cor.15.12-27. Rom.20.6,13.

was really a reply to their charge, that he was setting up a new *sect* in religion. The same thing Paul affirms of himself in 2Tim. i. 3: "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with a pure conscience." ¶ *Believing all things, &c.* Particularly respecting the Messiah. So he more fully explains his meaning in his speech before king Agrippa. ch. xxvi. 23. ¶ *In the law and in the prophets.* Commanded in the law of Moses, and foretold by the prophets. That Paul had ever disbelieved any of these things, they could not prove; and his whole course had shown that he fully credited the sacred records. Most of his arguments in defending Christianity had been drawn from the Jewish writings.

15. *And have hope toward God.* Having a hope of the resurrection of the dead, which arises from the promises of God. ¶ *Which they themselves, &c.* That is, the Pharisees. Perhaps he designated in this remark the Pharisees who were present. He held nothing in this great cardinal point, which they did not also hold. For the reasons why Paul introduced this point so prominently, and the success of thus introducing it, see Note on ch. xxiii. 1—9. ¶ *Both of the just, and of the unjust.* Of the righteous and the wicked; that is, of all the race. As *they* held this, they could not arraign him for holding it also.

16. *And herein.* In this, or for this purpose. ¶ *Do I exercise myself.* ἄσκησιν. I accustom or employ myself; I make it my constant aim and endeavour. It is the purpose of my constant study. Paul often appeals to his conscientiousness as the leading habit of his life. Even before his conversion he endeavoured to act according to the dictates of conscience. See Acts xxvi. 9. Comp. Phil. iii. 5, 6. ¶ *To have always a conscience, &c.* To do that which is right, so that my conscience shall approve of it, and never reproach me. ¶ *Void of offence.* ἄπεροσκόπον. That which is inoffensive, or which does not cause one to stumble or fall. He means, that he endeavoured to keep his conscience so enlightened and pure in regard to duty, and that he acted

self, to have ^c always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.

17 Now after many years, I came ^d to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

^c c.23.1.

^d c.11.29,30; 20.16. Rom.15.25

according to its dictates in such a way that his conduct should not be displeasing to God, or injurious to man. To have such a conscience implies two things. (1.) That it be enlightened or properly informed in regard to truth and duty and, (2.) That that which is made known to be right should be honestly and faithfully performed. Without these two things, no man can have a conscience that shall be inoffensive and harmless. ¶ *Toward God.* In an honest endeavour to discharge all the duties of public and private worship, and to do constantly what he requires. In believing all that he has spoken; doing all that he requires; and offering to him the service which he approves. ¶ *Toward men.* In endeavouring to meet all the demands of justice and mercy; to advance their knowledge, happiness, and salvation; so that I may look back on my life with the reflection that I have done all that I ought to have done, and all that I could do, to promote the welfare of the whole human family. What a noble principle of conduct was this! How devoted, and how pure! How unlike the conduct of those who live to gratify debasing sensual appetites, or for gold or honour; and who pass their lives in such a manner as to offer the grossest offence to God, and to do the most injury to man! The great and noble aim of Paul was to be pure; and no slander of his enemies, no trials, persecutions, or perils, and no pains of dying could take away the approving voice of conscience. Alike in his travels, and in his persecutions; among friends and foes; when preaching in the synagogue, the city, or the desert; or when defending himself before governors and kings, he had this testimony of a self-approving mind. Happy they who thus frame their lives. And happy will be the end of a life where this has been the grand object of the journey through this world.

17. *Now after many years.* After many years absence. Paul here commences a reply to the charges of Tertullus, that he had endeavoured to profane the temple ver. 6. He begins, by saying that his

18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult:

19 Who ought to have been here ^a before thee, and object, if they had aught against me.

20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil-

^a c. 25. 16.

design in coming up to Jerusalem was, to bring to them needed aid in a time of distress. It would be absurd to suppose, therefore, that his object in coming was to violate the customs of the temple, and to defile it. ¶ *I came to bring.* See ch. xi. 29, 30. Note, Rom. xv. 25, 26. ¶ *Alms. Charities;* the gift of the churches. ¶ *To my nation.* Not to *all* the nation; but to the poor saints or Christians who were in Judea, and who were suffering much by persecutions and trials. ¶ *And offerings.* The word used here properly denotes an offering or gift of any kind; but it is usually applied to an oblation, or offering made to God in the temple—a thank-offering, a sacrifice. This is probably its meaning here. He came to bring aid to his needy countrymen, and an offering to God; and it was, therefore, no part of his purpose to interfere with, or to profane the worship of the temple.

18. *Certain Jews from Asia.* ch. xxi. 27. ¶ *Found me purified in the temple.* ch. xxi. 26, 27. They found me engaged in the sacred service of completing the observance of my vow. ¶ *Neither with multitude.* Not having introduced a multitude with me—in a quiet and peaceful manner.

19. *Who ought to have been here, &c.* They were the proper witnesses; as they had stayed away, it showed that they were not prepared to undergo a strict examination. Paul, therefore, justly complains that the very persons who alone *could* testify against him were absent, and showed that there was really no well-founded charge against him. They alone could testify as to any thing that occurred in the temple; and as *they* were not present, that charge ought to be dismissed.

20. *Or else.* Since they are not here to witness against me in regard to what occurred in the temple, let these here present bear witness against me, if they can, in regard to *any other part* of my conduct. This was a bold appeal, and it showed his full consciousness of inno-

doing in me, while I stood before the council;

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question by you this day.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect know-

cence. ¶ *Let these same here say.* The Jews who are here present. ¶ *Any evil-doing.* Any improper conduct, or any violation of the law. ¶ *While I stood before the council.* The sanhedrim. ch. xxiii. 1—10. As they were present there, Paul admits that they were competent to bear witness to his conduct on that occasion; and calls upon them to testify, if they could, to any impropriety in his conduct.

21. *Except it be for this one voice.* For this one expression, or declaration. This was what Paul had said before the council—the *main* thing on which he had insisted, and he calls on them to testify to this, and to show, if they could, that in this declaration he had been wrong. Chubb, and other infidels have supposed that Paul here acknowledges that he was *wrong* in the declaration which he made, when he said, that he was called in question for the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (ch. xxiii. 6), and his conscience reproached him for appearing to be time-serving, and for concealing the true cause of offence against him; and for attempting to take advantage of their divisions of sentiment, and endeavouring to produce discord in the council. But against this interpretation we may urge the following considerations: (1.) Paul wished to fix their attention on the *main* thing which he had said before the council. (2.) It was true, as has been shown on the passage (xxiii. 1—10), that this was the principal doctrine which Paul had been defending. (3.) If they were prepared to witness against him for holding and teaching the resurrection of the dead as a false or evil doctrine, he called on them to do it. As this had been the *only* thing which they had witnessed before the council, he calls on them to testify to what they knew only, and to show if they could, that this was wrong. ¶ *Touching the resurrection, &c.* Respecting the resurrection. ch. xxiii. 6.

22. *Having more perfect knowledge of that way.* Our translation of this verse

ledge of *that way*, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias ^a the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

23 And he commanded a centu-

^a ver. 7.

is very obscure, and critics are divided about the proper interpretation of the original. Many (Erasmus, Luther, Michaelis, Morus, &c.) render it, 'although he had a more perfect knowledge of the Christian doctrine than Paul's accusers had, yet he deferred the hearing of the cause till Lysias had come down.' They observe that he might have obtained this knowledge, not only from the letter of Lysias, but from public rumour, as there were doubtless Christians at Cesarea. They suppose that he deferred the cause, either with the hope of receiving a bribe from Paul (comp. ver. 26), or to gratify the Jews with his being longer detained as a prisoner. Others, among whom are Beza, Grotius, Rosenmuller, and Doddridge, suppose that it should be rendered, 'he deferred them, and said, after I have been more accurately informed concerning this way, when Lysias has come down, I will hear the cause.' This is doubtless the true interpretation of the passage, and it is rendered more probable by the fact that Felix sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith of Christ (ver. 24), evidently with a design to make himself better acquainted with the charges against him, and the nature of his belief. ¶ *Of that way.* Of the Christian religion. This expression is repeatedly used by Luke to denote the Christian doctrine. Note, ch. ix. 2. ¶ *He deferred them.* He put them off; he postponed the decision of the case; he adjourned the trial. ¶ *When Lysias, &c.* Lysias had been acquainted with the excitement and its causes, and Felix regarded him as an important witness in regard to the true nature of the charges against Paul. ¶ *I will know the uttermost, &c.* I shall be fully informed and prepared to decide the cause.

23. *And he commanded, &c.* It is evident from this verse, that Felix was disposed to show Paul all the favours that were consistent with his safe keeping. He esteemed him to be a persecuted man, and doubtless regarded the charges against him as entirely malicious. What was Felix's *motive* in this cannot be certainly known. It is not improbable, how-

ever, that he detained him, (1.) To gratify the Jews by keeping him in custody as if he were guilty; and, (2.) That he hoped the friends of Paul would give him money to release him. Perhaps it was for this purpose that he gave orders that his friends should have free access to him, that thus Paul might be furnished with the means of purchasing his freedom.

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla,

^b c. 27.3; 28.16.

ever, that he detained him, (1.) To gratify the Jews by keeping him in custody as if he were guilty; and, (2.) That he hoped the friends of Paul would give him money to release him. Perhaps it was for this purpose that he gave orders that his friends should have free access to him, that thus Paul might be furnished with the means of purchasing his freedom.

24. *Felix came, with his wife Drusilla.* Drusilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa the elder, and was engaged to be married to Epiphanes, the son of king Antiochus, on condition that he would embrace the Jewish religion; but as he afterwards refused to do that, the contract was broken off. Afterwards she was given in marriage, by her brother Agrippa the younger, to Azizus king of Emesa, upon his consent to be circumcised. When Felix was governor of Judea, he saw Drusilla, and fell in love with her, and sent to her Simon, one of his friends, a Jew, by birth a Cyprian, who pretended to be a magician, to endeavour to persuade her to forsake her husband, and to marry Felix. Accordingly, in order to avoid the envy of her sister Bernice, who treated her ill on account of her beauty, "she was prevailed on," says Josephus, "to transgress the laws of her forefathers, and to marry Felix." Josephus, *Antiq. b. xx. ch. vii. § 1, 2.* She was, therefore, living in adultery with him, and this was probably the reason why Paul dwelt in his discourse before Felix particularly on "temperance," or chastity. Note, ver. 25. ¶ *He sent for Paul, and heard him.* Perhaps he did this, in order to be more fully acquainted with the case which was submitted to him. It is possible also that it might have been to gratify his wife, who was a Jewess, and who doubtless had a desire to be acquainted with the principles of this new sect. It is certain also that one object which Felix had in this, was to let Paul see how dependent he was on him, and to induce him to purchase his liberty. ¶ *Concerning the faith in Christ.* Concerning the Christian religion. Faith in Christ is

which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

a Prov.16.12. Jer.22.15-17. Dan.4.27. Jno.16.8.
b Prov.31.4,5. Dan.5.1-4. Hos.7.5. 1Pet.4.4.

25 And as he reasoned of ^a righteousness, temperance, ^b and judgment ^c to come, Felix trembled, ^d

c Ps.50.3,4. Dan.12.2. Matt.25.31-46. 2Cor.5.10. Rev.20.12. d Ps.99.1. Is.32.11. Hab.3.16. Heb.4.1,12.

often used to denote the whole of Christianity, as it is the leading and characteristic feature of the religion of the gospel.

25. *And as he reasoned.* Greek, "And he discoursing." Διαλεγόμενου δὲ αὐτοῦ. No argument should be drawn from the word that is used here, to prove that Paul particularly appealed to *reason*, or that his discourse was *argumentative*. That it was so is, indeed, not improbable, from all that we know of the man, and from the topics on which he discoursed. But the word used here means simply, as he *discoursed*, and is applied usually to making a public address, to preaching, &c. in whatever way it is done. Acts xvii. 2; xviii. 4. 19; xix. 8, 9; xxiv. 12. Felix and Drusilla intended this as a matter of entertainment or amusement. Paul readily obeyed their summons, as it gave him an opportunity to preach the gospel to them; and as they desired his sentiments in regard to the faith in Christ, he selected those topics which were adapted to their condition, and stated those principles of the Christian religion which were fitted to arrest their attention, and lead them to repentance. Paul seized every opportunity of making known the gospel; and whether a prisoner or at liberty; whether before princes, governors, kings, or common people, was equally prepared to defend the pure and holy doctrines of the cross. His boldness in this instance is the more remarkable as he was dependent on Felix for his pardon. A time-server or an impostor would have chosen such topics as would have conciliated the favour of the judge, and procured his pardon. He would have flattered his vanity or palliated his vices. *But such an idea never seems to have occurred to Paul.* His aim was to defend the truth; and to save, if possible, the souls of Drusilla and of Felix. ¶ *Of righteousness.* Περὶ δικαιοσύνης. Of justice. Not of the justice of God particularly, but of the nature and requirements of justice in the relations of life, the relations which we sustain to God and to man. This was a proper topic with which to introduce his discourse, as it was the office of Felix to dispense justice between man and man; and as his administration was not remarkable for the exercise of that virtue. It is evident that he could be influenced by a

bribe (ver. 26), and it was proper for Paul to dwell on this as designed to show him the guilt of his life, and his danger of meeting the justice of a Being who cannot be bribed, but who will dispense equal justice alike to the great and the mean. That Paul dwelt also on the *justice* of God, as the moral governor of the world, may also be presumed. The apprehension of *that* justice, and the remembrance of his own guilty life, tended to produce the alarm of Felix, and to make him tremble. ¶ *Temperance.* ἐγκρατείας. The word *temperance* we now use commonly to denote moderation, or restraint in regard to eating and drinking, particularly to abstinence from the use of ardent spirits. But this is not its meaning here. There is no reason to suppose that Felix was *intemperate* in the use of intoxicating liquors. The original word here denotes a restraint of all the passions and evil inclinations; and may be applied to prudence, chastity, and moderation in general. The particular thing in the life of Felix which Paul had probably in view, was the indulgence of licentious desires, or incontinence. He was living in adultery with Drusilla; and for this, Paul wished doubtless to bring him to repentance. ¶ *And judgment to come.* The universal judgment; the judgment that was to come on all transgressors. On this topic Paul also dwelt when he preached before the Areopagus at Athens. Acts xvii. 31. These topics were admirably adapted to excite the alarm of both Felix and Drusilla. It evinced great boldness and faithfulness in Paul to select them; and the result showed that he correctly judged of the kind of truth which was adapted to alarm the fears of his guilty auditor. ¶ *Felix trembled.* In view of his past sins, and in the apprehension of the judgment to come. The Greek (ἐμφοβοῦς) does not denote that his body was agitated or shaken, but only that he was alarmed, or terrified. That such fear usually shakes the frame, we know; but it is not certain that the body of Felix was thus agitated. He was alarmed and terrified; and looked with deep apprehension to the coming judgment. This was a remarkable instance of the effect of truth on the mind of a man unaccustomed to such alarms, and unused to hear such

and answered, Go ^a thy way for this time; when I have a con-

^a Prov.1.24-32. Matt.22.5; 25.1-10.

truth. It shows the power of conscience, when thus under the preaching of a *prisoner*, the judge should be thrown into violent alarm. ¶ *And answered, Go thy way, &c.* How different is this answer from that of the jailor of Philippi when alarmed in a similar manner. *He* asked, "what must I do to be saved?" and was directed to him in whom he found peace from a troubled conscience. Acts xvi. 30, 31. Felix was troubled; but instead of asking what he should do, he sent the messenger of God away. He was evidently not prepared to break off his sins, and turn to God. He sought peace by sending away his reprover; and manifestly intended *then* to banish the subject from his mind. Yet, like others, he did not intend to banish it altogether. He looked forward to a time when he should be more at leisure; when the cares of office should press less heavily on his attention; or when he should be more disposed to attend to it. Thus multitudes, when they are alarmed, and see their guilt and danger, resolve to defer it to a more convenient time. One man is engaged in a career of pleasure, and it is not *now* a convenient time to attend to his soul's salvation. Another is pressed with business; with the cares of life; with a plan of gain; with the labours of office, or of a profession, and it is not *now* a convenient time for him to attend to religion. Another supposes that his time of life is not the most convenient. His youth he desires to spend in pleasure, and waits for a more convenient time in middle age. His middle life he spends in business, and the toils of the world, and *this* is not a convenient time. Such a period he expects then to find in old age. But as age advances, he finds an increasing disposition to defer it; he is still indisposed to attend to it; still in love with the world. Even old age is seldom found to be a convenient time to prepare for heaven; and it is deferred from one period of life to another, till death closes the scene.—It has been commonly supposed and said that Felix never found that more convenient time to call for Paul. That he did not embrace the Christian religion, and forsake his sins, is probable, nay, almost certain. But it is not true that he did not take an opportunity of hearing Paul further on the subject; for it is said that he sent for him

venient season, I will call for thee.
26 He hoped also that money ^b

^b Ex.23.8.

often, and communed with him. But though Felix found this opportunity, yet (1.) We have no reason to suppose that the *main thing*—the salvation of his soul, ever again occupied his attention. There is no evidence that he was again alarmed or awakened, or that he had any further solicitude on the subject of his sins. He had passed for ever the favourable time; the golden moments when he might have secured the salvation of his soul. (2.) Others have no right to suppose that their lives will be lengthened out that they may have *any* further opportunity to attend to the subject of religion. (3.) When a sinner is awakened, and sees his past sins, if he rejects the appeal to his conscience *then*, and defers it to a more convenient opportunity, he has no reason to expect that his attention will ever be again called with deep interest to the subject. He may live; but he may live without the strivings of the Holy Spirit. When a man has once deliberately rejected the offers of mercy; when he has trifled with the influences of the Spirit of God, he has no *right* or *reason* to expect that that Spirit will ever strive with him again. Such, we have too much reason to fear, was the case with Felix. Though he often saw Paul again, and "communed with him," yet there is no account that he was again alarmed or awakened. And thus sinners often attend on the means of grace after they have grieved the Holy Spirit; they listen to the doctrines of the gospel, they hear its appeals, and its warnings, but they have no feeling, no interest; and die in their sins. ¶ *A more convenient time.* Greek, 'Taking time.' I will take a time for this. ¶ *I will call for thee.* To hear thee further on this subject. This he did. ver. 26. It is remarkable that Drusilla was not alarmed. She was as much involved in guilt as Felix; but she, being a Jewess, had been accustomed to hear of a future judgment, until it caused in her mind no alarm. Perhaps also she depended on the rites and ceremonies of her religion as a sufficient expiation for her sins. She might have been resting on those false dependencies which go to free the conscience from a sense of guilt, and which thus beguile and destroy the soul.

26. *He hoped also.* He thought that by giving him access to his friends, and by often meeting him himself, and showing

should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

27 But after two years, Porcius

kindness, Paul might be induced to attempt to purchase his freedom with a bribe. ¶ *That money should have been given him of Paul.* That Paul would give him money to procure a release. This shows the character of Felix. He was desirous of procuring a bribe. Paul had proved his innocence, and should have been at once released. But Felix was influenced by avarice; and he therefore detained Paul in custody, with the hope that, wearied with confinement, he would seek his release by a bribe. But Paul offered no bribe. He knew what was justice; and he would not be guilty, therefore, of attempting to purchase what was his due, or of gratifying a man who prostituted his high office for the purpose of gain. The Roman governors in the provinces were commonly rapacious and avaricious, like Felix. They usually took the office for the purpose of its pecuniary advantage, and they consequently usually disregarded justice, and made the procuring of money their leading object. ¶ *He sent for him the oftener.* It may seem remarkable that he did not fear again being alarmed. But the hope of money overcame all this. And having once resisted the reasoning of Paul, and the strivings of the Spirit of God, he seems to have had no further alarm or anxiety. He could again hear the same man, and the same truth, unaffected. When sinners have once grieved God's Spirit, they often sit with unconcern under the same truth which once alarmed them, and become entirely hardened and unconcerned. ¶ *And communed with him.* And conversed with him.

27. *But after two years.* Paul was unjustly detained during all this time. The hope of Felix seems to have been to weary his patience, and induce him to purchase his freedom. ¶ *Came into Felix's room.* As governor. ¶ *And Felix willing to show the Jews a pleasure.* Desirous of pleasing them, even at the expense of justice. This shows the principle on which he acted. ¶ *Left Paul bound.* Left him in custody to the charge of his successor. His object in this was to conciliate the Jews; that is, to secure their favour, and to prevent them, if pos-

sible, from accusing him for the evils of his administration before the emperor. The account which Luke gives here coincides remarkably with that which Josephus has given. He says, that Porcius Festus was sent as successor to Felix by Nero. He does not indeed mention Paul, or say that Felix sought to conciliate the favour of the Jews. But he gives such an account as to make the statement by Luke *perfectly consistent* with his character while in office. He informs us that Felix was unpopular, and that there was reason to apprehend that the Jews would accuse him before the emperor; and, therefore, the statement in the Acts, that he would be willing to show the Jews a favour, is in perfect keeping with his character and circumstances, and is one of those *undesigned coincidences*, which show that the author of the Acts was fully acquainted with the circumstances of the time, and that his history is true. The account in Josephus is, that "when Porcius Festus was sent as successor to Felix by Nero, the principal inhabitants of Cesarea went up to Rome to accuse Felix; and he had been certainly brought to punishment, unless Nero had yielded to the importunate solicitations of his brother Pallas, who was at that time had in the greatest honour by him." Antiq. b. xx. ch. viii. § 9. The plan of Felix, therefore, in suppressing the enmity of the Jews, and conciliating their favour by injustice to Paul, did not succeed; and is one of those instances, so numerous in the world, where a man gains nothing by wickedness. He sought money from Paul by iniquity, and failed; he sought by injustice to obtain the favour of the Jews, and failed in that also. And the inference from the whole transaction is, that "honesty is the best policy," and that man in any office should pursue a course of firm, and constant, and undeviating integrity.

CHAPTER XXV.

NOW when Festus was come into the province, after three

a Mark 15.15. c.25.9.

CHAPTER XXV.

1. *Now when Festus was come.* Note, ch. xxiv. 27. ¶ *Into the province.* The province of Judea; for Judea at that time was a Roman province. ¶ *After three days.* Having remained three days at Cesarea. ¶ *He ascended.* This was

days he ascended from Cesarea to Jerusalem.

2 Then the high-priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying ^a wait in the way to kill him.

^a c.23.14 15.

the usual language which described a journey to Jerusalem. Thus the English people speak of going up to London, because it is the capital. See Note, ch. xv. 1. ¶ *To Jerusalem.* The governors of Judea at this time usually resided at Cesarea; but as Jerusalem had been the former capital; as it was still the seat of the religious solemnities; as the sanhedrim held its meetings there; and as the great, and rich, and learned men, and the priests resided there, it is evident that a full knowledge of the state of the province could be obtained only there. Festus therefore, having entered on the duties of his office, early went to Jerusalem to make himself acquainted with the affairs of the nation.

2. Then the high-priest. The high-priest at this time was Ismael, the son of Fabi. He had been promoted to that office by Agrippa. Josephus' Antiq. b. xx. ch. viii. § 8. It is probable, however, that the person here intended was Ananias, who had been high-priest, and who would retain the name. Notes, ch. xxiii. 2. Some MSS. read *high-priests* here in the plural number, and this reading is approved by Mill and Griesbach. There is, however, no improbability in supposing that the high-priest Ismael might have been also as much enraged against Paul as the others. ¶ *Informed him against Paul.* Informed him of the accusation against him; and doubtless endeavoured to prejudice the mind of Festus against him. They thus showed their unrelenting disposition. It might have been supposed that after two years this unjust prosecution would be abandoned and forgotten. But malice does not thus forget its object; and the spirit of persecution is not thus satisfied. It is evident that there was here every probability that injustice would be done to Paul, and that the mind of Festus would be biassed against him. He was a stranger to Paul, and to the embittered feelings of the Jewish character. He would wish to

4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*.

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

conciliate their favour on entering on the duties of his office. And a strong representation therefore, made by the chief men of the nation, would be likely to prejudice him violently against Paul, and to unfit him for the exercise of impartial justice.

3. And desired favour against him. Desired the favour of Festus, that they might accomplish their wicked purpose on Paul. ¶ *Would send for him to Jerusalem.* Probably under a pretence that he might be tried by the sanhedrim; or perhaps they wished Festus to hear the cause there, and to decide it while he was at Jerusalem. Their *real* motive is immediately stated. ¶ *Lying wait in the way to kill him.* That is, they would lie in wait, or they would employ a band of Sicarii, or assassins, to take his life on the journey. See Notes, ch. xxi. 38; xxiii. 12. It is altogether probable that if this request had been granted, Paul would have been killed. But God had promised him that he should bear witness to the truth at Rome (ch. xxiii. 11), and his providence was remarkable in thus influencing the mind of the Roman governor, and defeating the plans of the Jewish council.

4. But Festus answered, &c. What induced Festus to refuse their request, is not known. It is probable, however, that he was apprized that Paul was a Roman citizen, and that his case could not come before the Jewish sanhedrim, but must be heard by himself. As Cesarea was also at that time the residence of the Roman governor, and the place of holding the courts, and as Paul was lodged there safely, there did not appear any sufficient reason for removing him to Jerusalem for trial. Festus, however, granted them all that they could reasonably ask, and assured them that he should have a speedy trial.

5. Which among you are able. Enjoy all the advantages of just trial, and exhibit your accusations with all the learn-

6 And when he had tarried among them ¹ more than ten days, he went down unto Cesarea; and the next day sitting in the judgment-seat, commanded Paul to be brought.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which ^a they could not prove.

¹ or, as some copies read, *no more than eight or ten days.*

ing and talent in your power. This was all that they could reasonably ask at his hands.

6. *More than ten days.* See the margin. The Syriac reads it, 'eight or ten.' The Vulgate, 'not more than eight or ten.' The Coptic, 'eight or ten.' Griesbach supposes this to be the true reading, and has admitted it into the text. ¶ *Sitting in the judgment-seat.* On the tribunal; or holding a court for the trial of Paul. ¶ *Commanded Paul to be brought.* To be brought up for trial. He had been secured, but was placed in the care of a soldier, who was commanded to let him have all the pardon that was consistent with his security.

7. *Grievous complaints.* Heavy accusations. Doubtless the same with which they had charged him before Felix. ch. xxiv. 5, 6. Comp. ch. xxv. 19. ¶ *Which they could not prove.* ch. xxiv. 13, 19.

8. *While he answered, &c.* See this answer more at length in ch. xxiv. 10—21. As the accusations against him were the same now as then, he made to them the same reply.

9. *But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure.* Desirous of securing their favour, as he had just entered on his administration. Comp. ch. xxiv. 27. In this he evinced rather a desire of popularity than an inclination to do justice. Had he been disposed to do right at once, he would have immediately discharged Paul. Festus perceived that the case was one that did not come fairly within the jurisdiction of a Roman magistrate; that it pertained solely to the customs and questions among the Jews (ver. 18—20); and he therefore proposed that the case should be tried before *him* at Jerusalem. It is remarkable, however, that he had such a sense of justice, and law, as not to suffer the case to go out of his own

8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the laws of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cesar, have I offended any thing at all.

9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat, where I

^a Ps.35.11. Matt.5.11,12. c.24.5,13.

hands. He proposed still to hear the cause, but asked Paul whether he was willing that it should be tried at Jerusalem? As the question which he asked Paul, was one on which he was at liberty to take his own course, and as Paul had no reason to expect that his going to Jerusalem would facilitate the cause of justice, it is not remarkable that he declined the offer, as perhaps Festus supposed he would.

10. *Then said Paul, &c.* The reasons why Paul declined the proposal to be tried at Jerusalem are obvious. He had experienced so much violent persecution from his countrymen; and their minds were so full of prejudice, misconceptions, and enmity, that he had neither justice nor favour to hope at their hands. He knew too that they had formerly plotted against his life, and that he had been removed to Cesarea for the purpose of safety. It would be madness and folly to throw himself again into their hands, or to give them another opportunity to form a plan against his life. As he was, therefore, under no obligation to return to Jerusalem; and as Festus did not propose it because it could be supposed that justice would be promoted by it, but to gratify the Jews, Paul prudently declined the proposal, and appealed to the Roman emperor. ¶ *I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat.* The Roman emperors after Julius Cesar were all called Cesar; thus, Augustus Cesar, Claudius Cesar, &c., as all the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh, though they had each his proper name, as Pharaoh Necho, &c. The emperor at this time (A. D. 60) was Nero, one of the most cruel and impious men that ever sat on a throne. It was under him that Paul was afterwards beheaded. When Paul says, "I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat," he means to

ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

11 For if I be an offender, or

say that he regarded the tribunal before which he then stood, and on which Festus sat, as really the judgment-seat of Cesar. The procurator, or governor, held his commission from the Roman emperor, and it was, in fact, his tribunal. The *reason* why Paul made this declaration, may be thus expressed: 'I am a Roman citizen. I have a right to justice. I am under no obligation to put myself again in the hands of the Jews. I have a right to a fair and impartial trial; and I claim the protection and privileges which all Roman citizens have before their tribunals; the right of a fair and just trial.' It was, therefore, a severe rebuke of Festus for proposing to depart from the known justice of the Roman laws; and, for the sake of popularity, proposing to him to put himself in the hands of his enemies. ¶ *Where I ought to be judged.* Where I have a right to demand and expect justice. I have a right to be tried where courts are usually held, and according to all the forms of equity which are usually observed. ¶ *I have done no wrong.* I have not injured their persons, property, character, or religion. This was a bold appeal which his consciousness of innocence, and the whole course of proceedings enabled him to make, without the possibility of their gainsaying it. ¶ *As thou very well knowest.* Festus knew, probably, that Paul had been tried by Felix, and that nothing was proved against him. He had now seen the spirit of the Jews, and the cause why they arraigned him. He had given Paul a trial, and had called on the Jews to adduce their "able" men to accuse him, and after all, nothing had been proved against him. Festus *knew* therefore that he was innocent. This abundantly appears also from his own confession. ver. 18, 19. As he knew this, and as Festus was proposing to depart from the regular course of justice for the sake of popularity, it was proper for Paul to use the strong language of rebuke, and to claim what he knew Festus did not dare to deny him, the protection of the Roman laws. Conscious innocence may be bold; and Christians have a right to insist on impartial justice, and the protection of the laws. Alas, how many magistrates there have been like Festus, who, when

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

Christians have been arraigned before them, have been fully satisfied of their innocence, but who, for the sake of popularity, have departed from all the rules of law, and all the claims of justice.

11. *For if I be an offender.* If I have injured the Jews so as to deserve death. If it can be proved that I have done injury to any one. ¶ *I refuse not to die.* I have no wish to escape justice. I do not wish to evade the laws, or to take advantage of any circumstances to screen me from just punishment. Paul's whole course showed that this was the noble spirit which actuated him. No true Christian wishes to escape from the laws. He will honour them, and not seek to evade them. But, like other men, he has rights; and he may and should insist that justice should be done. ¶ *No man may deliver me unto them.* No man shall be allowed to do it. This bold and confident declaration Paul could make, because he knew what the law required, and he knew that Festus would not *dare* to deliver him up contrary to the law. Boldness is not incompatible with Christianity; and innocence, when its rights are invaded, is always bold. Jesus firmly asserted his rights when on trial (John xviii. 23), and no man is under obligation to submit to be trampled on by an unjust tribunal in violation of the laws. ¶ *I appeal unto Cesar.* I appeal to the Roman emperor, and carry my cause directly before him. By the Valerian, Porcian, and Sempronian laws, it had been enacted, that if any magistrate should be about to beat, or to put to death any Roman citizen, the accused could appeal to the Roman people, and this appeal carried the cause to Rome. The law was so far changed under the emperors, that the cause should be carried before the emperor, instead of the people. Every citizen had the right of this appeal; and when it was made, the accused was sent to Rome for trial. Thus Pliny (Ep. 10. 97) says, that those Christians who were accused, and who, being Roman citizens, appealed to Cesar, he sent to Rome to be tried. The reason why Paul made this appeal was, that he saw that justice would not be done him by the Roman governor. He had been tried by Felix, and justice had been denied him, and he was detained a prisoner

may deliver me unto them. I appeal ^a unto Cesar.

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cesar? unto Cesar shalt thou go.

a c.26.32.

in violation of law, to gratify the Jews; he had now been tried by Festus, and saw that he was pursuing the same course; and he resolved, therefore, to assert his rights, and remove the cause far from Jerusalem, and from the prejudiced men in that city, at once to Rome. It was in this mysterious way that Paul's long cherished desire to see the Roman church, and to preach the gospel there, was to be gratified. Comp. Note on Rom. i. 9—11. For this he had prayed long (Rom. i. 10; xv. 23, 24), and now at length this purpose was to be fulfilled. God answers prayer; but it is often in a way which we little anticipate. He so orders the train of events; he so places us amidst a press of circumstances, that the desire is granted in a way which we could never have anticipated, but which shows in the best manner that he is a hearer of prayer.

12. *When he had conferred with the council.* With his associate judges, or with those who were his counsellors in the administration of justice. They were made up of the chief persons, probably military as well as civil, who were about him, and who were his assistants in the administration of the affairs of the province. ¶ *Unto Cesar shalt thou go.* He was willing in this way to rid himself of this trial, and of the vexation attending it. He did not *dare* to deliver him to the Jews in violation of the Roman laws; and he was not willing to do justice to Paul, and thus make himself unpopular with the Jews. He was, therefore, probably rejoiced at the opportunity of thus freeing himself from all the trouble in the case, in a manner against which none could object.

13. *And after certain days, king Agrippa.* This Agrippa was the son of Herod Agrippa (Acts xii. 1), and great grandson of Herod the Great. His mother's name was Cypros. Josephus' Jewish Wars, b. ii. ch. xi. § 6. When his father died, he was at Rome with the emperor Claudius. Josephus says that the emperor was inclined to bestow upon him all his father's dominions, but was dissuaded by his ministers. The reason of this was that it

13 And after certain days, king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cesarea, to salute Festus.

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying,

was thought imprudent to bestow so large a kingdom on so young a man, and one so inexperienced. Accordingly, Claudius sent Cuspius Fadus to be Procurator of Judea, and of the entire kingdom. Josephus' Antiq. b. xix. ch. ix. § 2. When Herod, the brother of his father Agrippa the Great, died in the eighth year of the reign of Claudius, his kingdom—the kingdom of Chalcis, was bestowed by Claudius on Agrippa. Josephus' Antiq. b. xx. ch. v. § 2. Afterwards he bestowed on him the tetrarchy of Philip and Batanea, and added to it Trachonitis with Abila. Antiq. b. xx. ch. vii. § 1. After the death of Claudius, Nero his successor added to his dominions Julias in Perea, and a part of Galilee. Agrippa had been brought up at Rome; and was strongly attached to the Romans. When the troubles commenced in Judea which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, he did all that he could to preserve peace and order, but in vain. He afterwards joined his troops with those of the Romans, and assisted them at the destruction of Jerusalem. After the captivity of that city, he went to Rome with his sister Bernice, where he ended his days. He died at the age of seventy years, about A. D. 90. His manner of living with his sister, gave occasion to reports respecting him very little to his advantage. ¶ *And Bernice.* She was sister of Agrippa. She had been married to Herod, king of Chalcis, her own uncle by her father's side. After his death, she proposed to Polemon king of Pontus and part of Cilicia, that if he would become circumcised she would marry him. He complied, but she did not continue long with him. After she left him, she returned to her brother Agrippa with whom she lived in a manner such as to excite scandal. Josephus directly charges her with incest with her brother Agrippa. Antiq. b. xx. ch. vii. § 3. ¶ *To salute Festus.* To show him respect as the governor of Judea.

14. *Festus declared Paul's cause.* He did this, probably, because Agrippa being a Jew, would be supposed to be interested in the case. It was natural that this

There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix.

15 About whom, when ^a I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself con-

a ver. 2, 3.

trial should be a topic of conversation, and perhaps Festus might be disposed to ask what was proper to be done in such cases. ¶ *Left in bonds.* Greek, "a prisoner." δισμύσις. He was left in custody, probably in the keeping of a soldier. ch. xxiv. 23. 27.

15. *About whom, &c.* See ver. 1—5. ¶ *To have judgment against him.* To have him condemned.

16. *It is not the manner, &c.* He here states the reasons which he gave to the Jews for not delivering Paul into their hands. In ver. 4, 5. we have an account of the fact that he would not accede to the requests of the Jews; and he here states that the reason of his refusal was, that it was contrary to the Roman law. Appian in his Roman history says, "it is not their custom to condemn men before they are heard." Philo de Præsi. Rom. says the same thing. In Tacitus (Annal. ii.), it is said, "a defendant is not to be prohibited from adducing all things, by which his innocence may be established." It was for this, that the equity of the Roman jurisprudence was celebrated throughout the world. We may remark that it is a subject of sincere gratitude to the God of our nation, that this privilege is enjoyed in the highest perfection in this land. It is the privilege of every man here to be heard; to know the charges against him; to be confronted with the witnesses; to make his defence; and to be tried by the laws, and not by the passions and caprices of men. In this respect our jurisprudence surpasses all that Rome ever enjoyed; and is not inferior to that of the most favoured nation of the earth. ¶ *To deliver.* To give him up as a favour (χαριζέσθαι), to popular clamour and caprice. Yet our Saviour, in violation of the Roman laws, was thus given up by Pilate. Matt. xxvii.

cerning the crime laid against him.

17 Therefore when ^b they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth.

18 Against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:

19 But ^c had certain questions against him of their own supersti-

b ver. 6.

c c. 18. 15.

18—25. ¶ *Have the accusers face to face.* That he may know who they are, and hear their accusations, and refute them. Nothing contributes more to justice than this. Tyrants suffer men to be accused without knowing who the accusers are, and without an opportunity of meeting the charges. It is one great principle of modern jurisprudence, that the accused may know the accusers, and be permitted to confront the witnesses, and adduce all the testimony possible in his own defence. ¶ *And have license.* Greek, 'place of apology,' may have the liberty of defending himself.

17. *Therefore when they were come hither, &c.* See ver. 6.

18. *None accusation, &c.* No charge as I expected of a breach of the peace; of a violation of the Roman law; of atrocious crime. It was natural that Festus should suppose that they would accuse Paul of some such offence. He had been arraigned before Felix; had been two years in custody; and the Jews were exceedingly violent against him. All this, Festus would presume, must have arisen from some flagrant and open violation of the laws.

19. *But had certain questions.* Certain inquiries, or litigated and disputed subjects; certain points of dispute in which they differed. Ζητήματα τινα. ¶ *Of their own superstition.* Διςσιδαμονίως. This word properly denotes the worship, or fear of demons; but was applied by the Greeks and Romans to the worship of their gods. It is the same word which is used in Acts xvii. 22. where it is used in a good sense. See Note on that place. There are two reasons for thinking that Festus used the word here in a good sense, and not in the sense in which we use the word superstition. (1.) It was the word by which the worship of the Greeks and

tion, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

20 And because ¹ I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the ² hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cesar.

¹ or, I was doubtful how to inquire hereof. ² or, judgment.

Romans, and, therefore, of Festus himself, was denoted, and he would naturally use it in a similar sense in applying it to the Jews. He would wish simply to describe their worship in such language as he was accustomed to use when speaking of religion. (2.) He knew that Agrippa was a Jew. Festus would not probably speak of the religion of his royal guest as *superstition*, but would speak of it with respect. He meant, therefore, to say simply, that they had certain inquiries about their own *religion*; but accused him of no crime against the Roman laws. ¶ *And of one Jesus, which was dead.* Gr. 'Of one dead Jesus.' It is evident that Festus had no belief that Jesus had been raised up; and in this he would expect that Agrippa would concur with him. Paul had admitted that Jesus had been put to death; but he maintained that he had been raised from the dead. As Festus did not believe this, he spoke of it with the utmost contempt. 'They had a dispute about one dead Jesus, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.' In this manner a Roman magistrate could speak of the glorious truth of the Christian religion; and this shows the spirit with which the great mass of philosophers and statesmen regarded its doctrines.

20. *And because I doubted of such manner of questions.* See the margin. Because I hesitated about the right way of disposing of them; because I was ignorant of their nature and bearing, I proposed to go to Jerusalem, that the matter might be there more fully investigated. It is obvious, that if Paul was not found guilty of any violation of the laws, he should have been at once discharged. Some interpreters understand this as affirming that he was not satisfied about the question of Paul's innocence, or certain whether he ought to be set at liberty or not.

22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To-morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great ^a pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul ^b was brought forth.

24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here

^a Ezek. 7.24.

^b c. 9.15.

21. *But when he had appealed.* ver. 11 ¶ *To be reserved.* To be kept; not to be tried at Jerusalem, but to be sent to Rome for trial. ¶ *Unto the hearing.* Margin, "the judgment." That Augustus might hear and decide the cause. ¶ *Of Augustus.* The reigning emperor at this time was Nero. The name *Augustus* (Σεβαστος) properly denotes that which is *venerable*, or worthy of honour and reverence. It was first applied to Cesar Octavianus, who was the Roman emperor in the time when our Saviour was born, and who is usually called Augustus Cesar. But the title continued to be used of his successors in office, as denoting the veneration or reverence which was due to the rank of emperor.

22. *Then Agrippa said, &c.* Agrippa doubtless had heard much of the fame of Jesus, and of the new sect of Christians; and probably he was induced by mere curiosity to hear what Paul could say in explanation and defence of the doctrine of Christianity. This wish of Agrippa gave occasion to the noblest defence which was ever made before any tribunal, and to as splendid eloquence as can be found any where in any language. See ch. xxvi.

23. *With great pomp.* Gr. "With much phantasy" (φαντασιος); with much show, parade, and splendour. It was an occasion on which he could exhibit much of the splendour of royalty, and he chose to do it. ¶ *Into the place of hearing.* The court-room; or the place where the judges heard and tried causes. ¶ *With the chief captains.* Gr. The chiliarchs; the commanders of a thousand men. It means here, that the military officers were assembled. ¶ *The principal men of the city.* The civil officers, or the men of reputation and influence.

24. *Have dealt with me.* Have appeared

present with us, ye see this man, about whom all ^a the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and *also* here, crying that ^b he ought not to live any longer.

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing ^c worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed ^d to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

a ver. 3, 7.
d ver. 11, 12.

b c. 22, 22.

c c. 23, 9, 29; 26, 31.

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

27 For ^e it seemeth to me unreasonable, to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

e Prov. 18. 13. Jno. 7. 51.

before me, desiring me to try him. They have urged me to condemn him, ¶ *Crying out*, &c. Comp. ch. xxii. 22. They had sought that he should be put to death.

26. *Of whom.* Respecting his character, opinions, manner of life; and respecting the charges against him. ¶ *No certain thing.* Nothing definite, and well established. They had not accused Paul of any crime against the Roman laws; and Festus professes himself too ignorant of the customs of the Jews to inform the emperor distinctly of the nature of the charges, and the subject of trial. ¶ *Unto my lord.* To the emperor; to Cesar. This name *Lord*, the emperors Augustus and Tiberius had rejected, and would not suffer it to be applied to them. Suetonius (*Life of Augustus*, v. 53.) says "the appellation of Lord he always abhorred as abominable and execrable." See also Suetonius' *Life of Tiberius*, v. 27. The emperors that succeeded them, however, admitted the title, and suffered themselves to be called by this name. Nothing would be more satisfactory to Nero, the reigning emperor, than this title. ¶ *I might have somewhat to write.* As Agrippa was a Jew, and was acquainted with the customs and doctrine of the Jews, Festus supposed that after hearing Paul, he would be able to inform him of the exact nature of these charges, so that he could present the case intelligibly to the emperor.

27. *For it seemeth to me unreasonable.* Festus felt that he was placed in an embarrassing situation. He was about to send a prisoner to Rome to be tried, who had been tried by himself, and who had appealed from his jurisdiction; and yet he was ignorant of the charges against him, and of the nature of his offences, if any had been committed. When prisoners were thus sent to Rome to be tried before the emperor, it would be proper that the charges should be all specified, and the evidence stated by which they were support-

ed. Yet Festus could do neither; and it is not wonderful that he felt himself perplexed and embarrassed; and that he was glad to avail himself of the desire which Agrippa had expressed to hear Paul, that he might be able to specify the charges against him. ¶ *Withal.* Also; at the same time. ¶ *To signify.* To specify, or make them know. In concluding this chapter, we may observe:

(1.) That in the case of Agrippa, we have an instance of the reasons which induce many men to hear the gospel. He had no belief in it; he had no concern for its truth or its promises; but he was led by *curiosity* to desire to hear the minister of the gospel of Christ. Curiosity thus draws multitudes to the sanctuary. In many instances, they remain unaffected and unconcerned in regard to its provisions of mercy. They listen, and are unmoved, and die in their sins. In many instances, like Agrippa, they are almost persuaded to be Christians. ch. xxvi. 28. But, like him, they resist the appeals; and die uninterested in the plan of salvation. In some instances, they are converted; and their curiosity, like that of Zaccheus, is made the means of their embracing the Saviour. Luke xix. 1—9. Whatever may be the motive which induces men to desire to hear, it is the duty of the ministry cheerfully and thankfully, like Paul, to state the truth, and to defend the Christian religion.

(2.) In Festus we have a specimen of the manner in which the great men, and the rich, and the proud, usually regard Christianity. They esteem it to be a subject of inquiry, in which they have no interest; a question about "one dead Jesus," whom Christians affirm to be alive. Whether he be alive or not; whether Christianity be true or false, they suppose is an inquiry which does not pertain to them. Strange that it did not occur to Festus that if he *was* alive, his religion

CHAPTER XXVI.

THEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself :

was true ; and that it was possible that it *might* be from God. And strange that the men of this world regard the Christian religion as a subject in which *they* have no personal interest, but as one concerning which Christians *only* should inquire, and in which *they* alone should feel any concern.

(3.) In Paul we have the example of a man unlike both Festus and Agrippa. He felt a deep interest in the subject—a subject which pertained as much to them as to him. He was willing not only to look at it with curiosity, but to stake his life, his reputation, his all, on its truth. He was willing to defend it every where, and before any class of men. At the same time that he urged his rights as a Roman citizen, yet it was mainly that he might preach the gospel. At the same time that he was anxious to secure justice to himself, yet his chief anxiety was to declare the truth of God. Before any tribunal ; before any class of men, in the presence of princes, nobles, and kings ; of Romans and of Jews, he was ready to pour forth irresistible eloquence and argument in defence of the truth. Who would not rather be Paul than either Festus or Agrippa ? Who would not rather be a *prisoner* like him, than invested with authority like Festus, or clothed in splendour like Agrippa ? And who would not rather be an honest and cordial believer of the gospel like Paul, than, like them, to be cold contemnors or neglecters of the God that made them, and of the Saviour that died, and rose again.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1. *Then Paul stretched forth the hand.* See Note, ch. xxi. 40. This was the usual posture of orators or public speakers. The ancient statues are commonly made in this way, with the right hand extended. The *dress* of the ancients favoured this. The long and loose robe, or outer garment, was fastened usually with a hook or clasp on the right shoulder, and thus left the arm at full liberty. ¶ *And answered for himself.* It cannot be supposed that Paul expected that his defence would be attended with a release from confinement ; for he had himself appealed to the Roman emperor. ch. xxv. 11. This design in speaking before Agrippa

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews :

3 Especially, *because I know thee*

was, doubtless, (1.) To vindicate his character, and obtain Agrippa's attestation to his innocence, that thus he might allay the anger of the Jews ; (2.) To obtain a correct representation of the case to the emperor, as Festus had desired this in order that Agrippa might enable him to make a fair statement of the case (ch. xxv. 26, 27) ; and, (3.) To defend his own conversion, and the truth of Christianity, and to preach the gospel in the hearing of Agrippa and the attendants, with a hope that their minds might be improved by the truth, and that they might be converted to God.

2. *I think myself happy.* I esteem it a favour and a privilege to be permitted to make my defence before one acquainted with Jewish customs and opinions. His defence, on former occasions, had been before *Roman* magistrates, who had little acquaintance with the opinions and customs of the Jews, who were not disposed to listen to the discussion of the points of difference between him and them, and who looked upon all their controversies with contempt. See ch. xxiv. xxv. They were, therefore, little qualified to decide a question which was closely connected with the Jewish customs and doctrines ; and Paul now rejoiced to know that he was before one, who, from his acquaintance with the Jewish customs and belief, would be able to appreciate his arguments and motives. Paul was not now on his trial ; but he was to defend himself, or state his cause, so that Agrippa might be able to aid Festus in transmitting a true account of the case to the Roman emperor. It was his interest and duty, therefore, to defend himself as well as possible ; and to put him in possession of all the facts in the case. His defence is, consequently, made up chiefly of a most eloquent statement of the *facts* just as they had occurred. ¶ *I shall answer.* I shall be permitted to make a statement, or to defend myself. ¶ *Touching, &c.* Respecting. ¶ *Whereof I am accused of the Jews.* By the Jews. The matters of the accusation were, his being a mover of sedition ; a ringleader of the Christians, and a profaner of the temple. ch. xxiv. 5, 6.

3. *To be expert.* To be skilled, or well

to be expert ^a in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear ^b me patiently.

4 My manner ^c of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem,

^a Deut. 17. 18.

^b c. 24. 4.

^c 2 Tim. 3. 10.

acquainted. ¶ *In all customs.* Rites, institutions, laws, &c. Every thing pertaining to the Mosaic ritual, &c. ¶ *And questions.* Subjects of debate, and of various opinions. The inquiries which had existed between the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, &c. Paul could say this of Agrippa without falsehood or flattery. Agrippa was a Jew; and had passed much of his time in the kingdom over which he presided; and though he had passed the early part of his life chiefly at Rome, yet it was natural that he should make himself acquainted with the religion of his fathers. Paul did not know how to flatter men; but he was not unwilling to state the simple truth, and to commend men as far as truth would permit. ¶ *Wherefore.* On this account; because you are acquainted with those customs. The Romans, who regarded those customs as superstitious, and those questions as matters to be treated with contempt, could not listen to their discussion with patience. Agrippa, who knew their real importance, would be disposed to lend to all inquiries respecting them a patient attention.

4. *My manner of life.* My opinions, principles, and conduct. ¶ *From my youth.* Paul was born in Tarsus; but at an early period he had been sent to Jerusalem for the purpose of education in the school of Gamaliel. ch. xxii. 3. ¶ *Which was at the first.* Which was from the beginning; the early part of which; the time when the opinions and habits are formed. ¶ *Know all the Jews.* It is not at all improbable that Paul was distinguished in the school of Gamaliel for zeal in the Jewish religion. The fact that he was early intrusted with a commission against the Christians (ch. ix.), shows that he was known. Comp. Phil. iii. 4—6. He might appeal to them, therefore, in regard to the early part of his life; and, doubtless, to the very men who had been his violent accusers.

5. *Which knew me.* Who were well acquainted with me. ¶ *From the beginning.* Ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς. Formerly; or from the very commencement of my career. Who

know all the Jews;

5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee. ^d

6 And now ^e I stand and am judged for the hope of the pro-

^d c. 23. 3. Phil. 3. 5.

^e c. 23. 6.

were perfectly apprized of my whole course. ¶ *If they would testify.* If they would bear witness to what they knew. ¶ *That after the most straitest.* The most rigid; the most strict; not only in regard to the written law of God, but the traditions of the elders. Paul himself elsewhere testifies (Phil. iii. 4—6), that he had enjoyed all the advantages of birth and training in the Jewish religion, and that he had early distinguished himself by his observance of its rites and customs. ¶ *Sect.* Division, or party. ¶ *I lived a Pharisee.* I lived in accordance with the rules and doctrines of the Pharisees. See Note, Matt. iii. 7. The reasons why Paul here refers to his early life are, (1.) As he had lived during the early period of his life without crime; as his principles had been settled by the instruction of the most able of their teachers, it was to be presumed that his subsequent life had been of a similar character. (2.) As he, at that period of his life, evinced the utmost zeal for the laws and customs of his country, it was to be presumed that he would not be found opposing or reviling them at any subsequent period. From the strictness and conscientiousness of his past life, he supposed that Agrippa might argue favourably respecting his subsequent conduct. A virtuous and religious course in early life is usually a sure pledge of virtue and integrity in subsequent years.

6. *And now I stand.* I stand before the tribunal. I am arraigned. ¶ *And am judged.* Am tried with reference to being judged. I am undergoing a *trial* on the point in which all my nation are agreed. ¶ *For the hope.* On account of the hope; or because, in common with my countrymen, I had entertained this hope, and now believe in its fulfilment. ¶ *Of the promise, &c.* See the references in the margin. It is not quite certain whether Paul refers here to the promise of the Messiah, or to the hope of the resurrection of the dead. When he stood before the Jewish sanhedrim (ch. xxiii. 6), he said that he was called in question on account of holding the doctrine

promise ^a made of God unto our fathers :

7 Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving ^b *God* ¹ day

^a Gen.3.15; 22.18; 49.10. Deut.18.15. 2Sam.7.12. Ps. 132.11. Isa.4.2; 7.14; 9.6,7. Jer.23.5; 33.14-16. Ezek.34. 23. Dan.9.24. Mic.7.20. Zech.13.1,7. Mal.3.1. c.13.32. Gal.4.4.

of the resurrection of the dead. But it may be observed, that in Paul's view, the two things were closely united. He hoped that the Messiah would come, and he hoped *therefore* for the resurrection of the dead. He believed that he *had* come, and had risen; and *therefore* he believed that the dead would rise. He argued the one from the other. And as he believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he had risen from the dead, and had thus furnished a demonstration that the dead would rise, it was evident that the subject of controversy between him and the Jews involved every thing that was vital to their opinions and their hopes. See ver. 8. ¶ *Made of God.* Made by God. See the marginal references. The promises had been made to the fathers of a Messiah to come, and that embraced the promise of a future state, or of the resurrection of the dead. It will help us to understand the stress which Paul and the other apostles laid on the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, to remember that it involved the whole doctrine of the separate existence of the soul, and of a future state. The Sadducees denied all this; and when the Pharisees, the Saviour, and the apostles opposed them, they did it by showing that there would be a future state of rewards and punishments. See the argument of the Saviour with the Sadducees explained in the Notes, Luke xx. 27—38. ¶ *Unto our fathers.* Our ancestors, the patriarchs, &c.

7. *Unto which promise.* To the fulfilment of which promise, they hope to come: i. e. they hope and believe that the promise will be fulfilled, and that they will partake of its benefits. ¶ *Our twelve tribes.* This was the name by which the Jews were designated. The ancient Jewish nation had hoped to come to that promise; it had been the hope and expectation of the nation. Long before the coming of the Messiah, ten of the twelve tribes had been carried captive to Assyria, and had not returned, leaving but the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah. But the name, 'the twelve tribes,' to designate the Jewish people

and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

8 Why ^c should it be thought a

^b Luke 2.37. 1Thess.3.10.

¹ night and day.

c 1Cor.15.12,20.

would be still retained. Comp. James i. 1. Paul here says that the hope had been that of the Jewish nation. Except the comparatively small portion of the Sadducees, the great mass of the nation had held to the doctrine of a future state. This Agrippa would well know. ¶ *Instantly.* Constantly; *with intensity*; with an effort (ἐν ἰσχυρί); with zeal. This was true; for amidst all the sins of the nation, they observed with punctuality and zeal the outward forms of the worship of God. ¶ *Serving God.* In the ordinances and observances of the temple. As a nation, they did not serve him in their hearts; but they kept up the outward form of religious worship. ¶ *Day and night.* With unwearied zeal; with constancy and ardour. Luke ii. 37. The ordinary Jewish services and sacrifices were in the morning and evening, and might be said to be performed day and night. Some of their services, as the paschal supper, were prolonged usually till late at night. The main idea is, that they kept up the worship of God with constant and untiring zeal and devotion. ¶ *For which hope's sake.* On account of my cherishing this hope in common with the great mass of my countrymen. See ch. xxiii. 6. If Paul could convince Agrippa that the main point of his offence was that which had been the common belief of his countrymen, it would show to his satisfaction that he was innocent. And on this ground Paul put his defence; that he held only that which the mass of the nation had believed; and that he maintained this in the only consistent and defensible manner—that God had, *in fact*, raised up the Messiah, and had thus given assurance that the dead should rise.

8. *Why should it be thought, &c.* The force of this question will be better seen by an interrogation point after *why* (τί). 'What! is it to be thought a thing incredible?' &c. It intimates surprise that it should be thought incredible; or implies that no reason could be given why such a doctrine should be unworthy of belief. ¶ *A thing incredible.* A doctrine which cannot be credited or believed.

thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

9 I^a verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

a 1 Tim. 1.13.

Why should it be regarded as absurd. ¶ *With you.* This is in the plural number; and it is evident that Paul here addressed not Agrippa alone, but those who were with him. There is no evidence that Agrippa doubted that the dead could be raised; but Festus, and those who were with him, probably did; and Paul, in the ardour of his speech, turned and addressed the entire assembly. It is very evident that we have only an *outline* of this argument, and there is every reason to suppose that Paul would dwell on each part of the subject at greater length than is here recorded. ¶ *That God should raise the dead.* Why should it be regarded as absurd that God—who has all power; who was the creator of all; who was the author of the human frame—should again restore man to life, and continue his future existence. The resurrection is no more incredible than the original creation of the human body, and it is attended with no greater difficulties. And as the perfections of God will be illustrated by his raising up the dead; as the future state is necessary to the purposes of justice in vindicating the just, and punishing the unjust; and as God is a righteous moral governor, it should not be regarded as an absurdity that he will raise up those who have died, and bring them to judgment.

9. *I verily thought.* I indeed (*μὲν*) supposed. Paul here commences the account of his conversion, and states the evidence on which he judged that he was called of God to do what he had done. He begins by saying that it was not because he was originally disposed to be a Christian, but that he was violently and conscientiously opposed to Jesus of Nazareth, and had been converted when in the full career of opposition to him and his cause. ¶ *With myself.* I thought to myself; or, I myself thought. He had before stated the hopes and expectations of his countrymen. ver. 6—8. He now speaks of his own views and purposes. 'For myself, I thought,' &c. ¶ *That I ought to do.* That I was bound, or that it was a duty incumbent on me. Δεῖν. 'I thought that I owed it to my country, to my religion, and to my God,

10 Which thing I also did in^b Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority^c from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*.

b c. 8. 3. Gal. 1. 13.

c c. 19. 14.

to oppose in every manner the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah.' We here see that Paul was conscientious, and that a man may be conscientious even when engaged in enormous wickedness. It is no evidence that a man is right because he is conscientious. No small part of the crimes against human laws, and almost all the cruel persecutions against Christians, have been carried on under the plea of conscience. Paul here refers to his conscientiousness in persecution, to show that it was no slight matter which could have changed his course. As he was governed in persecution by conscience, it could have been only by a force of demonstration, and by the urgency of conscience equally clear and strong, that could ever have induced him to *abandon* this course, and become a friend of that Saviour whom he had thus persecuted. ¶ *Many things.* As much as possible. He was not satisfied with a *few* things—a few words, or purposes, or arguments; but he felt bound to do as much as possible to put down the new religion. ¶ *Contrary to the name, &c.* In opposition to Jesus himself, or to his claims to be the Messiah. The name is often used to denote the person himself. ch. iii. 6.

10. *Which thing I did, &c.* ch. viii. 3. *And many of the saints, &c.* Many Christians. ch. viii. 3. ¶ *And when they were put to death.* In the history of those transactions there is no account of any Christian being put to death, except Stephen. Acts vii. But there is no improbability in supposing that the same thing which had happened to Stephen, had occurred in other cases. Stephen was the first martyr, and as he was a prominent man, his case is particularly recorded. ¶ *I gave my voice.* Paul was not a member of the sanhedrim, and this does not mean that he *voted*, but simply that he joined in the persecution; he approved it; he assented to the putting of the saints to death. Comp. ch. xxii. 20. The Syriac renders it, "I joined with those who condemned them." It is evident also that Paul instigated them in this persecution, and urged them on to deeds of blood and cruelty.

11 And I punished them oft in ^a every synagogue, and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

12 Whereupon as I went ^b to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 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 which journeyed with me.

^a c.22.19.

^b c.9.3.

11. *And I punished them oft, &c.* See ch. xxii. 19. ¶ *And compelled them to blaspheme.* To blaspheme the name of Jesus, by denying that he was the Messiah, and by admitting that he was an impostor. This was the object which they had in view in the persecution. It was not to make them blaspheme or reproach God, but to deny that Jesus was the Messiah, and to reproach him as a deceiver and an impostor. It is not necessarily implied in the expression, "and compelled them to blaspheme," that he succeeded in doing it; but that he violently *endeavoured* to make them apostatize from the Christian religion, and deny the Lord Jesus. It is certainly not impossible that a few might thus have been induced by the authority of the sanhedrim, and by the threats of Paul to do it; but it is certain that the great mass of Christians adhered firmly to their belief that Jesus was the Messiah. ¶ *And being exceedingly mad.* Nothing could more forcibly express his rage and violence against the Christians. He raged like a madman; he was so indignant that he laid aside all appearance of reason; and with the fury and violence of a maniac, he endeavoured to exterminate them from the earth. None but a madman will persecute men on account of their religious opinions; and all persecutions have been conducted like this, with the violence, and fury, and ungovernable temper of maniacs. ¶ *Unto strange cities.* Unto foreign cities; cities out of Judea. The principal instance of this was his going to Damascus; but there is no evidence that he did not intend also to visit other cities out of Judea, and bring the Christians there, if he found any, to Jeru-

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *it is hard* for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister ^c and a witness ^d both of

^c Eph.3.7. Col.1.23,25.

^d c.22.15.

12—15. See this passage explained in the Notes on ch. ix. 5, &c.

16. *But rise, &c.* The particulars mentioned in this verse and the two following, are not recorded in the account of Paul's conversion in ch. ix. But it is not improbable that many circumstances may have occurred which are not recorded. Paul dwells on them here at length, in order particularly to show his authority for doing what he had done in preaching to the Gentiles. ¶ *To make thee a minister.* A minister of the gospel; a preacher of the truth. ¶ *And a witness.* Note, ch. xxii. 15. ¶ *Which thou hast seen.* On the road to Damascus; that is, of the Lord Jesus, and of the fact that he was risen from the dead. ¶ *And of those things, &c.* Of those further manifestations of my person, protection, and will, which I will yet make to you. It is evident from this, that the Lord Jesus promised to manifest himself to Paul in his ministry, and to make to him still further displays of his will and glory. Comp. ch. xxii. 17, 18. This was done by his rescuing him from destruction and danger; by the intimation of his will; and by the growing and expanding view which Paul was permitted to take of the character and perfections of the Lord Jesus. In this we see that it is the duty of ministers to bear witness not only to the truth of religion in general, or of that which they can demonstrate by argument; but more especially of that which they experience in their own hearts, and which they understand by having themselves been the subjects of it. No man is qualified to enter the ministry who has not a personal and practical and saving view of the glory and perfections of the Lord Jesus, and who does not go to his work as a

these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto ^a whom now I send thee;

18 To open ^b their eyes, and to turn ^c them from darkness to light, and from the power ^d of Satan unto

^a c.22.21. Rom.11.13. ^b Isa.35.5; 42.7. ^c Luke 1.79. Jno.8.12. 2Cor.4.6. Eph.1.18. ^d Col.1.13. 1Pet. 2.9. ^e Luke 1.77. Eph.1.7. Col.1.14.

witness of those things which he has felt. And no man enters the ministry with these feelings, who has not, as Paul had, a promise that he shall see still brighter displays of the perfections of the Saviour, and be permitted to advance in the knowledge of him and of his work. The highest personal consolation in this work is the promise of their being admitted to ever-growing and expanding views of the glory of the Lord Jesus, and of experiencing his presence, guidance, and protection.

17. *Delivering thee from the people.* From the Jewish people. This implied that he would be persecuted by them, and that the Lord Jesus would interpose to rescue him. ¶ *And from the Gentiles.* This also implied that he would be persecuted and opposed by them—a prospect which was verified by the whole course of his ministry. Yet in all he experienced, according to the promise, the support and the protection of the Lord Jesus. This was expressed in a summary manner in Luke ix. 16. ¶ *Unto whom now I send thee.* ch. xxii. 21. As the opposition of the Jews arose mainly from the fact that he had gone among the Gentiles, it was important to bring this part of his commission into full view before Agrippa, and to show that the same Saviour who had miraculously converted him, had commanded him to go and preach to them.

18. *To open their eyes.* To enlighten or instruct them. Ignorance is represented by the eyes being closed, and the instruction of the gospel by the opening of the eyes. See Eph. i. 18. ¶ *And to turn them from darkness to light.* From the darkness of heathenism and sin, to the light and purity of the gospel. Darkness is an emblem of ignorance and of sin; and the heathen nations are often represented as sitting in darkness. Comp. Note, Matt. iv. 16. John i. 4, 5. ¶ *And from the power of Satan.* From the do-

minion of Satan. Comp. Col. i. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Notes, John xii. 31; xvi. 11. Satan is thus represented as the prince of this world; the ruler of the darkness of this world; the prince of the power of the air, &c. The heathen world, lying in sin and superstition, is represented as under his control; and this passage teaches, doubtless, that the great mass of the people of this world are the subjects of the kingdom of Satan, and are led captive by him at his will. ¶ *Unto God.* To the obedience of the one living and true God. ¶ *That they may receive forgiveness of sins.* Through the merits of that Saviour who died; that thus the partition wall between the Jews and the Gentiles might be broken down, and all might be admitted to the same precious privileges of the favour and mercy of God. Comp. Note, Acts ii. 38. ¶ *And inheritance.* An heirship, or lot (κληρον); that they might be entitled to the privileges and favours of the children of God. See Note, Acts xx. 32. ¶ *Which are sanctified.* Among the saints; the children of God. Note, Acts xx. 32.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But showed ⁱ first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem,

^f Eph.1.11. Col.1.12. 1Pet.1.4. ^g Jno.17.17. c.20. 32. 1Cor.1.30. Rev.21.27. ^h Eph.2.8. Heb.11.6. ⁱ c.11.26,&c.

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19. *Whereupon.* Whence (ὅθεν). Since the proof of his being the Messiah, and of his resurrection, and of his calling me to this work, was so clear and plain, I deemed it my duty to engage without delay in the work. ¶ *I was not disobedient.* I was not incredulous, or unbelieving; I yielded myself to the command, and at once obeyed. See Acts ix. 6. Comp. Gal. i. 16. ¶ *To the heavenly vision.* To the celestial appearance; or to the vision which appeared to me manifestly from heaven. I did not doubt that this splendid appearance (ver. 13) was from heaven; and I did not refuse to obey the command of him who thus appeared to me. He knew it was the command of God his Saviour; and he gave evidence of repentance by yielding obedience to it at once.

20. See ch. ix. 20—23. The 20th

and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works ^a meet for repentance.

21 For these causes the Jews ^b caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me*.

22 Having therefore obtained help

^a Matt. 3. 8.

^b c. 21. 30.

verse contains a *summary* of his labours in obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus. His argument is, that the Lord Jesus had from heaven commanded him to do this, and that he had done no more than to obey his injunction.

21. *Caught me in the temple.* ch. xxi. 30. ¶ *And went about, &c.* Endeavoured to put me to death.

22. *Having therefore obtained help of God.* Paul had seen and felt his danger. He had known the determined malice of the Jews, and their efforts to take his life. He had been rescued by Lysias, and had made every effort to avoid the danger, and to save his life; and at the end of all, he traced his safety entirely to the help of God. It was not by any power of his own that he had been preserved; but it was because God had interposed and rescued him. Those who have been delivered from danger, if they have just views, will delight to trace it all to God. They will regard *his* hand; and will feel that whatever wisdom *they* may have had, or whatever may have been the kindness of their friends to aid them, yet that *all this also* is to be traced to the superintending providence of God. ¶ *Witnessing.* Bearing testimony to what he had seen, according to the command of Christ. ver. 16. ¶ *To small.* To those in humble life; to the poor, the ignorant, and the obscure. Like his master, he did not despise them, but regarded it as his duty and privilege to preach the gospel to the poor. ¶ *And great.* The rich and noble; to kings, and princes, and governors. He had thus stood on Mars' Hill at Athens; he had borne testimony before the wise men of Greece; he had declared the same gospel before Felix, Festus, and now before Agrippa. He offered salvation to all. He passed by none because they were poor; and he was not deterred by the fear of the rich and the great from making known their sins, and calling them to repentance. What an admirable illustration of the proper duties of a minister of the gospel! ¶ *Saying none other thing, &c.* Delivering no new doctrine;

of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which ^c the prophets and Moses did say should come.

23 That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first ^d that should rise from the dead, and

^c Luke 24. 27, 46.

^d 1 Cor. 15. 23.

but maintaining only that the prophecies had been fulfilled. As he had done this only, there was no reason for the opposition, and persecution of the Jews.

¶ *Should come.* Should come to pass; or should take place. Paul here evidently means to say, that the doctrine of the atonement, and of the resurrection of Christ, is taught in the Old Testament.

23. *That Christ.* That the Messiah expected by the Jews should be a suffering Messiah. ¶ *Should suffer.* Should lead a painful life, and be put to death. See Note, ch. xvii. 3. Comp. Dan. ix. 27. Isa. liii. ¶ *And that he should be the first, &c.* This declaration contains two points. (1.) That it was taught in the prophets that the Messiah should rise from the dead. On this, see the proof alleged in ch. ii. 24—32; xiii. 32—37. (2.) That he should be the first that should rise. This cannot mean that the Messiah should be the first dead person who should be restored to life, for Elijah had raised the son of the Shunammite, and Jesus himself had raised Lazarus, and the widow's son at Nain. It does not mean that he should be the first *in the order of time* that should rise, but *first in eminence*, the most distinguished, the chief, the head of those who should rise from the dead. Πρῶτος ἐξ ἁνυστάσεως νεκρῶν. In accordance with this he is called (Col. i. 18), "the beginning, the first-born from the dead," having among all the dead who should be raised up, the rights and pre-eminence of the primogeniture, or which pertained to the first-born. In 1 Cor. xv. 20. he is called "the first-fruits of them that slept." This declaration is, therefore, made of him by way of eminence. (1.) As being chief, a prince among those raised from the dead; (2.) As being raised by his own power (John x. 18); (3.) As, by his rising, securing a dominion over death and the grave (1 Cor. xv. 25, 26); and, (4.) As bringing, by his rising, life and immortality to light. He rose to return to death no more. And he thus secured an ascendancy over death and the grave, and was thus, by way of eminence, *first* among those raised from

should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud

the dead. ¶ *And should show light unto the people.* To the Jews. Should be their instructor and prophet. This Moses had predicted. Deut. xviii. 15. ¶ *And to the Gentiles.* This had often been foretold by the prophets, and particularly by Isaiah. Isa. ix. 1, 2. Comp. Matt. iv. 14—16. Isa. xi. 10; xlii. 1. 6; liv. 3; lx. 3. 5; li. 6; lxii. 2; lxvi. 12.

24. *Festus said with a loud voice.* Amazed at the zeal and ardour of Paul. Paul doubtless evinced deep interest in the subject, and great earnestness in the delivery of his defence. ¶ *Thou art beside thyself.* Thou art deranged; thou art insane. The reasons why Festus thought Paul mad were, probably, (1.) His great earnestness and excitement on the subject. (2.) His laying such stress on the gospel of the despised Jesus of Nazareth, as if it were a matter of infinite moment. Festus despised it; and he regarded it as proof of derangement that so much importance was attached to it. (3.) Festus regarded, probably, the whole story of the vision that Paul said had appeared to him, as the effect of an inflamed and excited imagination; and as the proof of delirium. This is not an uncommon charge against those who are Christians, and especially when they evince any unusual zeal. Sinners regard them as under the influence of delirium and fanaticism; as terrified by imaginary and superstitious fears; or as misguided by fanatical leaders. Husbands often thus think their wives deranged, and parents their children, and wicked men the ministers of the gospel. The gay think it proof of derangement that others are serious, and anxious, and prayerful; the rich, that others are willing to part with their property to do good; the ambitious and worldly, that others are willing to leave their country and home, to go among the Gentiles to spend their lives in making known the unsearchable riches of Christ. The really sober, and rational part of the world—they who fear God, and keep his commandments; who believe that eternity is before them, and who strive to live for it—are thus charged with insanity by those who are really deluded, and who are thus living lives of madness and folly. The tenants of a mad-house often think all others deranged but themselves; but

voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. ^a

25 But he said, I am not mad,

a 2Kings 9.11.

there is no madness so great, no delirium so awful, as to neglect the eternal interest of the soul for the sake of the poor pleasures and honours which this life can give. ¶ *Much learning.* It is probable that Festus was acquainted with the fact that Paul had been well instructed, and was a learned man. Paul had not while before him manifested particularly his learning. But Festus, acquainted in some way with the fact that he was well educated, supposed that his brain had been turned, and that the effect of it was seen by devotion to a fanatical form of religion. The tendency of long continued and intense application to produce mental derangement, is every where known. ¶ *Doth make thee mad.* Impels, drives, or excites thee (περιτρέπει) to madness.

25. *I am not mad.* I am not deranged. There are few more happy turns than that which Paul gives to this accusation of Festus. He might have appealed to the course of his argument; he might have dwelt on the importance of the subject, and continued to reason; but he makes an appeal at once to *Agrippa*, and brings him in for a witness that he was not deranged. This would be far more likely to make an impression on the mind of Festus, than any thing that Paul could say in self-defence. The same reply, 'I am not mad,' can be made by all Christians to the charge of derangement which the world brings against them. They have come, like the prodigal (Luke xv. 17), to their right mind; and by beginning to act as if there were a God and Saviour, as if they were to die, as if there were a boundless eternity before them, they are conducting according to the dictates of reason. And as Paul appealed to *Agrippa*, who was not a Christian, for the reasonableness and soberness of his own views and conduct, so may all Christians appeal even to sinners themselves, as witnesses that they are acting as immortal beings should act. All men know that if there is an eternity, it is right to prepare for it; if there is a God, it is proper to serve him; if a Saviour died for us, we should love him; if a hell, we should avoid it; if a heaven, we should seek it. And even when they charge us with folly and derangement, we may turn at once upon them, and appeal to their own consciences.

most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak

and ask them if all our anxieties, and prayers, and efforts, and self-denials, are not right? One of the best ways of convicting sinners is, to appeal to them just as Paul did to Agrippa. When so appealed to, they will usually acknowledge the force of the appeal; and will admit that all the solicitude of Christians for their salvation is according to the dictates of reason. ¶ *Most noble Festus.* This was the usual title of the Roman governor. Comp. xxiv. 3. ¶ *Of truth.* In accordance with the predictions of Moses and the prophets; and the facts which have occurred in the death and resurrection of the Messiah. In proof of this he appeals to Agrippa. ver. 26, 27. Truth here stands opposed to delusion, imposture, and fraud. ¶ *And soberness.* Soberness (*σωφροσύνη*, *wisdom*) stands opposed here to madness, or derangement, and denotes sanity of mind. The words which I speak are those of a sane man, conscious of what he is saying, and impressed with its truth. They were the words, also, of a man who, under the charge of derangement, evinced the most perfect self-possession, and command of his feelings; and who uttered sentiments deep, impressive, and worthy of the attention of mankind.

26. *For the king.* King Agrippa. ¶ *Knoweth.* He had been many years in that region, and the fame of Jesus and of Paul's conversion were probably well known to him. ¶ *These things.* The things pertaining to the early persecutions of Christians; the spread of the gospel; and the remarkable conversion of Paul. 'Though Agrippa might not have been fully informed respecting these things, yet he had an acquaintance with Moses and the prophets; he knew the Jewish expectation respecting the Messiah; and he could not be ignorant respecting the remarkable public events in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and of his having been put to death by order of Pontius Pilate on the cross. ¶ *I speak freely.* I speak openly, boldly. I use no disguise; and I speak the more confidently before him, because, from his situation, he must be acquainted with the truth of what I say. Truth is always bold and free; and it is an evidence of honesty when a man is willing to declare every thing without reserve before those who

freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believest thou

are qualified to detect him if he is an impostor. Such evidence of truth and honesty was given by Paul. ¶ *For I am persuaded.* I am convinced; I doubt not that he is well acquainted with these things. ¶ *Are hidden from him.* That he is unacquainted with them. ¶ *For this thing.* The thing to which Paul had mainly referred in this defence, his own conversion to the Christian religion. ¶ *Was not done in a corner.* Did not occur secretly and obscurely; but was public, and was of such a character as to attract attention. The conversion of a leading persecutor, such as Paul had been, and in the manner in which that conversion had taken place, could not but attract attention and remark. And although the Jews would endeavour as much as possible to conceal it, yet Paul might presume that it could not be entirely unknown to Agrippa.

27. *King Agrippa.* This bland personal address is an instance of Paul's happy manner of appeal. He does it to bring in the testimony of Agrippa to meet the charge of Festus that he was deranged. ¶ *Believest thou the prophets?* The prophecies respecting the character, the sufferings, and the death of the Messiah. ¶ *I know that thou believest.* Agrippa was a Jew; and, as such, he of course believed the prophets. Perhaps too, from what Paul knew of his personal character, he might confidently affirm that he professed to be a believer. Instead, therefore, of waiting for his answer, Paul anticipates it, and says that he knows that Agrippa professes to believe all these prophecies respecting the Messiah. His design is evident. It is, (1.) To meet the charge of derangement, and to bring in the testimony of Agrippa, who well understood the subject, to the importance and the truth of what he was saying. (2.) To press on the conscience of his royal hearer the evidence of the Christian religion, and to secure if possible his conversion. 'Since thou believest the prophecies, and since I have shown that they are fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, that he corresponds in person, character, and work with the prophets, it follows that his religion is true.' Paul lost no opportunity of pressing the truth on every class of men. He had such a conviction

the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul,

of the truth of Christianity, that he was deterred by no rank, station, or office; by no fear of the rich, the great, and the learned; but every where urged the evidence of that religion as indisputable. In this, lay the secret of no small part of his success. A man who *really* believes the truth will be ready to defend it. A man who truly loves religion will not be ashamed of it any where.

28. Then Agrippa said unto Paul. He could not deny that he believed the prophets. He could not deny that the argument was a strong one, that they had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. He could not deny that the evidence of the miraculous interposition of God in the conversion of Paul was overwhelming. And instead, therefore, of charging him as Festus had done with derangement, he candidly and honestly avows the impression which the proof had made on his mind. ¶ *Almost*. Except a very little. Ἐν ὀλίγω. Thou hast nearly convinced me that Christianity is true, and persuaded me to embrace it. The arguments of Paul had been so rational; the appeal which he had made to his belief of the prophets had been so irresistible, that he had been nearly convinced of the truth of Christianity. We are to remember, (1.) That Agrippa was a Jew, and that he would look on this whole subject in a different manner from the Roman Festus. (2.) That Agrippa does not appear to have partaken of the violent passions and prejudices of the Jews who had accused Paul. (3.) His character as given by Josephus is that of a mild, candid, and ingenuous man. He had no particular hostility to Christians; he knew that they were not justly charged with sedition and crime; and he saw the conclusion to which a belief of the prophets inevitably tended. Yet, as in thousands of other cases, he was not *quite* persuaded to be a Christian. What was included in the "almost;" what prevented his being *quite* persuaded, we know not. It may have been that the evidence was not so clear to his mind as he would profess to desire; or that he was not willing to give up his sins; or that he was too proud to rank himself with the followers of Jesus of Nazareth; or that, like Felix, he was willing to defer it to a more convenient season. There is every reason to believe that he was never *quite* persuaded

Almost thou ^a persuadedest me to be a Christian.

^a James 1.23,24.

to embrace the Lord Jesus; and that he was never nearer the kingdom of heaven than at this moment. It was the *crisis*, the turning point in Agrippa's life, and in his eternal destiny; and, like thousands of others, he neglected or refused to allow the full conviction of the truth on his mind, and died in his sins. ¶ *Thou persuadedest me*. Thou dost convince me of the truth of the Christian religion, and persuadedest me to embrace it. ¶ *To be a Christian*. On the name *Christian*, see Note, ch. xi. 26. On this deeply interesting case, we may observe, (1.) That there are many in the same situation as Agrippa—many who are *almost*, but not *altogether*, persuaded to be Christians. They are found among (a) Those who have been religiously educated; (b) Those who are convinced by argument of the truth of Christianity; (c) Those whose consciences are awakened, and who feel their guilt, and the necessity of some better portion than this world can furnish. (2.) Such persons are deterred from being altogether Christians by the following, among other causes. (a) By the love of sin—the love of sin in general, or some particular sin which they are not willing to abandon. (b) The fear of shame, persecution, or contempt, if they become Christians. (c) By the temptations of the world—its cares, vanities, and allurements—which are often prosecuted most strongly in just this state of mind. (d) The love of office, the pride of rank, and power as in the case of Agrippa. (e) A disposition, like Felix, to delay to a more favourable time the work of religion, until life has wasted away, and death approaches, and it is too late; and the unhappy man dies *ALMOST a Christian*. (3.) This state of mind is one of peculiar interest, and peculiar danger. It is not one of safety; and it is not one that implies any certainty that the 'almost Christian' will ever be saved. There is no reason to believe that Agrippa ever became *fully* persuaded to become a Christian. To be *almost* persuaded to do a thing which we ought to do, and yet *not* to do it, is the very position of guilt and danger. And it is no wonder that many are brought to *this* point—the turning point, the *crisis* of life—and then lose their anxiety, and die in their sins. May the God of grace keep us from resting in being almost persuaded to be Christians.

29 And Paul said, I would ^a to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor,

^a 1Cor.7.7.

And may every one who shall read this account of Agrippa be admonished by his convictions, and be alarmed by the fact that *he* then paused, and that his convictions there ended! And may every one resolve by the help of God to forsake *every* thing that prevents his becoming an *entire* believer, and without delay embrace the Son of God as his Saviour!

29. *I would to God.* I pray to God; I earnestly desire it of God. This shows, (1.) Paul's intense desire that Agrippa, and all who heard him, might be saved. (2.) His steady and constant belief that none but God could incline them to become altogether Christians. Hence he expressed it as the object which he earnestly sought of God, that they might be *true* believers. Paul knew well that there was nothing that would overcome the reluctance of the human heart to be an entire Christian but the grace and mercy of God. He had addressed to them the convincing arguments of religion; and he now breathed forth his earnest prayer to God that these arguments might be effectual. So prays every faithful minister of the cross. ¶ *All that hear me.* Festus, and the military and civil officers who had been assembled to hear his defence. ch. xxv. 23. ¶ *Were both almost, and altogether, &c.* Paul had no higher wish for them than that they might have the faith and consolations which he had himself enjoyed. He had so firm a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and had experienced so much of its consolations and supports amidst all his persecutions and trials, that his highest desire for them was, that they might experience the same inexpressibly pure and holy consolations. He well knew that there was neither happiness nor safety in being *almost* a Christian; and he desired, therefore, that they would give themselves, as he had done, entirely and altogether to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. ¶ *Except these bonds.* These chains. This is an exceedingly happy and touching appeal. Probably Paul, when he said this, lifted up his arm with the chain attached to it.

and Bernice, and they that sat with them.

31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Fes-

His wish was, that they might be partakers of the pure joys which religion had conferred on him; that in all other respects they might partake of the effects of the gospel, *except those chains.* Those he did not wish them to bear. The persecutions, and unjust trials, and confinements which he had been called to suffer in the cause, he did not desire them to endure. True Christians wish others to partake of the full blessings of religion. The trials which they themselves experience from without in unjust persecutions, ridicule, and slander, they do not wish them to endure. The trials which they themselves experience from an evil heart, from corrupt passions, and from temptations, they do not wish others to experience. But even *with* these, religion confers infinitely more pure joy than the world can give; and even though others should be called to experience severe trials for their religion; still, Christians wish that all should partake of the pure consolations which Christianity alone can furnish in this world and the world to come.

31. *This man doeth nothing worthy of death.* This was the conclusion to which they had come, after hearing all that the Jews had to allege against him. It was the result of the whole investigation; and we have, therefore, the concurring testimony of Claudius Lysias (ch. xxiii. 29), of Felix (ch. xxiv.), of Festus (ch. xxv. 26, 27), and of Agrippa to his innocence. More honourable and satisfactory testimony of his innocence, Paul could not have desired. It was a full acquittal from all the charges against him; and though he was to be sent to Rome, yet he went there with every favourable circumstance of being acquitted there also.

32. *Then said Agrippa unto Festus, &c.* This is a full declaration of the conviction of Agrippa, that Paul was innocent. It is an instance also where boldness and fidelity will be attended with happy results. Paul had concealed nothing of the truth. He had made a bold and faithful appeal (ver. 27) to Agrippa him-

tus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cesar.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AND when it was determined that we should sail into Italy,

self for the truth of what he was saying. By this appeal, Agrippa had not been offended. It had only served to impress him more with the innocence of Paul. It is an instance which shows us that religion may be commended to the consciences and reason of princes, and kings, and judges, so that they will see its truth. It is an instance which shows us that the most bold and faithful appeals may be made by the ministers of religion to their hearers, for the truth of what they are saying. And it is a full proof that the most faithful appeals, if respectful, may be made without offending men, and with the certainty that they will feel and admit their force. All preachers should be as faithful as Paul; and whatever may be the rank and character of their auditors, they should never doubt that they have truth and God on their side, and that their message, when most bold and faithful, will commend itself to the consciences of men.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1. *And when it was determined.* By Festus (ch. xxv. 12), and when the time was come when it was convenient to send him. ¶ *That we should sail.* The use of the term "we" here shows that the author of this book, Luke, was with Paul. He had been the companion of Paul, and though he had not been accused, yet it was resolved that he should still accompany him. Whether he went at his own expense, or whether he was sent at the expense of the Roman government, does not appear. There is a difference of reading here in the ancient versions. The Syriac reads it, "And thus Festus determined that he [Paul] should be sent to Cesar in Italy," &c. The Latin Vulgate and the Arabic also read "he" instead of "we." But the Greek manuscripts are uniform; and the correct reading is, doubtless, that which is in our version. ¶ *Into Italy.* The country still bearing the same name, of which Rome was the capital. ¶ *And certain other prisoners.* Who were probably also sent to Rome for a trial before the emperor. Dr. Lardner has proved that it was common to send prisoners

they delivered Paul ^a and certain other prisoners unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, mean-

a c. 25. 12, 25.

from Judea and other provinces to Rome. Credibility, Part 1, ch. x. § 10. pp. 248, 249. ¶ *A centurion.* A commander of a hundred men. ¶ *Of Augustus' band.* For the meaning of the word "band," see Note, Matt. xxvii. 27. Acts x. 1. It was a division in the Roman army, consisting of from four to six hundred men. It was called "Augustus' band" in honour of the Roman emperor Augustus (Note, ch. xxv. 21), and was probably distinguished in some way for the care in enlisting or selecting them. The Augustine cohort or band is mentioned by Suetonius in his Life of Nero, 20.

2. *A ship of Adramyttium.* A maritime town of Mysia, in Asia Minor, opposite to the island of Lesbos. This was a ship which had been built there, or which sailed from that port, but which was then in the port of Cesarea. It is evident from ver. 6, that this ship was not expected to sail to Italy, but that the centurion expected to find some other vessel into which he could put the prisoners to take them to Rome. ¶ *We launched.* We loosed from our anchorage; or we set sail. See ch. xiii. 13. ¶ *By the coasts of Asia.* Of Asia Minor. Probably the owners of the ship designed to make a coasting voyage along the southern part of Asia Minor, and to engage in traffic with the maritime towns and cities. ¶ *One Aristarchus, a Macedonian.* This man is mentioned as Paul's companion in travel in ch. xix. 29. He afterwards attended him to Macedonia, and returned with him to Asia. ch. xx. 4. He now appears to have attended him, not as a prisoner, but as a voluntary companion, choosing to share with him his dangers, and to enjoy the benefit of his society and friendship. He went with him to Rome, and was a fellow-prisoner with him there (Col. iv. 10); and is mentioned (epistle to Philemon 24) as Paul's fellow-labourer. It was, doubtless, a great comfort to Paul to have with him two such valuable friends as Luke and Aristarchus; and it was an instance of great affection for him that they were not ashamed of his bonds, but were willing to share his dangers, and to expose them-

ing to sail by the coasts of Asia; *one* Aristarchus, ^a a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously ^b entreated Paul, and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

^a c.19.29.

^b c.24.23; 28.16.

selves to peril for the sake of accompanying him to Rome.

3. *We touched at Sidon.* Note, Matt. xi. 21. It was north of Cesarea. ¶ *And Julius courteously entreated Paul.* Treated him kindly, or humanely. ¶ *And gave him liberty, &c.* The same thing had been done by Felix. ch. xxiv. 23. ¶ *Unto his friends.* In Sidon. Paul had frequently travelled in that direction in going to, and returning from Jerusalem, and it is not improbable, therefore, that he had friends in all the principal cities. ¶ *To refresh himself.* To enjoy the benefit of their kind care, to make his present situation and his voyage as comfortable as possible. It is probable that they would furnish him with many supplies which were needful to make his long and perilous voyage comfortable.

4. *We sailed under Cyprus.* For an account of Cyprus, see Note, ch. iv. 36. By sailing "under Cyprus" is meant that they sailed along its coasts; they kept near to it; they thus endeavoured to break off the violent winds. Instead of steering a direct course in the open sea, which would have exposed them to violent opposing winds, they kept near this large island, so that it was between them and the westerly winds. The force of the wind was thus broken, and the voyage rendered less difficult and dangerous. They went between Cyprus and Asia Minor, leaving Cyprus to the left. Had it not been for the strong western winds they would have left it on the right. ¶ *The winds were contrary.* Were from the west, or southwest, which thus prevented their pursuing a direct course. See the map.

5. *The sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia.* The sea which lies off the coast from these two regions. For their situation, see the map, and Notes, Acts vi. 9, and xiii. 13. ¶ *We came to Myra, a city of Lycia.* Lycia was a province in the

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia.

6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete ¹ over against Salmone;

8 And, hardly passing it, came

¹ or, *Canay.*

southwestern part of Asia Minor, having Phrygia and Pisidia on the north, the Mediterranean on the south, Pamphylia on the east, and Caria on the west.

6. *A ship of Alexandria.* A ship belonging to Alexandria. Alexandria was in Egypt, and was founded by Alexander the Great. It appears from ver. 38, that the ship was laden with wheat. It is well known that great quantities of wheat were imported from Egypt to Rome; and it appears that this was one of the large ships which were employed for that purpose. Why the ship was on the coast of Asia Minor, is not known. But it is probable that it had been driven out of its way by adverse winds or tempests.

7. *Had sailed slowly.* By reason of the prevalence of the western winds. ver. 4. ¶ *Over against Cnidus.* This was a city standing on a promontory of the same name in Asia Minor, in the part of the province of Cana called Doris, and a little northwest of the island of Rhodes. ¶ *The wind not suffering us.* The wind repelling us in that direction; not permitting us to hold on a direct course, we were driven off near to Crete. ¶ *We sailed under Crete.* See ver. 4. We lay along near to Crete, so as to break the violence of the wind. For the situation of Crete, see Note, ch. ii. 11. ¶ *Over against Salmone.* Near to Salmone. This was the name of the promontory which formed the eastern extremity of the island of Crete.

8. *And, hardly passing it.* Scarcely being able to pass by it without being wrecked. Being almost driven on it. They passed round the east end of the island, because they had been unable to sail directly forward between the island and the main land. ¶ *The fair havens.* This was on the southeastern part of the island of Crete. It was probably not so much a harbour as an open kind of road, which afforded good anchorage for a time.

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 ¹ was now already past, Paul admonished them,

10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive ^a that this voyage will be with ² hurt and much damage, not

¹ The feast was on the 10th day of the 7th month. Lev. 23. 27, 29. ^a 2 Kings 6. 9, 10. Dan. 2. 20. Amos 3. 7.
² or, injury.

It is called by Stephen, the geographer, "the fair shore."

9. *When much time was spent.* In sailing along the coast of Asia; in contending with the contrary winds. It is evident, that when they started, they had hoped to reach Italy before the dangerous time of navigating the Mediterranean should arrive. But they had been detained and embarrassed contrary to their expectation, so that they were now sailing in the most dangerous and tempestuous time of the year. ¶ *Because the fast was now already past.* By "the fast," here is evidently intended the fast which occurred among the Jews on the great day of atonement. That was the tenth of the month *Tisri*, which answers to a part of September and part of October. It was therefore the time of the autumnal equinox, and when the navigation of the Mediterranean was esteemed to be particularly dangerous, from the storms which usually occurred about that time. The ancients regarded this as a dangerous time to navigate the Mediterranean. See the proofs in *Kuinöel* on this place. ¶ *Paul admonished them.* Paul exhorted, entreated, or persuaded them. He was somewhat accustomed to the navigation of that sea; and endeavoured to persuade them not to risk the danger of sailing at that season of the year.

10. *Sirs. Gr. Men.* ¶ *I perceive.* It is not certain that Paul understood this by direct inspiration. He might have perceived it from his own knowledge of the danger of navigation at the autumnal equinox, and from what he saw of the ship as unfitted to a dangerous navigation. But there is nothing that should prevent our believing also that he was guided to this conclusion by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Comp. ver. 23, 24. ¶ *Will be with hurt.* With injury, or hazard. It is not meant that their lives would be lost;

only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11 Nevertheless, the centurion ^b believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to win-

^b Prov. 27. 12.

but that they would be jeopardd. ¶ *The lading.* The freight of the ship. It was laden with wheat. ver. 38. Paul, evidently, by this, intended to suggest the propriety of remaining where they were, until the time of dangerous navigation was past.

11. *The master.* The captain, or the pilot. The person who is here meant, was the helmsman, who occupied, in ancient ships, a conspicuous place on the stern, and steered the ship, and gave directions to the crew. ¶ *The owner of the ship.* Probably a different person from "the master." He had the general command of the ship as his own property, but had employed "the master," or the pilot, to direct and manage it. His counsel in regard to the propriety of continuing the voyage, would be likely to be followed.

12. *The haven.* The fair havens. ver. 8. ¶ *Was not commodious to winter in.* Not safe or convenient to remain there. Probably it furnished rather a safe anchorage ground in time of a storm, than a convenient place for a permanent harbour. ¶ *The more part.* The greater part of the crew. ¶ *To Phenice.* This was a port or harbour on the south side of Crete, and west of the fair havens. It was a more convenient harbour, and regarded as more safe. It appears, therefore, that the majority of persons on board concurred with Paul in the belief that it was not advisable to attempt the navigation of the sea until the dangers of the winter had passed by. ¶ *And lieth toward.* Greek, *Looking toward*; i. e. it was open in that direction. ¶ *The southwest.* Κατα Διβρα. Toward *Lybia*, or *Africa*. That country was situated southwest of the mouth of the harbour. The entrance of the harbour was in a southwest direction. ¶ *And northwest.* Κατα Χωρον. This word denotes a wind blowing from the northwest. The harbour was doubtless

ter; *which is* an haven of Crete, ^a and lieth toward the southwest and northwest.

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosening ^b *thence*, they sailed close by Crete.

14 But not long after there ¹ arose against it a tempestuous ^c wind, called Euroclydon.

a ver.7. b ver.21. 1 or beat. c Ps.107.25.

curved. Its entrance was in a southwest direction. It then turned so as to lie in a direction towards the northwest. It was thus rendered perfectly safe from the winds and heavy seas; and in that harbour they might pass the winter in security.

13. *The south wind.* The wind before had probably been a head wind, blowing from the west. When it veered round to the south, and when it blew gently, though not entirely favourable, yet it was so that they supposed they could sail along the coast of Crete. ¶ *Had obtained their purpose.* The object of their desire; that is, to sail safely along the coast of Crete. ¶ *Loosing thence.* Setting sail from the fair havens. ¶ *Close by Crete.* Near the shore. It is evident that they designed, if possible, to make the harbour of Phenice, to winter there.

14. *Arose.* Beat violently. ¶ *Against it.* Against the island of Crete. ¶ *A tempestuous wind.* Turbulent, violent, strong. ¶ *Called Euroclydon.* Interpreters have been much perplexed about the meaning of this word, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The most probable supposition is, that it denotes a wind not blowing steadily from any quarter, but a *hurricane*, or wind veering about to different quarters. Such hurricanes are known to abound in the Mediterranean, and are now called *Levanters*, deriving their name from blowing chiefly in the Levant, or eastern part of the Mediterranean. The name *Euroclydon* is derived probably from two Greek words, εὖρος, *wind*, and κλύδων, *a wave*; so called from its agitating and exciting the waves. It thus answers to the usual effects of a hurricane, or of a wind rapidly changing its points of compass.

15. *The ship was caught.* By the wind. It came suddenly upon them as a tempest. ¶ *Could not bear up, &c.* Could not resist its violence, or could not direct the ship. It was seized by the wind, and

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat;

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and fearing lest they should fall ^d into the quick-

d ver.41.

driven with such violence that it became unmanageable. ¶ *We let her drive.* We suffered the ship to be borne along by the wind without attempting to control it.

16. *And running under.* Running near to an island. They run near to it, where the violence of the wind was probably broken by the island. ¶ *Which is called Clauda.* This is a small island southwest of Crete. ¶ *We had much work.* Much difficulty; we were scarcely able to do it. ¶ *To come by the boat.* This does not mean that they attempted here to land in the boat, but they had much difficulty in saving the small boat attached to the ship from being staved to pieces. Whether it was carried in the ship or towed at the stern does not appear; but it is evident that it was in danger of being broken to pieces, or lost, and that they had much difficulty in securing it. The importance of securing the small boat is known by all seamen.

17. *Which when they had taken up.* When they had raised up the boat into the ship, so as to secure it. ¶ *They used helps.* They used ropes, cables, stays, or chains, for the purpose of securing the ship. The danger was that the ship would be destroyed; and they, therefore, made use of such aids as should prevent the loss of the ship. ¶ *Undergirding the ship.* The ancients were accustomed to pass cables or strong ropes from one side of the ship to another, to keep the planks from springing or starting by the action of the sea. The rope was slipped under the prow, and passed along to any part of the keel which they pleased, and made fast on the deck. See cases mentioned in Kuinöel on this verse. An instance of the same kind is mentioned in lord Anson's voyage round the world. Speaking of a Spanish man-of-war in a storm, he says, "they were obliged to throw overboard all their upper-deck guns; and take six turns of the cable round the ship, to prevent her opening." (*Clarke.*)

sands, strake sail, and so were driven.

18 And being exceedingly tossed ^a with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship.

19 And the third *day* we cast out ^b with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither ^c sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope ^d that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of

^a Ps.107.27. ^b Job 2.4. Jon.1.5. ^c Ps.105.28.
^d Ezek.37.11. ^e ver.10. ^f ver.13. ^g Job
 22.29. Ps.112.7. 2Cor.4.8,9. ^h c.23.11. ⁱ Heb.1.14.

¶ *Lest they should fall into the quicksands.* There were two celebrated *syrtes*, or quicksands on the coast of Africa, called the greater and lesser. They were vast beds of sand driven up by the sea, and constantly shifting their position, so that that they could not know certainly where the danger was, and guard against it. As they were constantly changing their position, they could not be accurately laid down in a chart. They were afraid, therefore, that they should be driven on one of those banks of sand, and thus be lost. ¶ *Strake sail.* Or rather, lowered, or took down the mast; or the yards to which the sails were attached. There has been a great variety of interpretations proposed on this passage. The most probable is, that they took down the *mast*, by cutting or otherwise, as is now done in storms at sea, to save the ship. They were at the mercy of the wind and waves; and their only hope was by taking away their sails. ¶ *And so were driven.* By the wind and waves. The ship was unmanageable, and they suffered it to be driven before the wind.

18. *They lightened the ship.* By throwing out a part of the cargo.

19. *The tackling of the ship.* The anchors, sails, cables, baggage, &c. That is, they threw over every thing that was not indispensable to its preservation, for it seems still (ver. 29) that they retained some of their anchors on board.

20. *Neither sun nor stars, &c.* As they could see neither sun nor stars, they could make no observations; and as they had no compass, they would be totally

them, and said, *Sirs*, ye should have hearkened ^e unto me, and not have loosed ^f from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now ^g 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 ^h the angel ⁱ of God, whose ^j I am, and whom ^k I serve.

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cesar: and, lo, God hath given thee ^l all them that sail with thee.

^j Deut.32.9. Ps.135.4. Isa.44.5. Mal.3.17. Jno.17.9,10.
 1Cor.6.20. 1Pet.2.9,10 ^k Ps.116.16. Isa.44.21. Dan.
 3.17; 6.16. Jno.12.26. Rom.1.9. 2Tim.1.3. ^l Gen.
 19.21,22.

ignorant of their situation, and gave up all as lost.

21. *But after long abstinence.* By the violence of the storm, by their long-continued labour, and by their apprehension of danger, they had a long time abstained from food. ¶ *And to have gained this harm.* To have *procured* this harm, or have subjected yourselves to it. Had you remained there, you would have been safe. It seems to be bad English to speak of *gaining a loss*, but it is a correct translation of the original (κεεδησαι), which expresses the idea of *acquiring* or *procuring*, whether good or evil. See ver. 9, 10.

22. *There shall be no loss.* This must have been cheering news to those who had given up all for lost. As Paul had manifested great wisdom in his former advice to them, they might be now more disposed to listen to him. The reason why he believed they would be safe, he immediately states.

23. *There stood by me.* There appeared to me. ¶ *The angel of God.* The messages of God were often communicated by angels. See Heb. i. 14. This does not mean that there was any particular angel, but simply *an* angel. ¶ *Whose I am.* Of the God to whom I belong. This is an expression of Paul's entire devotedness to him. ¶ *Whom I serve.* In the gospel. To whom and to whose cause I am entirely devoted.

24. *Fear not, Paul.* Do not be alarmed with the danger of the loss of life. ¶ *Thou must be brought, &c.* And therefore thy life will be spared. ¶ *God hath given thee all, &c.* That is, they shall all

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for ^a I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

26 Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island. ^b

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country :

28 And sounded, and found *it* twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they

^a Luke 1.45. Rom. 4.20, 21. 2Tim. 1.12. ^b c.28.1.

sounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms.

29 Then fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished ^c for the day.

30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

31 Paul said to the centurion

^c Ps.130.6.

be preserved with thee. None of their lives shall be lost. It does not mean that they should be converted; but that their lives should be preserved. It is implied here that it was for the sake of Paul, or that the leading purpose of the divine interposition to rescue them from danger was, to save his life. The wicked often derive important benefits from being connected with Christians; and God often confers important favours on *them* in his general purpose to benefit his own people. The lives of impenitent men are often spared because God interposes to save his own people.

26. *Howbeit.* Nevertheless. ¶ *Upon a certain island.* Malta. See ch. xviii. 1.

27. *The fourteenth night.* From the time when the tempest commenced. ¶ *In Adria.* In the Adriatic sea. This sea is properly situated between Italy and Dalmatia, now called the Adriatic gulf. But among the ancients the name was given not only to that gulf, but to the whole sea lying between Greece, Italy, and Africa, including the Sicilian and Ionian sea. It is evident from the narrative, that they were not in the Adriatic gulf, but in the vicinity of Malta. See the map. ¶ *Deemed.* Judged. Probably by the appearance of the sea.

28. *And sounded.* To *sound* is to make use of a line and lead to ascertain the depth of water. ¶ *Twenty fathoms.* A fathom is six feet, or the distance from the extremity of the middle finger on one hand to the extremity of the other, when the arms are extended. The depth, therefore, was about one hundred and twenty feet. ¶ *Fifteen fathoms.* They knew, therefore, that they were drawing near to shore.

29. *They cast four anchors.* On account of the violence of the storm and waves, to make if possible the ship se-

cure. ¶ *And wished for the day.* To discern more accurately their situation and danger.

30. *The shipmen.* The sailors, leaving the prisoners. ¶ *Under colour.* Under pretence. They pretended that it was necessary to get into the boat, and carry the anchors ahead of the ship so as to make it secure, but with a real intention to make for the shore. ¶ *Out of the foreship.* From the prow, so as to make the fore part of the ship secure. The reason why they did this was, probably, that they expected the ship would go to pieces; and as all on board could not be saved in one small boat, they resolved to escape to a place of safety as soon as possible.

31. *Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers.* The centurion had, it appears, the general direction of the ship. ver. 11. Probably it had been pressed into the service of the government. ¶ *Except these.* These seamen. The soldiers and the centurion were unqualified to manage the ship, and the presence of the sailors was therefore indispensable to the preservation of any. ¶ *Abide in the ship.* Remain on board. ¶ *Ye cannot be saved.* You cannot be preserved from death. You will have no hope of managing the ship so as to be secure from death. It will be remembered that Paul had been informed by the angel, and had assured them (ver. 22—24), that no lives should be lost. But it was only in the use of the proper *means* that their lives would be safe. Though it had been determined, and though Paul had the assurance that their lives would be safe, yet this did not, in his view, prevent the use of the proper means to secure it. From this we may learn, (1.) That the certainty of an event does not render it improper to use means to obtain it. (2.) That though the event

and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued fasting, having

^a Matt.15.32. 1Tim.5.23.

^b 1Kings 1.52. Matt.

10.30. Luke 12.7; 21.18.

may be determined, yet the use of the means may be indispensable. The event is rendered no more certain than the means requisite to accomplish it. (3.) That the doctrine of the divine purposes or decrees, making certain future events, does not make the use of man's agency unnecessary or improper. The means are determined as well as the end; and the one will not be secured without the other. (4.) The same is true in regard to the decrees respecting salvation. The end is not determined without the means; and as God has resolved that his people shall be saved, so he has also determined the means. He has ordained that they shall repent, shall believe, shall be holy, and shall *thus* be saved. (5.) We have in this case a full answer to the objection that a belief in the decrees of God will make men neglect the means of salvation, and lead to licentiousness. It has just the contrary tendency. Here is a case in which Paul *certainly* believed in the purpose of God to save these men; in which he was assured that it was fully determined; and yet the effect was not to produce inattention and unconcern, but to prompt him to use strenuous efforts to accomplish the very effect which God had determined *should* take place. So it is always. A belief that God has purposes of mercy; that he designs, and has always designed, to save some, will prompt to the use of all proper means to secure it. If we had no evidence that God had any such purpose, effort would be vain. We should have no inducement to exertion. Where we *have* such evidence, it operates as it did in the case of Paul, to produce great and strenuous endeavours to secure the object.

32. *Cut off the ropes, &c.* It is evident that the mariners had not yet got on board the boat. They had let it down into the sea (ver. 30), and were about to

taken nothing.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat; for this ^a is for your health: for there ^b shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and ^c gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good

^c 1Sam.9.13. Matt.15.36. Mark 8.6. Jno.6.11,23. 1Tim. 4.3,4.

go on board. By thus cutting the ropes which fastened the boat to the ship, and letting it go, they removed all possibility of their fleeing from the ship, and compelled them to remain on board.

33. *And while the day was coming on.* At daybreak. It was before they had sufficient light to discern what they should do. ¶ *To take meat.* Food. The word *meat* was formerly used to denote food of any kind. ¶ *That ye have tarried.* That you have remained or been fasting. ¶ *Having taken nothing.* No regular meal. It cannot mean that they had lived entirely without food; but that they had been so much in danger, so constantly engaged, and so anxious about their safety, that they had taken no regular meal; and that what they had taken had been at irregular intervals, and had been a scanty allowance. "Appian speaks of an army which for twenty days together had neither food nor sleep; by which he must mean that they neither made full meals, nor slept whole nights together. The same interpretation must be given to this phrase." (*Doddridge.*) The effect of this must have been, that they would be weak and exhausted; and little able to endure the fatigues which yet remained.

34. *Not an hair fall from the head, &c.* This is a proverbial expression, denoting that they should be preserved safe; that none of them should be lost, and that in their persons they should not experience the least damage. 1 Kings i. 52. 1 Sam. xiv. 45.

35. *And gave thanks, &c.* This was the usual custom among the Hebrews. See Note, Matt. xiv. 19. Paul was among those who were not Christians. But he was not ashamed of the proper acknowledgment of God, and was not afraid to avow his dependence on him, and to express his gratitude for his mercy

cheer, and they also took *some* meat.

37 And we were in all in the ship, two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to

38. *They lightened the ship.* By casting the wheat into the sea. As they had no hope of saving the cargo, and had no further use for it, they hoped that by throwing the wheat overboard, the ship would draw less water, and that thus they would be able to come nearer to the shore.

39. *They knew not the land.* They had been driven with a tempest, without being able to make any observation; and it is probable that they were entire strangers to the coast, and to the whole island. ¶ *A certain creek with a shore.* Greek, A certain *bosom* (βάλανον) or bay. By its having a shore is probably meant that it had a level shore, or one that was convenient for landing. It was not a high bluff of rocks, but was accessible. *Kui-nöl* thinks that the passage should be construed, "they found a certain shore, having a bay," &c. ¶ *Were minded.* Were resolved.

40. *Had taken up the anchors.* The four anchors with which they had moored the ship. ver. 29. See the margin. The expression may mean that they slipped or cut their cables, and that thus they left the anchors in the sea. This is the most probable interpretation. ¶ *And loosed the rudder-bands.* The rudder in navigation is that by which a ship is steered. It is that part of the helm which consists of a piece of timber, broad at the bottom, which enters the water, and is attached by hinges to the stern-post, on which it turns.—(*Webster.*) But what was the precise form of the rudder among the ancients, is not certainly known. Sometimes a vessel might be steered by oars. In most ships they appear to have had a rudder at the prow as well as at the stern. In some instances also, they had them on the sides. The

thrust in the ship.

40 And when they had ¹ taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

¹ or, cut the anchors, left them in the sea, etc.

word used here in the Greek is in the plural (τῶν πηδαλίων), and it is evident that they had in this ship more than one rudder. The *bands* mentioned here were probably the cords, or fastenings by which the rudder could be made secure to the sides of the ship, or could be raised up out of the water in a violent storm, to prevent its being carried away. And as in the tempest, the rudders had become useless (ver. 15. 17), they were probably either raised out of the water, or made fast. Now that the storm was passed, and they could be used again, they were *loosed*, and they endeavoured to direct the vessel into port. ¶ *The mainsail.* Ἀετίμων. There have been various explanations of this word. Luther translates it *the mast.* Erasmus, *the yards.* Grotius, who supposes that the mainmast had been cast away (ver. 17), thinks that this must mean the foremast or bowsprit. The word usually means the *mainsail.* The Syriac and Arabic understand it of a *small sail*, that was hoisted for a temporary purpose.

41. *And falling.* Being carried by the wind and waves. ¶ *Into a place where two seas met.* Gr. Into a place of a *double sea.* Διθάλασσον. That is, a place which is washed on both sides by the sea. It refers properly to an isthmus, tongue of land, or a sand-bar stretching out from the main land, and which was washed on both sides by the waves. It is evident that this was not properly an *isthmus* that was above the waves, but was probably a long sand-bank that stretched far out into the sea, and which they did not perceive. In endeavouring to make the harbour, they ran on this bar or sand-bank. ¶ *They ran the ship aground.* Not designedly, but in endeavouring to reach the harbour. ver. 39

42 And the soldiers' counsel ^a was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, ^b kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:

^a Ps.74.20.

^b 2Cor.11.25.

¶ *The hinder part was broken.* The stern was broken or staved in. By this means the company was furnished with boards, &c., on which they were safely conveyed to the shore. ver. 44.

42. *And the soldiers' counsel, &c.* Why they gave this advice is not known. It was probably, however, because the Roman military discipline was very strict, and if they escaped, it would probably be charged on them that it had been done by the negligence and unfaithfulness of the soldiers. They therefore proposed, in a most cruel and bloodthirsty manner, to kill them, though contrary to all humanity, justice, and laws; presuming probably that it would be supposed that they had perished in the wreck. This is a remarkable proof that men can be cruel even when experiencing the tender mercy of God; and that the most affecting scenes of divine goodness will not mitigate the natural ferocity and cruelty of those who delight in blood.

43. *But the centurion, willing to save Paul.* He had at first been disposed to treat Paul with kindness. ver. 3. And his conduct on board the ship; the wisdom of his advice (ver. 10); the prudence of his conduct in the agitation and danger of the tempest; and not improbably the belief that he was under the divine protection and blessing, disposed him to spare his life. ¶ *Kept them from their purpose.* Thus, for the sake of this one righteous man, the lives of all were spared. The instance here shows, (1.) That it is possible for a pious man, like Paul, so to conduct in the various trying scenes of life—the agitations, difficulties, and temptations of this world—as to conciliate the favour of the men of this world; and, (2.) That important benefits often result to sinners from the righteous. Paul's being on board was the means of saving the lives of many prisoners; and God often confers important blessings on the wicked for the sake of the pious relatives, friends, and neighbours with whom

44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so ^c it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AND when they were escaped, then they knew that the island ^d was called Melita.

^c Ps.107.28,30. ver.22.

^d c.27.26.

they are connected. Ten righteous men would have saved Sodom (Gen. xviii. 32); and Christians are in more ways than one the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. Matt. v. 13, 14. It is a privilege to be related to the friends of God—to be the children of pious parents, or to be connected with pious partners in life. It is a privilege to be connected with the friends of God in business; or to dwell near them; or to be associated with them in the various walks and dangers of life. The streams of blessings which flow to fertilize their lands, flow also to bless others; the dews of heaven which descend on their habitations, descend on all around; and the God which crowns them with loving-kindness, often fills the abodes of their neighbours and friends with the blessings of peace and salvation. ¶ *And commanded.* Probably they were released from their chains.

44. *And the rest.* Those who could not swim. ¶ *They escaped all safe to land.* According to the promise which was made to Paul. ver. 22. This was done by the special providence of God. It was a remarkable instance of divine interposition to save so many through so long continued dangers; and it shows that God can defend in any perils, and can accomplish all his purposes. On the ocean, or the land, we are safe in his keeping; and he can, devise ways that shall fulfill all his purposes, and that can protect his people from danger.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. *They knew.* Either from their former acquaintance with the island, or from the information of the inhabitants. ¶ *Was called Melita.* Now called Malta. It was celebrated formerly for producing large quantities of honey, and is supposed to have been called *Melita* from the Greek word, signifying honey. It is about twenty miles in length from east to west, and twelve miles in breadth from north to south, and about sixty miles in circumference. It is about sixty miles

2 And the barbarous ^a people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us, ^b every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them*

^a Rom. 1. 14. Col. 3. 11.

^b Matt. 10. 42. Heb. 13. 2.

from the coast of Sicily. The island is an immense rock of white soft free-stone, with a covering of earth about one foot in depth, which has been brought from the island of Sicily. There was also another island formerly called *Melita*, now called *Meleda*, in the Adriatic sea, near the coast of Illyricum, and some have supposed that Paul was shipwrecked on that island. But tradition has uniformly said that it was on the island now called Malta. Besides, the other Melita would have been far out of the usual track in going to Italy; and it is further evident that Malta was the place, because, from the place of his shipwreck, he went directly to Syracuse, Rhegium, and Puteoli, thus sailing in a direct course to Rome. In sailing from the other Melita to Rhegium, Syracuse would be far out of the direct course. The island now is in the possession of the British.

2. *And the barbarous people.* See Note, Rom. i. 14. The Greeks regarded all as barbarians who did not speak their language; and applied the name to all other nations but their own. It does not denote, as it does sometimes with us, people of savage, uncultivated, and cruel habits, but simply those whose speech was unintelligible. See 1 Cor. xiv. 11. The island is supposed to have been peopled at first by the Phœcians, afterwards by the Phœnicians, and afterwards by a colony from Carthage. The language of the Maltese was that of Africa, and hence it was called by the Greeks the language of barbarians. It was a language which was unintelligible to the Greeks and Latins. ¶ *The rain.* The continuance of the storm. ¶ *And of the cold.* The exposure to the water in getting to the shore, and probably to the coldness of the weather. It was now in the month of October.

3. *Had gathered a bundle of sticks.* For the purpose of making a fire. ¶ *There came a viper.* A poisonous serpent. Note, Matt. iii. 7. The viper was, doubtless, in the bundle of sticks or limbs of trees which Paul had gathered, but was con-

on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt ^c this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the

^c Jno. 7. 24.

cealed, and was torpid. But when the bundle was laid on the fire, the viper became warmed by the heat, and ran out, and fastened on the hand of Paul. ¶ *And fastened on his hand.* Κεκολλησε. This word properly means to join one's-self to; to touch; to adhere to. It might have been by coiling around his hand and arm; or by fastening its fangs in his hand. It is not expressly affirmed that Paul was *bitten* by the viper, yet it is evidently implied; and it is wholly incredible, that a viper, unless miraculously prevented, should fasten himself to the hand without biting.

4. *The venomous beast.* The word *beast* we apply usually to an animal of larger size than a viper. But the original word (θηρίον) is applicable to animals of any kind, and especially applied by Greek writers to serpents. (See *Schleusner*.) ¶ *No doubt.* The fact that the viper had fastened on him, and that, as they supposed, he must now certainly die, was the proof from which they inferred his guilt. ¶ *Is a murderer.* Why they thought he was a *murderer* rather than guilty of some other crime, is not known. It might have been, (1.) Because they inferred that he must have been guilty of some very atrocious crime, and as murder was the highest crime that man could commit, they inferred that he had been guilty of this. Or, (2.) More probably, they had an opinion that when divine vengeance overtook a man, he would be punished in a manner similar to the offence; and as murder is committed usually with the hand, and as the viper had fastened on the hand of Paul, they inferred that he had been guilty of taking life. It was supposed among the ancients, that persons were often punished by divine vengeance in that part of the body which had been the instrument of the sin. ¶ *Whom though he hath escaped the sea.* They supposed that vengeance and justice would still follow the guilty; that though he might escape one form of punishment, yet he would be exposed to another. And this, to a certain extent, is true. These bar-

sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt ^a no harm.

6 Howbeit, they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said ^b that he was a god.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the

^a Mark 16, 18. Luke 10. 19.

^b c. 14. 11.

barians reasoned from great original principles, written on the hearts of all men by nature, that there is a God of justice, and that the guilty would be punished. They reasoned incorrectly, as many do, only because that they supposed that every calamity is a judgment for some particular sin. Men often draw this conclusion; and suppose that suffering is to be traced to some particular crime, and to be regarded as a direct judgment from heaven. See Notes, John ix. 1—3. The general proposition, that all sin will be punished at some time, is true; but we are not qualified to affirm of particular calamities always that they are direct judgments for sin. In some cases we may. In the case of the drunkard, the gambler, and the profligate, we cannot doubt, that the loss of property, health, and reputation is the direct result of specific crime. In the ordinary calamities of life, however, it requires a more profound acquaintance with the principles of divine government than we possess, to affirm of each instance of suffering, that it is a particular judgment for some crime. ¶ *Yet vengeance.* Ἡ δίκη. *Diké*, or justice, was represented by the heathen as a goddess, the daughter of Jupiter, whose office it was to take vengeance, or to inflict punishment for crimes. ¶ *Suffereth not to live.* They regarded him as already a dead man. They supposed the effect of the bite of the viper would be so certainly fatal, that they might speak of him as already in effect dead. *Beza.*

5. *And he shook off, &c.* In this was remarkably fulfilled the promise of the Saviour (Mark xvi. 18): "They shall take up serpents," &c.

6. *When he should have swollen.* When they expected he would have swollen

island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody flux: to whom ^c Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid ^d his hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

10 Who also honoured ^e us with

^c James 5. 14, 15. ^d Matt. 9. 13. Mark 6. 5—7. 32; 16. 18. Luke 4. 40. c. 19. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 9, 28. ^e 1 Thess. 2. 6. 1 Tim 5. 17.

from the bite of the viper. The poison of the viper is rapid; and they expected that he would die soon. The word rendered "swollen" (πυρεσθῆσι) means properly to burn; to be inflamed; and then to be swollen from inflammation. This was what they expected here, that the poison would produce a violent inflammation. ¶ *Or fallen down dead suddenly.* As is sometimes the case from the bite of the serpent, when a vital part is affected. ¶ *They changed their minds.* They saw he was uninjured, and miraculously preserved; and they supposed that none but a god could be thus kept from death. ¶ *That he was a god.* That the Maltese were idolaters there can be no doubt. But what gods they worshipped is unknown, and conjecture would be useless. It was natural that they should attribute such a preservation to the presence of a divinity. A similar instance occurred at Lystra. See Notes, ch. xiv. 11.

7. *In the same quarters.* In that place, or that part of the island. ¶ *Possessions.* Property. His place of residence. ¶ *The chief man.* Gr. The first man. Probably he was the governor of the island.

8. *A bloody flux.* Gr. Dysentery. ¶ *And laid his hands on him, &c.* In accordance with the promise of the Saviour. Mark xvi. 18. This miracle was a suitable return for the hospitality of Publius, and would serve to conciliate further the kindness of the people, and prepare the way for the usefulness of Paul.

10. *Who also honoured us.* As men who were favoured of heaven, and who had been the means of conferring important benefits on them in healing the sick, &c. Probably the word "honours" here means *gifts*, or marks of favour. ¶ *They laded us.* They gave us, or con-

many honours; and when we departed, they laded *us* with such things ^a as were necessary.

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days.

13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind

^a Matt.6.31-34; 10.8-10. 2Cor.2.5-11. Phil.4.11,12.

ferred on us. They furnished us with such things as were necessary for us on our journey.

11. *And after three months.* Probably they remained there so long, because there was no favourable opportunity for them to go to Rome. If they arrived there, as is commonly supposed, in October, they left for Rome in January. ¶ *In a ship of Alexandria.* See Note, ch. xxvii. 6. ¶ *Whose sign.* Which was ornamented with an image of Castor and Pollux. It was common to place on the prow of the ship the image of some person, or god, whose name the ship bore: This custom is still observed. ¶ *Castor and Pollux.* These were two semi-deities. They were reputed to be twin brothers, sons of Jupiter and Leda, the wife of Tyndarus, king of Sparta. After their death, they are fabled to have been translated to heaven, and made *constellations* under the name of *gemini*, or the twins. They then received divine honours, and were called the sons of Jupiter. They were supposed to preside over sailors, and to be their protectors; hence it was not uncommon to place their image on ships. See authorities in Lempriere's Dictionary.

12. *And landing at Syracuse.* Syracuse was the capital of the island of Sicily, on the eastern coast. It was in the direct course from Malta to Rome. It contains at present about 18,000 inhabitants.

13. *We fetched a compass.* We coasted about; or we coasted along the eastern side of Sicily. The course can be seen on the map. ¶ *And came to Rhegium.* This was a city of Italy, in the kingdom of Naples, on the coast near the southwest extremity of Italy. It was nearly opposite to Messina, in Sicily. It is now called *Reggio*. See the map. ¶ *The south wind.* A wind favourable for their voyage. ¶ *To Puteoli.* The wells. It was celebrated for its warm baths, and

blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli;

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came ^b to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and the Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage. ^c

^b c.21.5. 3Jno.6,8.

^c Josh.1.6,7,9. 1Sam.30.6. Ps. 27.14.

from these, and its springs, it is supposed to have derived its name of *the wells*. It is now called *Pozzuoli*, and is in the campania of Naples, on the northern side of the bay, and about eight miles northwest from Naples. The town contains at present about 10,000 inhabitants.

14. *Brethren.* Christian brethren. But by whom the gospel had been preached there, is unknown.

15. *And from thence.* From Puteoli. ¶ *When the brethren heard of us.* The Christians who were at Rome. ¶ *As far as the Appii Forum.* This was a city about 56 miles from Rome. The remains of an ancient city are still seen there. It is on the borders of the Pontine marshes. The city was built on the celebrated Appian way, or road from Rome to Capua. The road was made by Appius Claudius, and probably the city also. It was called the *forum* or *market-place* of Appius, because it was a convenient place for travellers on the Appian way to stop for purposes of refreshment. It was also a famous resort for pedlars and merchants. See Horace, b. i. sat. 5. 3. ¶ *And the Three Taverns.* This place was about eight or ten miles nearer Rome than the Appii Forum. Cicero ad Att. ii. 10. It undoubtedly received its name because it was distinguished as a place of refreshment on the Appian way. Probably the greater part of the company of Christians remained at this place, while the remainder went forward to meet Paul, and to attend him on his way. The Christians at Rome had doubtless heard much of Paul. His epistle to them had been written about the year of our Lord 57, or at least five years before this time. The interest which the Roman Christians felt in the apostle was thus manifested by their coming so far to meet him, though he was a prisoner. ¶ *He thanked God.* He had long ardently desired to see the Chris-

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 ^a with a soldier that kept him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men *and* brethren, though ^b I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered ^c prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans:

18 Who, ^d when they had ex-

^a c.24.25; 27.3. ^b c.24.12,13; 25.8. ^c c.21.33, &c. ^d c.24.10; 26.31.

tians of Rome. Rom. i. 9—11; xv. 23. 32. He was now grateful to God that the object of his long desire was at last granted to him, and that he was permitted to see them, though in bonds. ¶ *And took courage.* From their society and counsel. The presence and counsel of Christian brethren is often of inestimable value in encouraging and strengthening us in the toils and trials of life.

16. *The captain of the guard.* The commander of the Pretorian cohort, or guard. The custom was, that those who were sent from the provinces to Rome for trial were delivered to the custody of this guard. The name of the prefect or captain of the guard at this time, was Burrhus Afranius. Tacit. Ann. 12. 42. 1. ¶ *But Paul was suffered, &c.* Evidently by the permission of the centurion, whose favour he had so much conciliated on the voyage. See ch. xxvii. 43. ¶ *With a soldier that kept him.* That is, in the custody of a soldier, to whom he was chained, and who, of course, constantly attended him. See ch. xxiv. 23. Note, ch. xii. 6.

17. *Paul called the chief of the Jews.* He probably had two objects in this: one was to vindicate himself from the suspicion of crime, or to convince them that the charges alleged against him were false; and the other, to explain to them the gospel of Christ. In accordance with his custom every where, he seized the earliest opportunity of making the gospel known to his own countrymen; and he naturally supposed that charges highly unfavourable to his character, had been sent forward against him to the Jews at

amined me, would have let *me* go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews spake against *it*, I was constrained to appeal ^e unto Cesar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that for the hope ^f of Israel I am bound with this chain. ^g

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee.

^e c.25.11. ^f c.26.6,7. ^g c.26.29. Eph.3.1; 4.1; 6. 20. 2Tim.1.16; 2.9. Philem.10,13.

Rome by those in Judea. ¶ *Against the people.* Against the Jews. ch. xxiv. 12. ¶ *Or customs, &c.* The religious rites of the nation. Note, ch. vi. 14. ¶ *Was I delivered prisoner, &c.* By the Jews. ch. xxi. 33, &c.

18. *When they had examined me, &c.* ch. xxiv. 10—27; xxv. xxvi. 31, 32. ¶ *No cause of death.* No crime worthy of death.

19. *The Jews spake against it.* Against my being set at liberty. ¶ *I was constrained.* By a regard to my own safety and character. ¶ *To appeal unto Cesar.* Note, ch. xxv. 11. ¶ *Not that I had aught, &c.* I did it for my own preservation and safety; not that I wished to accuse my own countrymen. It was not from motives of revenge, but for safety. Paul had been unjustly accused and injured; yet with the true spirit of the Christian religion, he here says that he cherished no unkind feelings towards them.

20. *Because for the hope of Israel.* On account of the hope which the Jews cherished of the coming of the Messiah; of the resurrection; and of the future state through him. See this explained in the Note on ch. xxiii. 6. ¶ *I am bound with this chain.* See Note, ch. xxvi. 29. Probably he was attached constantly to a soldier by a chain.

21. *We neither received letters, &c.* Why the Jews in Judea had not forwarded the accusation against Paul to their brethren at Rome, that they might continue the prosecution before the emperor, is not known. It is probable that they

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where ^a it is spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; ^b to whom he expounded ^c and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both ^d out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

24 And some ^e believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one

^a Luke 2.34. c.24.5,14. 1Pet.2.12; 4.14. ^b Philem. 2. ^c Luke 24.27. c.17.3; 19.8. ^d c.26.6,22.

regarded their cause as *hopeless*, and choose to abandon the prosecution. Paul had been acquitted successively by Lysias, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa; and as they had not succeeded in procuring his condemnation before them, they saw no prospect of doing it at Rome, and chose therefore not to press the prosecution any farther. ¶ *Neither any of the brethren that came.* Any of the Jews. There was a very constant intercourse between Judea and Rome, but it seems that the Jews who had come before Paul had arrived, had not mentioned his case, so as to prejudice them against him.

22. *What thou thinkest.* What your belief is; or what are the doctrines of Christians respecting the Messiah. ¶ *This sect.* The sect of Christians. ¶ *Spoken against.* Particularly by Jews. This was the case then; and to a great extent, is the case still. It has been the common lot of the followers of Christ to be spoken of with contempt. Comp. ch. xxiv. 5.

23. *Appointed him a day.* A day when they would hear him. ¶ *To his lodging.* To the house where he resided. ver. 30. ¶ *He expounded.* He explained or declared the principles of the Christian religion. ¶ *And testified the kingdom of God.* Bore witness to, or declared the principles and doctrines of the reign of the Messiah. See Note, Matt. iii. 2. ¶ *Persuading them concerning Jesus.* Endeavouring to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah. ¶ *Both out of the law of Moses.* Endeavouring to convince them that he corresponded with the predictions re-

word; Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias ^f the prophet unto our fathers,

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is

^e c.14.4; 17.4; 19.9. Rom.3.3. ^f Ps.81.11. Isa.6.9. Jer.5.21. Eze.3.6,7; 12.2. Matt.13.14,15. Rom.11.8.

pecting the Messiah in the books of Moses. (See Gen. xlix. 10. Deut. xviii. 18.) and with the types which Moses had instituted to prefigure the Messiah. ¶ *And out of the prophets.* Showing that he corresponded with the predictions of the prophets. See Note, ch. xvii. 3. ¶ *From morning until evening.* An instance of Paul's indefatigable toil in endeavouring to win his own countrymen to Jesus as the Messiah.

24. *And some believed, &c.* See Note, ch. xiv. 4.

25. *Had spoken one word.* One declaration of solemn prophecy, reminding them that it was the characteristic of the nation to reject the testimony of God, and that it was to be expected. It was the last solemn warning which we know Paul to have delivered to his countrymen the Jews. ¶ *Well spake.* Or he spoke the truth; he justly described the character of the Jewish people. The passage here quoted was as applicable in the time of Paul as of Isaiah. ¶ *The Holy Ghost.* A full proof of the inspiration of Isaiah. ¶ *By Esaias.* By Isaiah. Isa. vi. 9, 10.

26, 27. *Saying, &c.* See this passage explained in the Notes on Matt. xiii. 14, and John xii. 39, 40.

28. *The salvation of God.* The knowledge of God's mode of saving men. ¶ *Is sent unto the Gentiles.* Since you have rejected it, it will be offered to them. See Note, ch. xiii. 46. ¶ *And that they will hear it.* They will embrace it. Paul was never discouraged. If the gospel

sent unto the Gentiles, ^a and *that* they will hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole

^a Matt. 21. 41. c. 13. 46, 47; 18. 6.; 22. 21; 26. 17, 18. Rom. 11. 11.

was rejected by one class of people, he was ready to offer it to another. If his own countrymen rejected and despised it, he never allowed himself to suppose that Christ had died in vain, but believed that others would be inclined to embrace its saving benefits. How happy would it be if all Christians had the same unwavering faith and zeal as Paul!

29. *And had great reasoning.* Great discussion or debates. That is, the part which believed that Jesus was the Messiah (ver. 24) discussed the subject warmly with those who did not believe. This whole verse is wanting in the Syriac version, and in some Greek MSS., and is supposed by Mill and Griesbach to be spurious.

30. *Paul dwelt two whole years.* Doubtless in the custody of the soldiers. Why he was not prosecuted before the emperor during this time is not known. It is evident, however (ver. 21), that the Jews were not disposed to carry the case before Nero, and the matter, during this time, was suffered quietly to sleep. There is great probability that the Jews durst not prosecute him before the emperor. It is clear that they had never been in favour of the appeal to Rome, and that they had no hope of gaining their cause. Probably they might remember the former treatment of the Roman emperor of their people (Note, ch. xviii. 2); they might remember that they were despised at the Roman capital, and not choose to encounter the scorn and indignation of the Roman court; and as there was no prosecution, Paul was suffered to live in quietness and safety. Lardner, however, supposes (vol. v. p. 528, 529. Ed. 8vo. Lond. 1829) that the case of Paul was soon brought before Nero, and decided; and that the method of confinement was ordered by the emperor himself. Lightfoot also supposes that Paul's "accusers, who had come from Judea to lay their charge against him, would be urgent to get their business despatched, that they might be returning to their own home again, and so would bring him to trial as

years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.

31 Preaching ^b the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

^b c. 4. 31. Eph. 6. 19.

soon as they could." But nothing certainly is known on the subject. It is evident, indeed, from 2 Tim. iii. 16, that he was at *some time* arraigned before the emperor; but when it was, or what was the decision, or why he was at last set at liberty, are all involved in impenetrable obscurity. ¶ *In his own hired house.* In a house which he was permitted to hire, and occupy as his own. Probably in this he was assisted by the kindness of his Roman friends. ¶ *And received all, &c.* Received all hospitably and kindly who came to him to show him kindness, or to listen to his instructions. It is evident from this, that he was still a prisoner, and was not permitted to go at large.

31. *Preaching the kingdom of God.* Note, ch. xx. 25. ¶ *With all confidence.* Openly and boldly, without any one to hinder him. It is known also, that Paul was not unsuccessful even when a prisoner at Rome. Several persons were converted by his preaching even in the court of the emperor. The things which had happened to him, he says (Phil. i. 12, 13, 14), had fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel, so that his bonds in Christ were manifested in all the palace, and in all other places; and many brethren in the Lord, says he, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. In this situation he was remembered with deep interest by the church at Philippi, who sent Epaphroditus to him with a contribution to supply his wants. Of their kindness he speaks in terms of the tenderest gratitude in Phil. ii. 25; iv. 18. During his confinement also, he was the means of the conversion of Onesimus, a runaway slave of Philemon, of Colosse in Phrygia (Philem. 10); whom he sent back to his master with a letter to himself, and with an epistle to the church at that place. See epistle to the Colossians iv. 8, 9. 18. During this imprisonment, he wrote, according to Lardner, the following epistles, in the following order and time, viz:

Ephesians, April, A. D.....	61
2 Timothy, May.....	61
Philippians, before the end of...	62
Colossians	62
Philemon.....	62
Hebrews, spring of.....	63

Here closes the inspired account of the propagation of Christianity, of the organization of the Christian church, and of the toils and persecutions of the apostle Paul. Who can but be deeply affected when he comes to the conclusion of this inspired book of revivals, and of the history of the spread of the Christian religion, and of the account of that wonderful man—the apostle Paul? Who can help heaving the sigh of regret, that this interesting historian did not carry forward the history of Paul till his death, and that henceforward, in the history of the church, we want this faithful, inspired guide; and that, from the close of this book, every thing becomes at once so involved in obscurity and uncertainty? Instead, however, of pouring forth the sigh of unavailing regret that the sacred historian has carried us no farther onward, we should rather speak the language of praise that he has given, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a history of the church for thirty years after the ascension of the Saviour; that he has recorded the accounts of the first great revivals of religion; that he has presented us the examples of the early missionary zeal; that he has informed us how the early Christians endured persecution and toil; that he has conducted us from land to land, and from city to city, showing us every where how the gospel was propagated, until we are led to the seat of the Roman power, and see the great apostle of Christianity there proclaiming, in that mighty capital of the world, the name of Jesus as the Saviour of men. Perhaps there could be no more appropriate close to the book of the inspired history, than thus to have conducted the apostle of the Gentiles, and to have recorded the spread of Christianity, to the capital of the Roman world, and to leave the principal agent in the establishment of the Christian religion in that seat of intelligence, and influence, and power. It is the conducting of Christianity to the very height of its earthly victories; and having shown its power in the *provinces* of the empire, it was proper for the inspired author of this ecclesiastical history to close the account with the record of its achievements in the capital.

Why Luke closed his history here is not known. It may have been that he was not afterwards the companion of Paul; or that he might have been himself removed by death. It is agreed on all hands that he did not attend Paul in his subsequent travels; and we should infer from the conclusion of this book, that he did not survive the apostle, as it is almost incredible, if he did, that he did not mention his release and death. It is the uniform account of antiquity, that Luke, after the transactions with which the Acts of the Apostles closes, passed over into Achaia, where he lived a year or two, and there died at the age of eighty-four years.

Every thing in regard to the apostle Paul, after the account with which Luke closes this book, is involved in doubt and uncertainty. By what means he was set at liberty is not known; and there is a great contradiction of statements in regard to his subsequent travels, and even the time of his death. It is generally agreed, indeed, that he was set at liberty in the year of our Lord 63. After this, some of the fathers assert, that he travelled over Italy, and passed into Spain. But this account is involved in great uncertainty. Lardner, who has examined all the statements with care, and than whom no one is better qualified to pronounce an opinion on these subjects, gives the following account of the subsequent life of Paul. (Works, vol. v. 331—336. Ed. Lond. 1829.) He supposes that after his release, he went from Rome to Jerusalem as soon as possible; that he then went to Ephesus, and from thence to Laodicea and Colosse; and that he returned to Rome by Troas, Philippi, and Corinth. The reason why he returned to Rome, Lardner supposes was, that he regarded that city as opening before him the widest and most important field of labour; and that, therefore, he proposed there to spend the remainder of his life.

In the year of our Lord 64, a dreadful fire happened at Rome which continued for six or seven days. It was generally supposed that the city had been set on fire by order of the emperor Nero. In order to divert the attention of the people from this charge against himself, he accused the Christians of having been the authors of the conflagration, and excited against them a most furious and bloody persecution. In this persecution, it is generally supposed that Paul and Peter suffered death; the former by being beheaded, and the latter by crucifix-

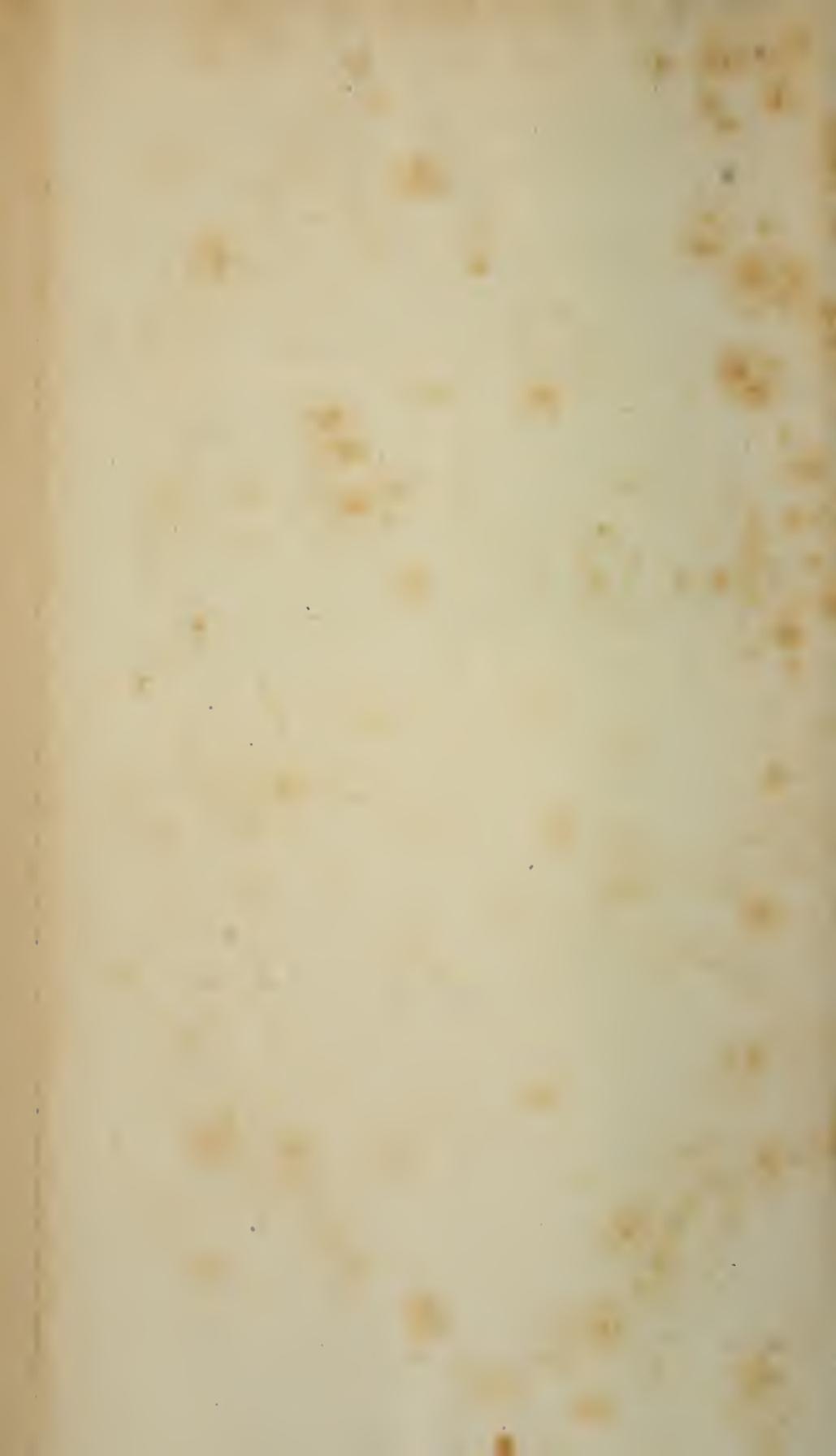
ion. Paul is supposed to have been beheaded rather than crucified, because he was a Roman citizen, and because it was unlawful to put a Roman citizen to death on a cross. Lardner thinks that this occurred in the year 65. Where Paul was beheaded is not certainly known. It is generally supposed to have occurred at a place called the Salvian Waters, about three miles from Rome, and that he was buried in the Ostian Way, where a magnificent church was afterwards built. But of this there is no absolute certainty.

It is far more important and interesting for us to be assured, from the character which he evinced, and from the proofs of his zeal and toil in the cause of the Lord Jesus, that his spirit rested in the bosom of his Saviour and his God. Wherever he died, his spirit, we doubt not, is in heaven. And where that body rested at last, which he laboured "to keep under," and which he sought to bring "into subjection" (1 Cor. ix. 27), and which was to him so much the source of conflict, and of sin (Rom. vii. 5. 23), is a matter of little consequence. It will

be watched and guarded by the eye of that Saviour whom he served, and will be raised up to eternal life. In his own inimitable language, it was sown in corruption; it shall be raised in incorruption; it was sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory; it was sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power; it was sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body. 1 Cor. xvi. 42—44. And in regard to him, and to all other saints, when that corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and that mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. 1 Cor. xvi. 54. To Paul now, what are all his sorrows, and persecutions, and toils in the cause of his Master? What but a source of thanksgiving that he was permitted thus to labour to spread the gospel through the world? So may we live—imitating his life of zeal, and self-denial, and faithfulness, that when he rises from the dead we may participate with him in the glories of the resurrection of the just.

THE END.









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