



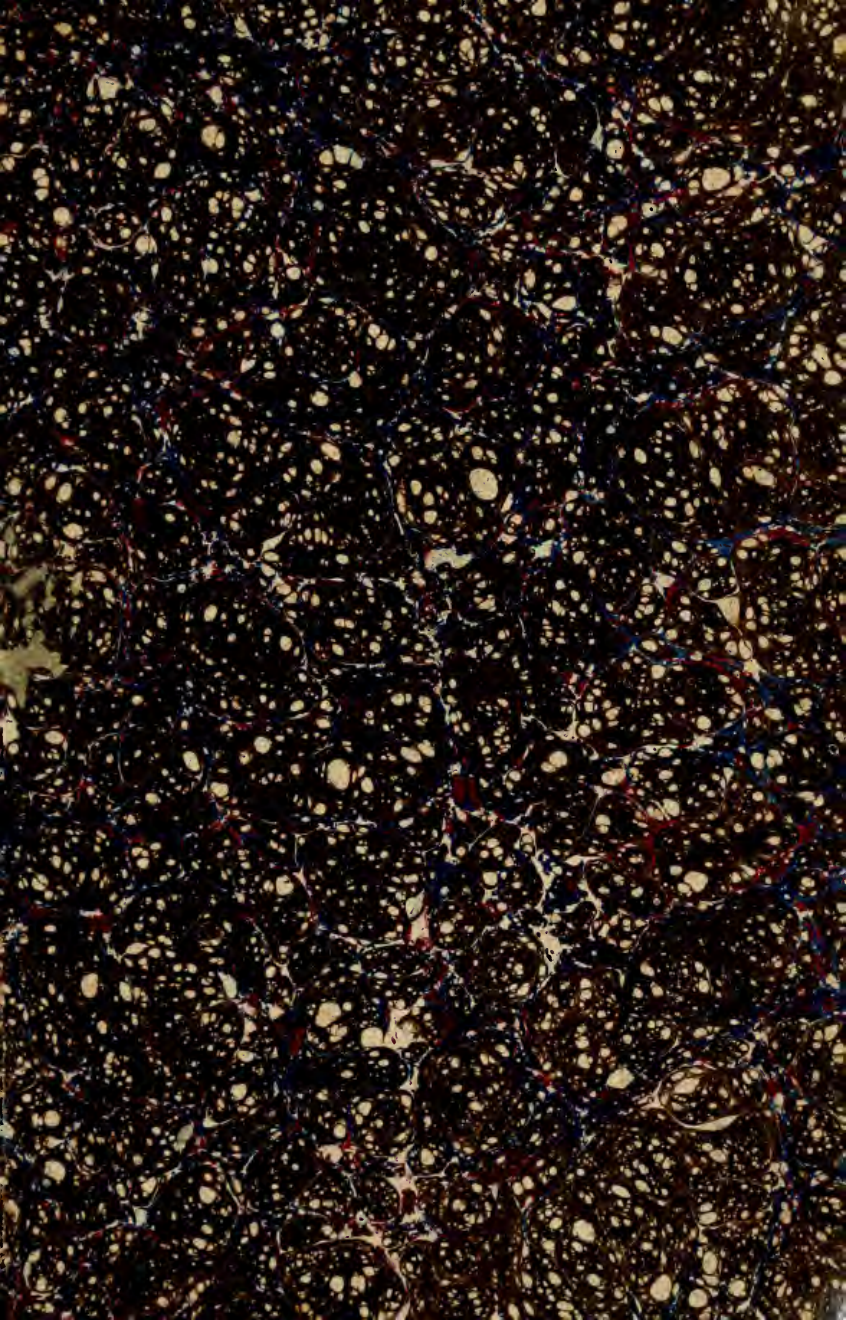
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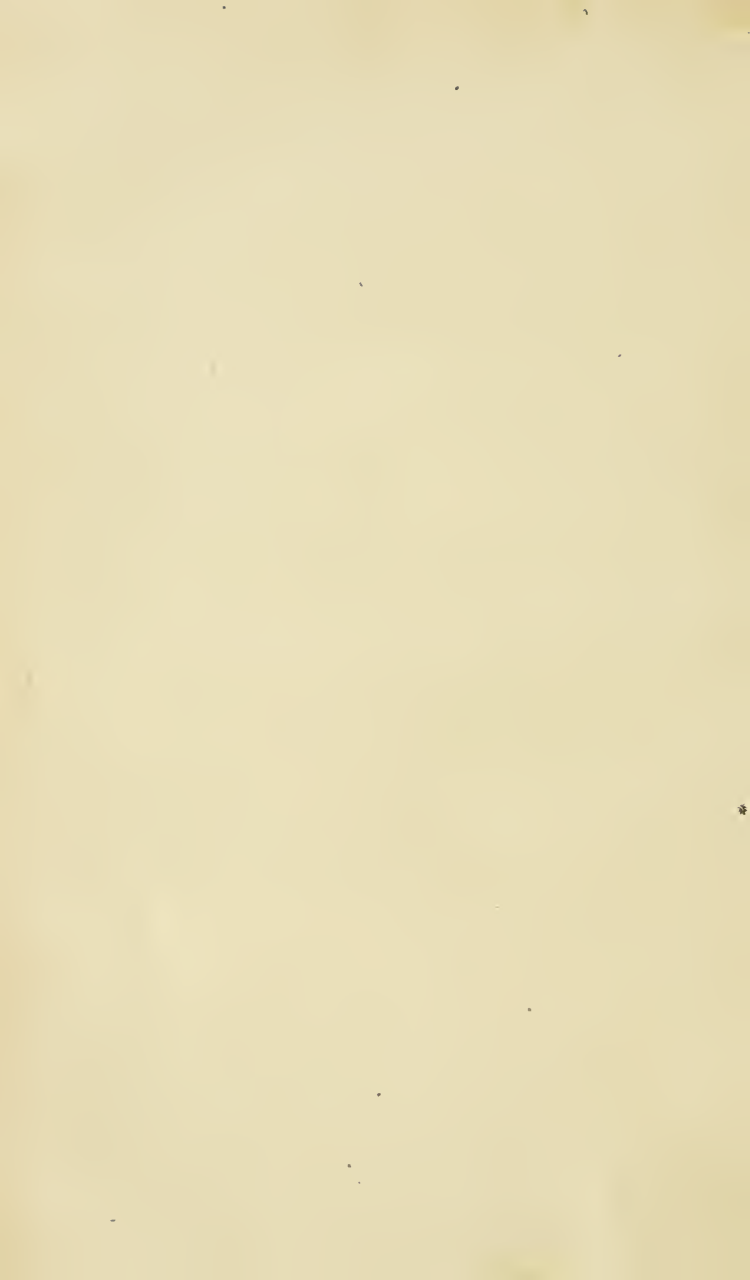
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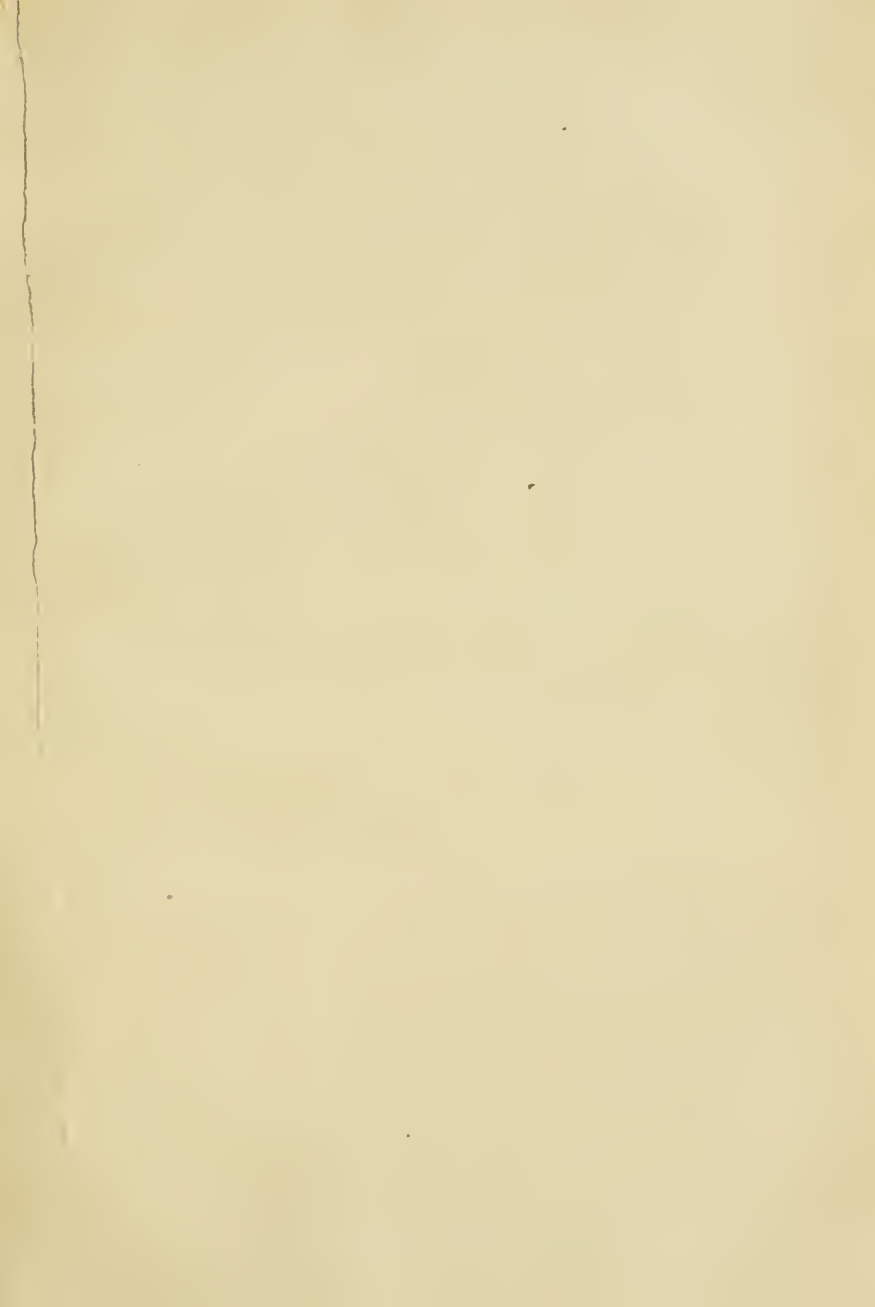


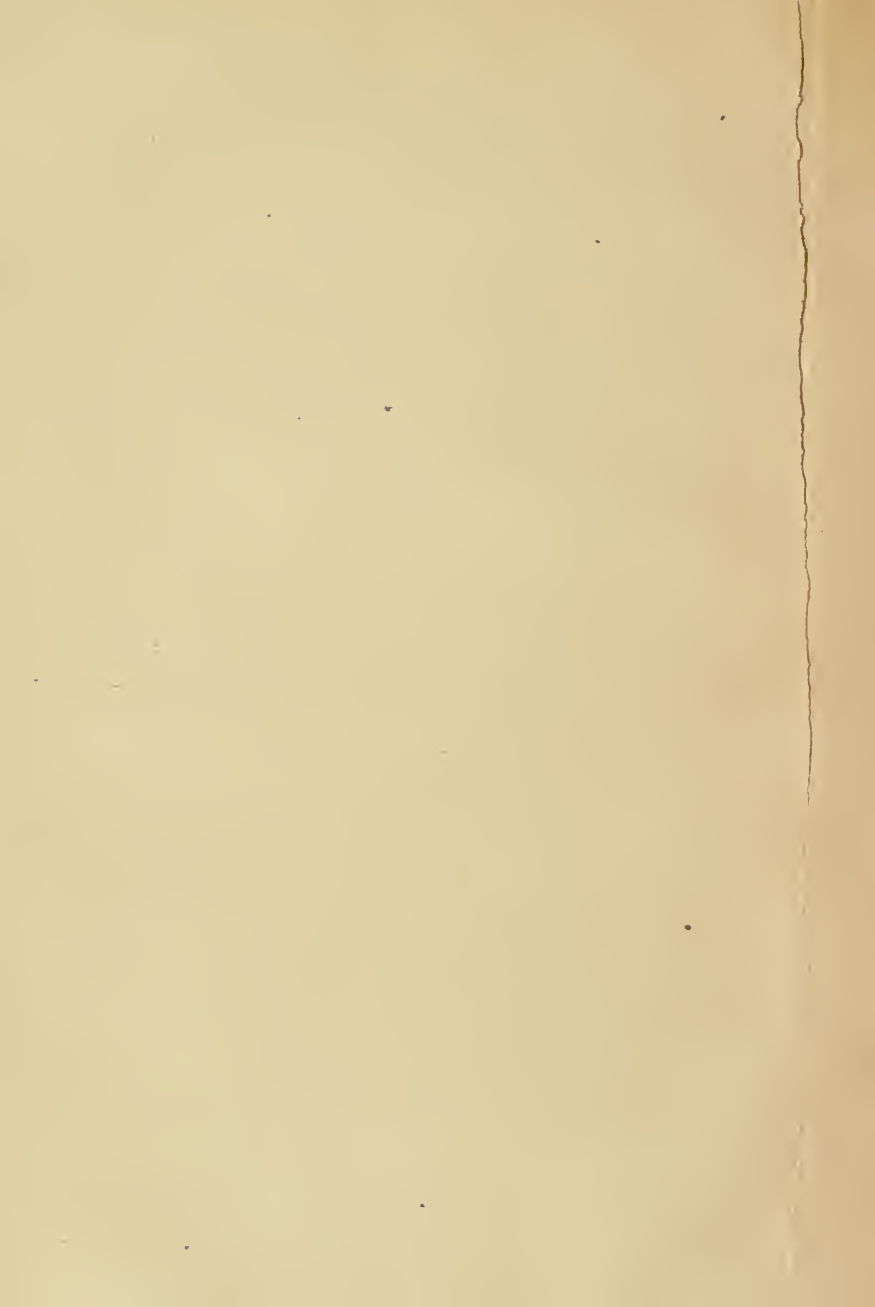










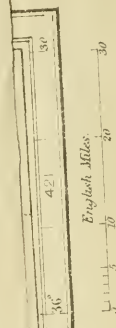




# PALESTINE

IN THE TIME OF OUR SAVIOUR



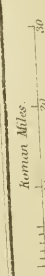


From Greenock

Longitude

36°

41° 3'



Roman Miles

NEW COMMENTARY  
ON  
ACTS OF APOSTLES

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BY  
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Bible," and "Evidences of Christianity."*

LEXINGTON, KY.

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# COMMENTARY ON ACTS.

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## PART THIRD.

### *PAUL'S TOURS AMONG THE GENTILES.*

(XIII.—XXI.)

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#### SEC. I.—THE FIRST TOUR.

(XIII.—XIV.)

##### 1. BARNABAS AND SAUL SET APART TO THE WORK, XIII. 1-3.

VER. 1. The opening sentence of this part of Acts stands closely connected with the preceding part, taking its start from the return of Barnabas and Saul to Antioch; and yet, because of the new subject here introduced, its style is the same as if it were the beginning of an independent narrative.<sup>1</sup> (1) Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

The distinction between prophets and teachers is not clearly drawn in the New Testament, except to the ex-

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<sup>1</sup> The new and quite different subject matter now introduced, sufficiently accounts for the author's style here, without aid from any of the suppositions mentioned by Meyer, including one of his own.

tent that the former were men who spoke by inspiration, while the latter sometimes did and sometimes did not. The previous statement of Luke, that "there came down prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch" (xi. 27), of whom Agabus was one, may have included the prophets who are here mentioned.

The order in which the five names are written is probably that of the relative reputation of the men. Barnabas, having been sent from Jerusalem, and having been an eminent man there, was naturally looked upon as the most important person, while Saul was at this time the least noted of the five. Symeon, as his name proves, was a full-blooded Jew; and though his surname Niger (black) can scarcely justify the conclusion that he was an African Jew,<sup>1</sup> it could scarcely have been given to him without some allusion to his complexion. Symeons were so numerous among the Jews that it was necessary to distinguish them in some way, and it is highly probable that this one, from having an unusually dark complexion, was called black Symeon.<sup>2</sup> As some of the second group of preachers who had come to Antioch were men of Cyrene (xi. 20), it is natural to suppose that Lucius of Cyrene was one of these, and that he was therefore one of the founders of the church. Manaen is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Menahem. Having been the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, his mother having nursed the two when they were infants, he had in all likelihood kept up through life an acquaintance

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<sup>1</sup> "From his appellation Niger, he may have been an African proselyte." (Alford, *in loco*).

<sup>2</sup> It is quite common in America, when two or three men with the same name live in the same vicinity, to distinguish them by their shades of complexion, or the color of their hair: *e. g.*, Red Tom, Black Tom, etc.

with that prince; and it is not improbable that Luke learned through him something of Herod's thoughts and words concerning John the Baptist and Jesus, which he had recorded in his previous narrative (Luke ix. 7-9).

Vv. 2, 3. Symeon, Lucius and Manaen had been the chief teachers of the church during the absence of Barnabas and Saul on their mission to Jerusalem, and now this work is to be left to them again. (2) And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (3) Then when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands upon them, they sent them away. The ministering to the Lord here mentioned has no special reference to the public worship, but rather to their service in supplying the wants of their brethren; for such is the meaning of the original word when used in reference to Christian<sup>1</sup> service. It was their habitual, daily work. For what cause they were fasting just at this time we have no intimation; but from the instruction of the Master on the subject (Matt. ix. 15), we may safely infer that it was in consequence of some affliction which had befallen them.

The command of the Holy Spirit, to separate Barnabas and Saul, must have been addressed to the other three brethren, and it was doubtless communicated through one of them to the others. The clause, "the work whereunto I have called them," implies that they had both been called to this work before this time. Paul

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<sup>1</sup> Such is the usage of the verb, *λειτουργέω*, to minister; and of the nouns, *λειτουργία*, and *λειτουργός*, ministry, and minister, as is seen in Rom. xv. 16, 27; II. Cor. ix. 12; Phil. ii. 17, 30. The fact that the word liturgy is derived from it is suggestive of the great departure from Scriptural ideas and usage indicated by ancient and modern liturgies.

was called to it in the commission given to him by the Lord at the time of his conversion, as we learn from his own lips farther on (xxvi. 16-18); but when Barnabas was called we have no means of determining. Saul had been preaching to Gentiles as well as to Jews, as we may safely conclude, ever since he had heard of the baptism of Cornelius by Peter; but he had never yet made the former his chief work. It should be observed, that the thought of separating the two to this work did not originate with the brethren; but it was expressly communicated to them by the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of the fasting, prayer and laying on of hands is clearly indicated in the context: for what they did was doubtless what they were told to do; but what they were told to do was to "separate" the two to the work indicated; and, therefore, fasting, praying and laying on of hands was the method of separating them. This is the ceremony deemed suitable for such a separation by those under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and it follows that on all similar occasions, such as separating a brother to the ministry of the word, or separating one who is already an experienced preacher, as were both Barnabas and Saul, to some new and different field of labor, it is proper for those concerned in the movement to lay hands on him with fasting and prayer. The modern conception, that hands may be imposed only by those holding an office superior to that which is to be filled, is the invention of an unscriptural hierarchy, having no support in the New Testament. In the instance before us, hands were imposed on Barnabas by three men who were his inferiors in the estimation of the church; and on Paul, the called apostle of Jesus Christ, by men who were not apostles, and, so far as our information extends,



not even elders of the congregation in which they were teachers and prophets. This incident clearly demonstrates another fact in regard to this ceremony, that it possesses none of the magical power to impart spiritual graces which has been superstitiously ascribed to it; for surely Barnabas and Saul were not destitute of any grace which could be imparted to them by Symeon, Lucius and Manaen. The truth is, that this ceremony, now no longer called ordination<sup>1</sup> in the English Scriptures, was nothing more than a method of solemnly commending a man to God for the ministration to which he was being set apart. The subject will come before us again in regard to Timothy under xvi. 1-3.

Only the teachers and prophets are mentioned in connection with this proceeding, but we are not to suppose that they acted in private. Doubtless the ceremony of laying on hands was in the presence of the congregation; and after the command of the Spirit was received, there was doubtless time given for the apostles to prepare for the journey, and for the congregation to be notified. These considerations make it probable that the fasting connected with the imposition of hands was not the one in which the teachers and prophets were already engaged, but one specially appointed for the occasion.

## 2. THEIR LABORS IN CYPRUS, 4-12.

Vv. 4, 5. The journeys now entered upon by Saul are among the most momentous ever undertaken, whether by one man or many. They are worthy therefore of the space allotted to them by our author, and of the most

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<sup>1</sup>The revisers have wisely disconnected this English word from the accounts of appointments to office, and confined it to decrees and appointments of God.

careful study by every one interested in human progress.

(4) So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia ; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

(5) And when they were at Salamis they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews : and they had also John as their attendant. Seleucia was the seaport of Antioch, sixteen miles distant, where all large vessels lay at anchor ; for although the Orontes, on the banks of which Antioch was situated, was navigable for small vessels, it was too shallow for those of the deepest draught. Embarking here on some trading vessel, they sailed to the port of Salamis,<sup>1</sup> which is at the eastern end of the island of Cyprus.

In choosing this island as the first point in the wide world to which they directed their course, they were moved in part, no doubt, by the fact that it was the birth-place of Barnabas, where his personal acquaintance would be of advantage to them ; but also in part by the consideration that there were many Jewish synagogues there, furnishing starting points for the work, and that the gospel had been proclaimed there already with some success (xi. 19, 20).

The John mentioned as the attendant of Barnabas and Saul is the "John surnamed Mark" of xii. 25. He had not been set apart to the work, as had his older companions, but he had undertaken voluntarily to go with them as an attendant. His work was to assist them in every way in which a young man can serve his elders.

Luke is entirely silent in regard to the success of the preaching in Salamis, leaving us to suppose that it was

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<sup>1</sup> Salamis was afterward destroyed by war and earthquakes, and its site is now marked by ruins about four miles north of the modern town Famagosta.

not great, and that the stay of the apostles there was probably void of stirring incidents.

Vv. 6, 7. It was not till the preachers reached the other extremity of the island, about one hundred miles distant to the west, that the writer pauses to relate any of the incidents of their labors in Cyprus. (6) And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus; (7) who was with the proconsul,<sup>1</sup> Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God. Paphos was not the original city of that name, the birthplace, according to the Greek mythology, of the goddess Venus, but a small city of later origin which inherited the name after its predecessor had gone to ruin. It is now an insignificant village called Baffa, or Bafo. At the time of our text, although situated at the western extremity of the island, it was the seat of the Roman government.

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<sup>1</sup> For a long time modern skeptics contended that Luke here made the mistake of styling Sergius Paulus a proconsul, when he should have called him proprætor, the latter, and not the former, being the Roman title borne by the chief ruler of the island. In vain believers insisted that, though the latter was the usual title, there may have been exceptions, and that Luke was therefore to be credited. "To set the matter finally at rest," says Farrar, "coins and inscription of this very epoch have been found at Curium and Citium, in which the title of proconsul is given to Cominius Proelus, Julius Corduo, and L. Annus Bassus, who must have been immediate predecessors or successors of Sergius Paulus." (Life of Paul, *Excursus*, xvi.) Still later, M. de Cesnolo found at Soli, in the same island, a coin with the inscription "Paulus the Proconsul." (Cyprus, p. 125). Thus the defense of Luke, based at first on the presumption that he is a reliable historian, is made complete by the demonstration of that which had been presumed in his favor.

Lest the reader should think that Luke makes an overestimate of Sergius Paulus in styling him "a man of understanding," seeing that he had with him a false prophet, we may remark that statesmen and generals in that age were in the habit of consulting oracles and auguries about all important matters, and of keeping about them some one who was credited with interpreting the signs of approaching good and evil. As there certainly had been true prophets among the Jews, Paulus showed good sense in trusting to a so-called prophet of that nation, rather than to any other; and when the two Jews came to Paphos, claiming to bring fresh revelations from the God of Israel, the same good sense prompted him to send for them. Such a mind as his could not fail to hear with profit what Barnabas and Saul had to say.

VER. 8. Bar-Jesus saw at once that the success of Barnabas and Saul in convincing the proconsul would be an end of his influence with him, and of the profits which his pretences were yielding; so he put forth his utmost efforts to defeat them. (8) But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation)<sup>1</sup> withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. It would be vain to conjecture the mode of argumentation or vilification which he employed. Whatever it was, it proved to Paul that he was a villain of the deepest dye, fighting against what he knew to be right, and perverting that which he knew to be true. Perhaps Barnabas, as the chief man of the company, had been the speaker up to this moment; but Saul saw that something

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<sup>1</sup> More properly, "*by translation.*" Luke translates the name Elymas, by some supposed to be an Arabic, and by others an Aramaic word (Grimm's Lexicon), into Greek, by the word here rendered sorcerer. His other name, Bar-Jesus, is Hebrew, and means son of Jesus.



more decisive than words was demanded, and a most extraordinary scene followed.

Vv. 9-12. (9) But Saul, who is also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes upon him, (10) and said, O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? (11) And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. (12) Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. This is the only miracle wrought by an apostle to the injury of any one's person. It was a case much like that of Moses in Egypt, who found it necessary to bring some irresistible afflictions on the magicians, in order to destroy Pharaoh's confidence in them. Saul saw that the readiest way to convince the proconsul that Bar-Jesus was a base impostor was to denounce him in his true character, and then prove the sentence pronounced upon him true and just by blinding him. As he groped about, calling on one and another of the frightened bystanders to lead him by the hand, the falsity and iniquity of his pretensions stood practically confessed, and the divine mission of the apostles was demonstrated. It had the desired effect on the proconsul, and perhaps Barnabas and Mark were as much surprised, though not so much frightened, as the rest of the company. Whether the proconsul followed his belief with the proper obedience, Luke fails to inform us, and the omission rather implies that he did not. The hindrances in the way of a heathen of high rank becom-

ing a Christian in life were almost insurmountable, and if Paulus had accomplished the mighty task, it is unaccountable that at least a word to that effect is not spoken. How long the "season" during which Bar-Jesus was to remain blind proved to be, is left to conjecture. It was certainly long enough for him to have become a believer if his corrupt nature was capable of any good.

With the clause, "Saul, who is also called Paul," this apostle ceases to be called Saul, and begins to be called Paul. Hitherto he has occupied a subordinate position, and his name has come last in the list of himself and his companions; but hereafter he is to occupy the forefront of almost every scene in which he figures. Heretofore it has been "Barnabas and Saul;" hereafter it is to be "Paul and Barnabas." It is impossible not to connect this change with the name of Paulus, who was convinced by the vigorous and unexpected action of Paul. Many eminent scholars think that he had previously borne both names, the one Hebrew and the other an adopted Roman name; and that the change consisted in using the latter henceforward exclusively. This would be satisfactory, if we had any evidence, of which we have not the slightest, that he had ever borne the name Paul previous to this time; for the mere fact that many Jews had Greek or Roman surnames can not be held as evidence that Paul had. The obvious explanation is, that just as his companion Barnabas has been so called by his brethren, his original name being Joseph, because he was a good exhorter (iv. 36); so he, on account of convincing the first proconsul who ever paid respectful attention to the faith in Christ, and especially on account of the exceptionally bold and startling way in which he did it, his brethren, not himself, changed his

name to Paulus. The change was the more easily made, and the more naturally suggested, from the circumstance that there was already a difference of only one letter between the two names. As a matter of course, after everybody else had put upon him this new name, he was compelled, willing or unwilling, to use it himself, as he does in all his epistles.

### 3. THE JOURNEY FROM PAPHOS TO ANTIOCH, 13-15.

VER. 13. Cutting short the account of events in Paphos in a way that disappoints our curiosity, the historian hurries us with the two apostles on the further prosecution of their tour. (13) Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. So completely has Paul now become the central figure in Luke's narrative, that Barnabas and John Mark are called simply "his company." Why they chose this portion of Asia Minor as their next field of labor, is not stated; but it was probably because Paul had already evangelized Cilicia, and wished now to introduce the gospel to the districts adjacent to Cilicia on the west, with a view to the systematic evangelization of the whole peninsula. We shall see a further indication of such a plan in xvi. 1-8. His long residence in Cilicia made him more or less familiar with the state of society in the region which he now penetrates, and he enters it with intelligent foresight.

Luke is equally silent in regard to the reason which governed John Mark in turning back from Perga, and going home. He does not even hint at this point that his reason was unsatisfactory to either of John's companions; though he shows plainly farther on (xv. 37-39)

that it was extremely so to Paul. It is very plausibly conjectured by Mr. Howson that he was moved by fear of robbers in the mountains which they would have to cross in passing into the interior. He says: "No population through the midst of which Paul ever traveled abounded more in those 'perils of robbers' of which he himself speaks, than the wild and lawless clans of the Pisidian highlands."<sup>1</sup> The preachers were not burdened with money to attract robbers, but John knew that robbers sometimes kill men and then search for their money.

Vv. 14, 15. Luke does not recount the dangers and hardships of the journey across the mountains, but follows the two travelers in silence from Perga to Antioch. (14) But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. (15) And after the reading of the law and the prophets the ruler of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. This is a graphic, though altogether informal account of the order of service in a Jewish synagogue. First, a section of the law is read; then a section of the prophets; then came exhortations based on what had been read. Paul and Barnabas had taken their seats modestly in the audience among the people; for so Jesus had taught his disciples (Matt. xxiii. 5-12); and the reason why the ruler gave them permission to speak was doubtless because they had previously sought it. They had come into this community for the purpose of speaking to the people; they had fully intended, as was their custom, to begin in the synagogue; and they did as any preacher at the present day would do under similar circumstances

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<sup>1</sup> *Life and Epistles of Paul*, i. 162, 163.

—they took pains, before the service began, to introduce themselves to the rulers, and ask the privilege of addressing the audience ere it should be dismissed.

This Antioch was one of many cities founded or enlarged by Seleneus Nicator, and named Antioch in honor of his father Antiochus, who was made king of Syria after the death of Alexander the Great. On account of the good roads which radiated from it in every direction, and its comparative proximity to the sea, being about one hundred and twenty miles from Perga, it was the center of a considerable trade, and this had attracted a considerable Jewish population.

#### 4. PAUL'S SERMON IN ANTIOCH, 16-41.

##### I. THE INTRODUCTION, 16-22.

Vv. 16-22. To the invitation of the synagogue rulers Paul responded by immediately arising and addressing the audience. There had no doubt been a previous agreement between him and Barnabas that he should thus take the lead. He introduced his discourse by a brief sketch of the history of Israel from the exodus to the time of David: (16) And Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken. (17) The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm led them forth out of it. (18) And for about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. (19) And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land for an inheritance, for about four hundred and fifty years: (20) And after these things he gave them judges until Samuel

the prophet. (21) And afterward they asked for a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for the space of forty years. (22) And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king; to whom he also bore witness, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will.

The gesture made by Paul as he began, described as "beckoning with his hand," was habitual with him;<sup>1</sup> and though quite an unusual gesture, it was well calculated to arrest the attention of an audience. It indicated that he knew what he was about to say, and felt confident of its importance.

His brief sketch of the history of Israel served the two chief purposes of an introduction—it led the minds of the hearers forward to the main theme of the discourse, and it did so in a manner well calculated to interest and please them. The Jews had a glorious history, of which they were justly proud; and any happily expressed allusions to its more glorious incidents always awakened their most lively emotions. These incidents furnished the inspiration of their songs, the themes of their orators, and their comfort in persecution. He had the readiest access to their sympathy who showed the highest appreciation of these great events. Paul, knowing this, passed readily into the hearts of his hearers through this open door.

In the statement of verse 19, that "when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land for an inheritance for about four hundred and fifty years," the period given can not be understood as beginning before the destruction of those nations, neither can it be limited to the period of Joshua's con-

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<sup>1</sup> See xxi. 40; xxvi. 1.

quest, which is usually estimated at twenty-five years. It must then refer to the whole period in which God was gradually giving them full possession of the land. It was well known that after the death of Joshua many strongholds were still in the possession of the Canaanites, and of course they held the territory immediately adjacent to these fortified cities. The Philistines, too, the most indomitable of all these tribes, held their own territory almost without dispute till after the death of Saul, who perished in a battle in which they defeated the hosts of Israel. It was not until late in the reign of David that this obstinate power was at last completely broken down, never again to make war upon Israel (II. Sam. viii. 1; I. Chron. xviii. 1). Now, if the period of four hundred and eighty years, given in I. Kings vi. 1, as the time from the exodus to the founding of Solomon's temple in the fourth year of his reign, be understood as counting, not from the start out of Egypt, but from the arrival in Canaan; and the time of destroying the nations of Canaan by Joshua be estimated at twenty-five years, we have just four hundred and fifty-one years from the latter date to the end of David's reign; and thus the period in which God was giving the land to Israel by the gradual extermination of the remnants of heathen left by Joshua, was "about four hundred and fifty years," as Paul says. It lacked as much of it as the space between the final conquest of the Philistines and the end of David's reign, concerning which no figures are given in the Old Testament. Stephen, like Paul, counted the subjugation of the Canaanites as in progress until the time of David, for he refers to them as the "nations which God thrust out before the face of our fathers unto the days of David" (vii. 45).



The next statement (20), "and after these things he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet," can not mean that he gave them judges after the four hundred and fifty years, seeing that this period includes both the time of the judges, and the reigns of Saul and David. The words are not, after this time, but "after these things (*μετὰ ταῦτα*);" and they may therefore be construed as referring to the *events* preceding the figures given. The last of the events is the destruction of the seven nations, that is, the breaking down of their national power by Joshua; and it is true that after these things he gave them judges, for it is at this very point, according to the book of Judges, that these rulers began to have sway.

The length of Saul's reign is not given in the Old Testament, so Paul must have learned that it was forty years from some extra-biblical source which was current in his day.

The words, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will," express a thought gathered from *Psa. lxxxi. 20*, "I have found my servant David;" and *I. Sam. xiii. 14*, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath appointed him to be prince over his people." These words are not spoken concerning the whole life of David, in which there were some things not at all after God's own heart; but they had reference to David's character when chosen to be the successor of Saul; he was to do all God's will in those particulars in which Saul had failed.

The commentators have nearly all noticed the similarity between this introduction, and a portion of that of Stephen, of whom Paul was a hearer (*vii. 36-45*). The similarity consists only in the fact that both speakers



make use of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage; for the details which they mention are almost totally different, and they make the reference for totally different purposes—Paul's purpose being to favorably introduce his main theme, while Stephen was gathering up a bundle of misdeeds in the history of the fathers, with which to lash the consciences of sons who were wickedly imitating their fathers in resistance to the Holy Spirit.

## II. JESUS PREACHED AS A SAVIOUR, 23-29.

### (a) *THE PROPOSITION, 23, 24.*

Vv. 23, 24. Having reached the name of David in his introductory sketch, Paul passes immediately from this name to his main theme, the appearance and work of David's promised Son: (23) Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour Jesus; (24) when John had before his coming preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. In this brief sentence Paul skillfully introduces Jesus as the promised Son of David who was to deliver Israel (Ps. lxxxix. 19-37), and also states the time of his public appearance, in accordance with the Gospel narratives, as immediately after the close of John's ministry. Thus he fixes attention not upon the time of his birth, but upon the time that God "brought him to Israel as a Saviour."

### (b) *JOHN'S TESTIMONY, 25.*

VER. 25. Having pointed to the close of John's ministry as the time at which Jesus had been brought to Israel as a Saviour, the speaker next introduces the direct testimony on this point which was borne by John. (25) And as John was fulfilling his course, he said,

What suppose ye that I am? I am not he. But behold, there cometh one after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to loose. This quotation from John is not given in the words of either of our Gospels; yet it may nevertheless be a literal quotation from his lips; for doubtless John very frequently, and in varying forms of speech, corrected the idea which began to prevail among the people, that he was the Christ. The purport of the quotation as used by Paul is that John bore formal testimony that one was coming after him so much more exalted than himself that he was not worthy to perform for him the menial service of untying his sandals; and who could this be but the Christ, the Son of David? No other conclusion could appear possible to his hearers; and thus the words of John furnished proof of the two affirmations contained in the proposition which Paul had announced; first, that the Saviour had appeared; and second, that he appeared after John had preached repentance to all the people of Israel. It is highly probable that this very preaching of John was familiar to Paul's hearers, as a consequence of the visits which some of them had made to the festivals in Jerusalem, where they would hear all about it; and consequently Paul had no occasion to dwell upon it.

(c) *PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN THE DEATH OF JESUS, 26-29.*

VER. 26. At this point in his discourse, moved, perhaps, by some favorable expression in the countenances of his hearers, or possibly by some apparent want of attention, the speaker interrupts the course of his argument momentarily, and vehemently urges upon his hearers their personal interest in the matters of which he is speaking. (26) Brethren, children of the stock of

Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth. But his impetuosity was not so great as to make him forget the convincing and persuasive proofs which he had yet to present, so he advances quickly to a fuller statement of his argument.

Vv. 27-29. After asserting that the messiahship of Jesus was authenticated by the testimony of John, it was incumbent on the speaker to explain the singular fact that the Jews in Jerusalem had put him to death as an impostor. Had he proceeded to state this fact without qualification, it would have appeared to his hearers as proof that Jesus could not be the Christ; consequently, he states it in such a way as not only to guard against this objection, but to furnish additional evidence. (27) For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they know him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. (28) And though they found no cause of death in him, yet asked they of Pilate that he should be slain. (29) And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. This statement of the case made it appear that the Jerusalem Jews had condemned and slain him because they did not know him; that their failure to know him was a result of their ignorance of what the prophets had said concerning the Christ; and that both in his condemnation, and in the details of his crucifixion, they fulfilled what had been written by the prophets concerning him. Doubtless Paul here quoted some of these prophecies, in order that his hearers might see the correctness of his statements; but Luke, for brevity's sake, omits them. Thus the

crucifixion of Jesus, which, as a naked fact, would be regarded by any Jew in the world as *prima facie* evidence that he was not the Messiah, was turned into an unanswerable argument in his favor, and at the same time the misconception of the messiahship itself which was held by the Jews was corrected.

In this condensed account of the death and burial of Jesus, the mention of their taking him down from the tree, without a previous mention of their hanging him on the tree, implies either that Paul's hearers were familiar with the fact of the crucifixion, or that Luke, in abbreviating, has omitted much of what Paul said. The latter is the more probable explanation; for throughout the speech Paul speaks as if his hearers were ignorant of the facts about Jesus. He makes no distinction between those who condemned him and those who took him down and buried him, for the very obvious reason that he is telling what "they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers," did, and these expressions include Joseph and Nicodemus, who buried him. He calls the cross a tree, as Peter does (v. 30; x. 39; I. Pet. ii. 24), for the reason, most likely, that the main shaft of it was the rough undressed trunk of a small tree.<sup>1</sup> Sawed timbers were not then in use, and the soldiers were not likely to hew a piece for the sake of appearances.

(d) *THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS, 30-37.*

Vv. 30-33. The speaker next presents the crowning fact in the gospel evidence, and he fails not to connect

<sup>1</sup>The word employed is not the usual one for tree (*δένδρον*), but *ξύλον*, which strictly means wood, though it is employed by Paul and Peter, and by John in Revelation, in the sense of tree. See, besides the citations made above, Gal. iii. 13; Rev. ii. 7; xxii. 2; 14.

it with Old Testament predictions, so as to make his Jewish hearers more willing to receive it. (30) But God raised him from the dead: (31) and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses unto the people. (32) And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, (33) how that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* That the ancient promise to the fathers, “*In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,*” had been fulfilled, was in the nature of the case good tidings to these Jews; but that it was fulfilled in raising Jesus from the dead, was a new thought to them; and that in this were fulfilled the words of the second psalm, “*Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,*” was equally new and startling. Both propositions needed proof. It is scarcely possible that Paul stated the testimony of the witnesses of the resurrection as briefly as it is here given; for it is the capital fact of the whole sermon, and it needed the most ample verification to his hearers. He doubtless gave the testimony of the original witnesses in full; but he seems to have omitted his own. As he was addressing total strangers, this was a matter of prudence. They would be more ready to believe what he said of the testimony of others, than of his own, because in stating the former he would appear more disinterested.

The words, “*Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,*” would naturally be referred at first glance to the birth of the person addressed; but they are here applied to the resurrection of Jesus. In other instances of their occurrence in the New Testament they are ap-

plied in the same way. In Hebrews v. 5, it is said : " So Christ glorified not himself to be made a priest, but he that spake unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Now as he was not a priest until after he had died as a victim, and was prepared to enter heaven with his own blood, it is clear that these words refer to his being begotten from the dead. In Hebrews i. 5, the question, " To which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" is adduced as evidence that he was superior to angels, and it can not therefore refer to the birth by which he was " made a little lower than the angels" (Heb. ii. 7). The context in the psalm, too, supports this application ; for the words are addressed, not to an unconscious infant, that day born into the world ; but to an intelligent being :

" I will tell of the decree :  
The Lord said unto me, Thou art my Son ;  
This day have I begotten thee."

The whole of the second psalm, from which the quotation is made, is evidently Messianic ; for none of it is applicable to any other person than the Christ.

Vv. 34-37. Paul now adds to the testimony of the witnesses of the resurrection a still more formal proof that this was the purpose of God concerning the Christ. (34) And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David. (35) Because he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not give thy Holy One to see corruption. (36) For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption : (37) but he whom God



raised up saw no corruption. The quotation, "I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David," is taken from Is. lv. 3, and the context shows that it has reference to him of whom it had been promised that God would raise him up to sit on David's throne. Paul uses the past tense in regard to the fulfillment of this promise, because his hearers believed in the prophecies, and would readily grant that every one of them must be fulfilled in its season. If he proved, as he had done, that Jesus had been raised from the dead, they would readily grant that in this the prediction was fulfilled.

The reader will at once recognize the next prediction quoted (35) as the one made use of by Peter in the first division of his sermon on Pentecost, and the argument based upon it in the next two verses as the same used by Peter on that occasion. There is perhaps no passage in the whole of the Old Testament which contains a more explicit prediction of the resurrection of the Christ than this; and for this reason it became a favorite proof-text with the early preachers. To accuse Paul of copying in any unbecoming manner from Peter, or Luke of falsely putting into Paul's mouth an argument which the latter would not have deigned to borrow, as some have done, is absurd; for if two men are to argue the truth of any proposition, how is it possible for them to do so successfully except by both employing the evidences which support it? And these evidences, whatever the nature of the proposition, or of the subject matter, must from the nature of things be always largely the same.

(c) *REMISSION OF SINS PROCLAIMED THROUGH JESUS, 38, 39.*

Vv. 38, 39. Having now established by conclusive evidences the messiahship of Jesus, Paul proceeds to offer

the audience the benefit of his mediation: (38) Be it known to you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you the remission of sins: (39) and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Here Paul joins with John the Baptist, Jesus himself, and Peter in setting forth remission of sins as the one distinguishing blessing to be enjoyed in Christ. The revised version, like that of King James, is wrong here in the rendering, "by him," and "by the law." The original means "in him" (ἐν τούτῳ) and "in the law" (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ).<sup>1</sup> The thought is, that the believer who is "in Christ," a characteristic expression with Paul, is justified in the sense of enjoying remission of sins (38), which blessing those in or under the law could not enjoy. He here teaches concerning the law what he abundantly taught later in his epistles, that in it there was no remission of sins, and that the promise of forgiveness which was made to those who offered the sacrifices of the law was dependent for its fulfillment on the subsequent shedding of the blood of Christ.<sup>2</sup> The benefits of the Jewish law were extended only to those who were born in or properly initiated into the body of people to whom the law was given; and just so, the remission of sins is here proclaimed to the believer who shall be "in Christ;" and as we learn by another characteristic expression of Paul, the believer is "baptized into Christ," baptized into his body."<sup>3</sup> Thus the connection of the remission of sins with baptism, which was plainly stated

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<sup>1</sup> "Literally, *in him*, as the sphere in which forgiveness was found, rather than as the instrument through which it came." (Plumptre). Meyer, Alford and Lechler give the same rendering.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. x. 1-4; ix. 15. <sup>3</sup> Rom. vi. 3; Gal. iii. 27; I. Cor. xii. 13.



in Peter's first discourse (ii. 38), is implied in this, the first reported discourse by Paul. The reason that he did not, like Peter, urge his hearers to repent and be baptized, that they might be in Christ and enjoy the remission of their sins, was because, as we shall see below, he saw that they were not prepared for such an exhortation.

### III. A WARNING, 40, 41.

Vv. 40-41. The announcement which closed the preceding division of the speech was most unwelcome to Paul's hearers; for it was an express disparagement of the law of Moses, and such remarks always grated harshly upon Jewish ears. Peter had said by implication the same thing, when he said to the sanhedrim, "neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (iv. 12). That which was implied in Peter's speech was boldly expressed in Paul's. He doubtless discovered after this utterance an unfavorable expression in the faces of his Jewish hearers; for otherwise so watchful a speaker would not have closed his address with the words which follow: (40) Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets;

(41) Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish;

For I work in your days,

A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you.

The quotation was intended to warn them against rejecting the good tidings which he preached to them, and to show them that if they did, they would identify themselves with the class to which these fearful words of the prophet had reference. The words, "though

one should declare it unto you," imply that the declaration of it would contain such evidence as would make the rejection of it inexcusable. The words are quoted from Habakkuk i. 5 (Septuagint version), and the context there shows that the reference is to an impending destruction at the hands of the Chaldeans. Paul applies them to the destruction impending over all who reject the gospel; for in this the words have another fulfillment.

#### 5. IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF THE SERMON, 42, 43.

Vv. 42, 43. Though no one in the audience was prepared to obey the gospel; and no one, perhaps, fully believed what had been spoken, the majority were favorably impressed, as appears from the way in which they spoke and acted. (42) And as they were going out they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. (43) Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God. The request mentioned in the former of these two verses was made as the people pressed around the apostles after leaving their seats; while the breaking up of the synagogue mentioned in the latter means the departure of the people from the place. The dismissal by the elders preceded both. The "proselytes," here first mentioned, were that portion of the audience twice addressed in the course of the sermon as "ye that fear God" (16, 26). The picture which Luke draws of these devout Gentiles and many of the Jews following Paul and Barnabas in a crowd to their lodging, and keeping up an earnest conversation, shows at once the simple habits of the people, and the deep interest which they felt in the new and thrilling

theme of the discourse. They were already "in the grace of God," an expression which means only that God regarded them with favor, as he does all earnest seekers after truth; and should they continue in it, as the apostles exhorted them, they would soon attain to the remission of sins which he had offered in Christ.

#### 6. RESULTS ON THE NEXT SABBATH, 44-48.

VER. 44. The profound impression made by Paul's sermon in the synagogue, and by the conversation of both the preachers with those who followed them to their lodging, very naturally spread like a contagion throughout the city during the succeeding week; and we are not to suppose that the preachers were in the meantime idle. Paul's characteristic zeal, which afterward caused some sober men to style him a babbler (xvii. 18), would not permit him to remain silent for a whole week, when the tide of public opinion was running so strongly in his favor. The first result was seen in the next assemblage at the synagogue. (44) And the next Sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. The previous audience had assembled merely to hear the usual readings and exhortations of the synagogue; but this one assembled for the purpose of hearing the word which was to be preached by Paul. The synagogues were not built with a view to such crowds, and therefore it is highly probable that the speaker stood in the door, as has been done so often in our western country, and spoke to a large crowd without, as well as to those within the building. The building was not cumbered, like our modern chapels, with benches; but the people sat on mats laid on the floor, and could

easily turn their faces toward the door, while those outside sat in the same way on the ground.

VER. 45. So large an assemblage of the people to hear a doctrine which had appeared disparaging to the law of Moses, and which had on this account already offended some of the Jews, could but arouse the indignation of the disaffected, and was calculated to disaffect those who had been favorably impressed on the previous Sabbath. The leaders among them acted as their countrymen of like spirit in other countries uniformly acted under such circumstances. (45) But when the Jews saw the multitude, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. This contradicting and blaspheming did not of course precede Paul's remarks. We must understand that he delivered a discourse, omitted by the historian, in which the doctrine of the previous Sabbath was again set forth, and that during the course of its delivery he was interrupted by outspoken contradictions and reproaches. Such interruptions are not unknown at the present day in oriental congregations.

Vv. 46, 47. Thus far the apostle had addressed the Jews directly, and the Gentiles present only indirectly; but it now appeared that it was useless to reason further with the former, or to attempt to conciliate them. (46) And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing that ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. (47) For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying,  
I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,  
That thou shouldst be for salvation to the uttermost part of the earth.

In these utterances both of the apostles took part (46), and they were bold utterances from the consideration that they were certain to provoke the hatred of the Jews, and would probably result in violence. The statement, "it was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you," shows that the apostles understood that the preaching was not only to begin at Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 47), but that it was in every community to be presented to the Jews first. "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek," was the standing rule with Paul (Rom. i. 16 ; ii. 10). The propriety of this we have discussed under i. 8.

VER. 48. The next statement of our historian has been the subject of no little controversy. (48) And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. The controversy turns on the meaning of the word translated "were ordained" (*ἔσαν τεταγμένοι*). Calvinistic writers unite in referring it to the eternal election and foreordination taught in their creeds. If this were the correct interpretation, it would involve some difficulties which they seem not to have observed. If "as many as were foreordained to eternal life" believed on that day, then all the rest were reprobates, doomed to everlasting punishment, and Paul's further preaching to them was useless. Now it is unaccountable that so complete a separation of the two classes took place throughout a large assembly in a single day; and still more unaccountable that this was revealed to Luke so that he could record it. Our surprise is even yet greater when we remember that, according to the theory, not even the elect themselves can ever know with certainty that they are elect. We should surely not adopt

a conclusion so anomalous, unless we are compelled to do so by the obvious force of the words employed. Dr. Hackett, after rendering the passage, "and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed," says: "This is the only translation which the philology of the passage allows." Grimm, in his lexicon, expresses the Calvinistic idea more fully by giving as the meaning, "as many as were appointed (by God) to eternal life, or to whom God had decreed eternal life."

The word thus translated is from the root *τάσσω*, the primary meaning of which is to *set in order*; or, as Grimm expresses it, *to place in a certain order*. In composition with *δια* it is so rendered in I. Cor. xi. 34: "The rest will I *set in order* when I come." In only one other of its eight occurrences in the New Testament is it rendered ordained; and in this it may as well have been rendered by its primary meaning: "The powers that are ordained [set in order] by God" (Rom. xiii. 1). It is usually rendered appoint; as, to appoint a place (Matt. xxviii. 16); to appoint something to be done (Acts xxii. 10); to appoint a day (xxviii. 23). But in making appointments order is brought out of preceding confusion, or want of order, and the primary meaning of the word is not lost sight of in this use of it. The same is true when it is applied to a mental act. When the mind has been in confusion on a subject, not knowing what to think, and finally reaches a definite conclusion or purpose, the thoughts are brought out of confusion into order, and this term properly expresses the change. A striking example is found in xvi. 2, where the brethren in Antioch are said to have heard "no small dissension and questioning," between Paul and Barnabas on one side, and certain men from Judea on the other, in reference to a vital



question. While this dissension was in progress, the rank and file of the brethren and sisters must have been in the utmost confusion; but they finally reached a conclusion as to what should be done, and this change is expressed by the word in question; "they determined (ἐταξάω) that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question." This is the rendering of A. V., and it correctly represents the mental change which occurred. Dr. Hackett affirms that the term "was not used to denote an act of the mind;" but the translation to which this idea forced him is conclusive evidence to the contrary. He renders the clause in question, "they appointed that they should go up," etc.; and in this he is followed by the authors of R. V. This is not good English. It is an ungrammatical use of the word appoint. When a mission is determined on, we appoint the men who shall be sent, but we do not appoint that they shall go. Evidently the state of the case was this: the brethren were at first undetermined what to do; and they finally determined to do what they did. Our English word *disposed* has a similar usage. It means to arrange in a certain order, and it applies primarily to external objects; but when one's mind is arranged in accordance with a certain line of conduct, we say he is disposed to pursue it.

We scarcely need to observe, after the preceding remarks, that the specific meaning of this verb in a given passage is to be determined by the context. In the passage before us the context presents no allusion to something done by God for one part of the audience, and not done for the other; or to some purpose entertained respecting the one, and not the other; but it speaks

of two contrasted states of mind among the people, and two consequent courses of conduct. Of the Jews present it is said, first, that they were filled with jealousy; second, that they contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed; third, that they judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. In contrast with these, the Gentiles, first, were glad; second, they glorified the word of God; third, they were *τεταγμένοι* for eternal life. Now which of the specific meanings of the Greek word shall we here insert? It stands contrasted with the mental act of the Jews in judging themselves unworthy of eternal life, and the law of antithesis requires that we understand it of some mental act of the opposite nature. The rendering, were *determined*, or were *disposed* for eternal life, is the only one of which the case admits. The verb is in the passive voice, and a past tense, and therefore it represents a mental state which had been brought about before the moment of which the writer is speaking. In other words, the statement that "as many as were determined for eternal life believed" implies that they were brought to this determination before they believed. At some previous time in their history these Gentiles, who had been born and reared in heathenism, had heard of eternal life as taught by the Jews. Either under the teaching of the Jews, or under the teaching of Paul since his arrival in Antioch, or under both combined, they had been brought out of a state of mental confusion on this transcendently important subject, into a determination to obtain eternal life if possible.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Better, 'as many as were disposed for.'" (Plumptre). "All who, by the grace of God, desired to range themselves in the ranks of those who desired eternal life accepted the faith." (Farrar, *Life of Paul*, 211). "Rather, were set in order for, *i. e.*, disposed for eternal life." (Jacobson in *Speaker's Com.*) "As many



Let it be noted that the being determined for eternal life, and the believing, stand here as cause and effect, or at least as antecedent and consequent. This is not at all unnatural or uncommon. A man who has learned that eternal life may be obtained, and has made up his mind to obtain it if within his power, is the very man to readily accept the true way of obtaining it when that way is clearly pointed out to him; while the man who is so much absorbed in worldly matters as to be indifferent to eternal life is the very man to allow the testimony concerning the way of obtaining it to pass in at one ear and out at the other. We find it so in all of our congregations at the present day. Two men sit side by side under the sound of the same gospel sermon; one is awake to the importance of the life to come, while the other is absorbed in the life that now is. The latter will turn a deaf ear to the preaching, incurring Paul's reproach of judging himself unworthy of eternal life, while the former will believe the glad message, and fly to the seat of mercy. It is precisely this difference as respects eternal life which Luke here points out; and he points it out because it accounts for the fact that one class in Paul's audience believed, and the other did not. It leaves the responsibility for belief and unbelief, with their eternal consequences, on men, and not on God.

#### 7. FINAL RESULTS IN ANTIOCH, 49-52.

VER. 49. The devout proselytes who believed under Paul's second sermon proved to be the first fruits of a

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as were disposed to eternal life. The meaning of the word disposed must be determined by the context. The Jews had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life: the Gentiles, as many as were disposed to eternal life, believed." (Alford).

large harvest. (49) And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. This means that not only in Antioch, but in all Pisidia lying adjacent to it, converts to the truth were made. Paul's labors were apparently confined to the city, but the report of his work, as it spread from place to place, brought interested hearers from every direction, even as we see in our own age.

VER. 50. The jealousy of the Jews, which had been aroused by the presence of the great audience that heard Paul's second sermon, was intensified by these triumphs of the word, and it led, as similar triumphs had done from the beginning in Jerusalem, to the violence which Paul and Barnabas had anticipated (46). (50) But the Jews urged on the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders. These devout women were among the Gentile proselytes who heard Paul; for such is the usage of the word rendered devout; but they were not of those who had been determined for eternal life; and this shows that not all the Gentile attendants of the synagogue became believers under the second sermon. That these women were of honorable estate, that is, of high connections in the political world, and satisfied with the present life, accounts for their being less determined for eternal life than those who believed. They doubtless belonged to the families of the "chief men of the city," and it was through their influence that the latter were stirred up to persecute the apostles by banishing them from the city. Women have always been among the most steadfast friends of Jesus, and yet some women have been ready and effective tools of his enemies. It seems that the Jews acted with practical unanimity in this wicked procedure,

and that the favorable impression made on some of them by Paul's first sermon (43) was but transitory.

Vv. 51, 52. Paul and Barnabas were not without indignation when they were thus ignominiously expelled from the city. They were pained to think of the ingratitude which it manifested, and to anticipate the prejudice which the fact would excite against them when they should enter into other cities with this stigma upon them. Luke tells us briefly how they acted, and how the disciples felt after their teachers were driven from them. (51) But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. (52) And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. The act of the departing apostles, witnessed no doubt by those for whom it was intended, was not an idle or childish mark of resentment, as it would be in an uninspired teacher; but it was designed as a solemn "testimony against them"—a prophecy of the righteous judgment of God, whom they had rejected in rejecting his chosen messengers (Mark vi. 11; Luke x. 16). The statement that the disciples, under these painful circumstances, were "filled with joy and the Holy Spirit," is to us a surprise; for we should have expected them to be filled with grief and fear. It shows that their assurance concerning the everlasting life for which they had been determined, and their belief that the Spirit of God now dwelt in their mortal bodies, gave them a joy which could now be maintained without the aid of human teachers, and of which no human power could deprive them. They were capable now of standing alone, and of edifying one another.

## 8. EVENTS IN ICONIUM, XIV. 1-7.

VER. 1. On leaving Antioch the apostles took a road leading to the southeast, as if they were aiming to reach Cilicia, Paul's native province. They pursued this course over a vast plain grazed by innumerable flocks of sheep for about ninety<sup>1</sup> miles, when, after crossing a mountain ridge, they reached Iconium, the largest and most important city in that part of Asia Minor, both then and now. Lofty mountains rise to the west, to the north, and to the south of it, while to the east there opens another vast plain with a beautiful lake in the midst of it. Here the principal routes of travel from the cardinal points of the compass meet and cross one another, making Iconium a center of traffic and travel for an extensive region. The apostles had passed by all smaller places on the way, and kept this city in view, both because it was such a center, and because it contained a synagogue, within and around which they could find a people prepared to hear the gospel. (1) And it came to pass in Iconium, that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and the Greeks believed. The multitude who believed was great, not in proportion to the whole population of the city, but to the number who usually believed in such places, and especially to those in Antioch. The Greeks, who made up part of the number,

<sup>1</sup> The geography of the interior of Asia Minor is very imperfectly known by western scholars. This is strikingly illustrated by the conflicting statements of the distance from Antioch to Iconium, found in recent commentaries. It is represented by Farrar, Jacobson, and Plumptre, as 60 miles; by Gloag as 50; and by Hacket as 45. Prof. Ramsey, who must be accepted as authority on the subject because of his very recent explorations in that region, furnishes the figures given above.

were doubtless proselytes in the main. The immediate cause of their belief is distinctly stated by Luke ; the apostles " so spake " that they believed. It was the conclusiveness of the evidence, and the earnestness with which it was presented, that carried conviction to the hearers, thus verifying Paul's subsequent doctrine, that " faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ " (Rom. x. 17).

Vv. 2, 3. More Jews were won to Christ there than in Antioch, but those who were not won exhibited the spirit universal with their class. (2) But the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren. (3) Long time therefore they tarried there, speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. The Gentiles whom the disobedient Jews stirred up included others besides Greeks ; that is, the native Lyeaonians, and perhaps persons of other nationalities residing in the city. It must have been by false and malicious representations that the Jews succeeded in stirring them up. This opposition seems to have increased the boldness of the apostles, and it caused them to continue there " a long time ; " but how many days, weeks, or months, we can not say. This is the only note of time given by Luke in the whole account of this tour.

The manner in which the Lord bore witness to the word of his favor, as here stated by Luke, is worthy of notice for the contrast which it presents with much of the phraseology of modern times. The proof with many in these days, that a man's ministry is " owned and accepted " by the Lord, is found in the " abundant outpourings of the Holy Spirit " which attend it ; and this means

the number of "powerful conversions" which reward it. But the Lord's method, according to Luke, was by "granting signs and wonders to be done" by the hands of the preachers. Not a word is said by him, or by any other inspired writer, of such an attestation as is now constantly brought forward. This difference shows that our modern revivalists confound the attestations of the word by signs and miracles, which was common in the apostolic age, with the exciting scenes which now occur in revivals, many of which were not dreamed of by the early evangelists. This whole subject needs to be re-studied in the light thrown upon it by the book of Acts.

Vv. 4-7. The bold and persistent efforts of Paul and Barnabas stirred the city to its depths, but they failed to overcome the obstinacy of the Jews, and the depravity of the Gentiles. (4) But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. (5) And when there was made an onset both of the Gentiles and of the Jews with their rulers, to entreat them shamefully, and to stone them, (6) they became aware of it, and fled unto the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about: (7) and there they preached the gospel. Here, as in Antioch, the Jews dared not use violence toward the preachers, for fear that they would themselves suffer as disturbers of the peace; so they worked through others until they gained the coöperation of the city rulers. As the onset which was concocted involved stoning as well as other mistreatment, we suppose that the Jews had obtained permission to do that part of the work, for it was their national form of capital punishment. As in all such cases, although the multitude of the city was divided, the party for truth and right were less active than the



party for injustice ; and, because they were for the right, they were not willing to use violence. The escape of the missionaries must have been narrow ; and it was due, no doubt, to the watchful kindness of some friend, it may be from among the disobedient, who exposed the plot in time to prevent its execution. The next journey of the apostles, like the preceding, was toward the south-east, across the extensive plain which we have already mentioned (1), to Lystra, about forty miles from Iconium.

### 9. LABORS AND RESULTS IN LYSTRA, 8-20.

Vv. 8-12. Lycaonia, the district into which the apostles fled, was east of Pisidia, and north of the Taurus mountains. The exact site of Lystra was not known in modern times until it was recently identified by Prof. Ramsay. (Historical Geography of Asia Minor).

Finding at Lystra no Jewish synagogue to afford them an assembly of devout hearers, the missionaries were constrained to preach in the open air. The narrow streets universal in the cities of that age were unsuited to gatherings of the people ; but in every city there was more or less unoccupied space about the gates, both inside and outside, and these were always favorite places of concourse. It seems from the context below (13) that Paul was addressing a crowd at the principal gate when the following incident took place: (8) And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. (9) The same heard Paul speaking ; who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, (10) said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. (11) And when the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up

their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. (12) And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. The "faith to be made whole," which Paul discovered in the countenance of the cripple, is no more nor less than belief that Paul could make him whole. The idea that it was a faith which would *enable* Paul to make him whole finds no countenance in the Scriptures. (See remarks under iii. 16). He could not have obtained this faith from anything miraculous which Paul had yet done; for evidently this was the first cure effected in Lystra. The source of his belief then must have been something which Paul had said. Paul had probably spoken of the miraculous cures wrought by Jesus, and of the power given by him to his apostles to work similar cures in proof of their divine mission. He may even have mentioned the miracles which he had wrought at Iconium (3), and have commenced looking in the crowd around him for a proper subject. Seeing the cripple, and fastening his eyes upon him, he saw that the cripple, with that credulity which always characterizes persons with chronic diseases, believed, from the solemn statements made, that Paul had the power which he claimed. Instantly, therefore, with a loud voice, Paul commanded, "Stand upright on thy feet." With amazement the crowd fell away from him as he leaped and walked, and as quickly as the shock of surprise would allow them to think, with one accord there flashed into their minds the only conclusion which their heathen education would allow, that two gods in the form of men had come down to them. We shall see another heathen crowd jump to the same conclusion from a similar event farther on (xxviii. 1-6). As instantane-



ous as the conviction that the preachers were gods, was the opinion as to which gods they were; for who could one of them be but Jupiter, whose temple stood before their gate as the patron god of the city? And as the other was the chief speaker, who could he be but the god of eloquence, and Jupiter's interpreter? Their excitement caused them very naturally to break forth in their native tongue, instead of the Greek in which Paul had addressed them, and which they spoke as an acquired language. Their shouts necessarily silenced Paul for the time being, and perhaps, while he was waiting for silence to be restored so that he could continue his remarks, he failed to notice that a part of the crowd darted away, some to bring two or more fat bulls which were in readiness for a sacrifice to Jupiter, and some to bring garlands of flowers with which to decorate the horns of the victims.

VER. 13. While Paul was still waiting to renew his discourse, the people made a rush toward the temple, and he learned from their outcries what was about to take place. (13) And the priest of Jupiter whose temple was before the city, brought oxen<sup>1</sup> and garlands unto the gates,<sup>2</sup> and would have done sacrifice with the multi-

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<sup>1</sup> The original is *ταύρους*, bulls.

<sup>2</sup> The position is taken by Mr. Howson (Life and Epistles of Paul), and he is followed in it by several commentators, that the word here rendered gates, *πύλῳας*, never means the gates of a city, but always the gates of a private house; and that we are therefore to understand that Paul and Barnabas had retired to their place of lodging, and that the idolators brought the victims to the gate of the latter to make the sacrifice. But the criticism on the use of the Greek word is proved to be inaccurate by the fact that in the Apocalypse it is used repeatedly for the gates of a city. See xxi. 12, 13, 15, 21, 25; xxii. 14. Furthermore, as there was a temple to Jupiter in front of the city gate (13), the priest could

tudes. The priest was doubtless moving toward the altar in front of the temple, which may have been but a few steps from where Paul stood, and the people at once, by a common impulse, rushed forward to join in the honors so promptly made ready for their heavenly visitors.

Vv. 14-18. Paul and Barnabas were shocked beyond measure to see themselves about to be honored as gods. (14) But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it,<sup>1</sup> they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out (15) and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: (16) who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. (17) And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. (18) And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.

It should be observed that Luke here applies the title apostle to both Barnabas and Paul (14), as we have

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not have thought of leaving it, and going into the street to offer sacrifice. These considerations constrain us to take the view of the whole transaction which we have given.

<sup>1</sup> Not "heard of it," as if they were at a distance, and did not see it; or as if they did not understand the Lycaonian dialect, and therefore knew not that they had been called gods until some one who could speak Greek told them of it; but simply "heard it" (*ἀκούσαντες*). They may have seen the priests and others bringing the bulls and flowers without the thought of what was intended until some outcry from the priests, or from the crowd immediately about the apostles, made it known to them. The

done occasionally in preceding remarks. While Barnabas was not one of the twelve, and therefore not an apostle in the same sense that they were, he still bore the title in common with some others.<sup>1</sup> This was probably due to their having been under the personal instruction of Jesus, or possibly to their having been present when the great commission was given as recorded by Matthew.<sup>2</sup>

The habit of rending one's clothing when suddenly and violently agitated, though as old as the time of Jacob (Gen. xxxvii. 29-34), appears here (14) the last time in the Bible. The self-possession which the Christian faith inculcates and imparts soon made it disappear from the customs of the Christian Jews.

Though Barnabas, on this occasion, received the chief honor from the people, Luke on that account placing his name foremost in the paragraph just quoted, yet Paul was the master spirit in all these exciting scenes. He continued to play the part of Mercury, which the people had assigned him; for the speech to the idolaters is his in thought and diction. Mr. Howson notes the coincidence between the exhortation to the Lystrians, that they should "turn from these vain things to the living God," and his remark to the Thessalonians, that they had "turned from idols to serve the living and true God;" between the remark, that "in generations past God had suffered the Gentiles to go in their own ways," and his statement to the Athenians, the "time of this ignorance God has

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narrative furnishes no ground at all for the supposition that neither Paul nor Barnabas understood what the Lycaonians had said.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xvi. 7; II. Cor. xi. 13; Gal. i. 19; Rev. ii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> For an elaborate discussion of the N. T. use of this title, see the essay on the subject in Lightfoot's commentary on Galatians.

overlooked;" and finally, between the argument to prove that God had not left himself without witness among the heathen, and that in Romans (i. 20), where he says: "The invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things which are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse." To which I may add, that the coincidence in thought between this speech and that made in Athens to another company of idolaters (xvii. 22-31) is so striking that the latter might be regarded as the same speech altered to suit another audience. The speech was successful in preventing the sacrifice intended, but it left the idolatrous crowd sorely perplexed as to who their two visitors might be.

VER. 19. Paul continued his labors from day to day, but so dense was the darkness in which these idolaters were enshrouded, that he labored in vain to make them understand the revelation which he brought to them. In the meantime the news of that strange scene, in which men were about to be worshiped as gods, flew like wild fire from city to city, until it reached the ears of Paul's enemies in Iconium and Antioch, when a number of these, urged by hatred, made a swift journey to Lystra. (19) But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. It is difficult to comprehend the malignity of these Jews. Those who came from Antioch had journeyed one hundred and thirty miles, and those from Iconium forty, to maltreat a man who had not harmed them, but whom they hated without a cause. It is not so difficult to imagine the representations by which

they persuaded the Lystrians. They could say, We understand that you have taken these two countrymen of ours for gods in human form. We can tell you who they are. They are Jews who came to Antioch and acted so base a part as to disgust all of their fellow Jews in the city, and to cause the honorable women and chief men of the city to rise up and drive them away. They then went to Iconium, and made themselves such pests that the city rulers, with the aid of Jews and Gentiles acting together, prepared to stone them, when they fled like thieves and came to Lystra. We are not willing for them to disgrace our name and nation any longer, and with your permission we will put an end to their sorcery; for it is by the power of evil spirits that they work wonders among the people. On hearing such representations from the countrymen of Paul and Barnabas, the Lystrians readily consented to let them have their own way.

Knowing from past experience how certainly Paul would escape their hands if he should learn what was on foot, they waited till he came forth as usual to preach near the gateway, when they made a rush with stones already prepared, and pelted him to death in a moment. He fell inside the city gate. Two or three of the rudest and strongest of the crowd were directed to remove his body; so, seizing him by the hands, or perhaps by the feet, they dragged him to a place outside the city where his body was left, like that of a dead beast, to any fate which might await it. Satisfied with what they had done, and fearing, possibly, that some authority higher than that of the city rulers might call them to account for their bloody work, the murderers in all probability started the same hour on their journey homeward.

They supposed that they would never hear of Paul again as a living disturber of their peace.

VER. 20. Up to this moment Luke has given us no intimation that Paul's labors in Lystra had been rewarded with converts. Now they appear on his page, and in a most pitiable condition. (20) But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city : and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe. How long the disciples waited before they ventured out to where the body lay ; how long they stood over him before he showed signs of returning consciousness ; and how long after that before he and they ventured back into the city, Luke leaves to the imagination of his reader. We can readily imagine the bitter tears and cries of that little band, while they gazed upon the wounds and bruises of one whom they had learned to love so tenderly ; while they thought of the cruelty with which he had been murdered ; and when they glanced at the future awaiting themselves, like lambs, as they were, in the midst of wolves. We can rejoice with them when Paul opened his eyes ; and wonder with them that, after he was stoned to unconsciousness, the last spark of life which may have lingered in his body was not extinguished by the horrid manner in which he was dragged over the rough pavements, and through the dust and filth of the street and of the highway, to the place where they found him. And how was he able, so soon, to rise up and walk ? How is it possible that he was able to start on a new journey with Barnabas the next day ? Does not the last fact especially tell us of gentle hands and loving ministrations all through the night, bathing and dressing his many wounds and bruises, and cheering him with words of deepest sympathy ?



Thank God, we are not left altogether to imagination for the names of those tender and loving friends. Timothy was a native of Lystra, baptized during this very visit of Paul; and many years after this we hear, from the depths of the Roman prison whence Paul was led forth to the executioner's block, these melting words addressed to this most beloved of all his companions in tribulation: "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in supplications, night and day longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and in thy mother Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also" (II. Tim. i. 3-5). Were those remembered tears the tears which Timothy, then a boy of fifteen,<sup>1</sup> shed over Paul's bruised and mangled body? And were the faithful Eunice and the venerable Lois in the group which stood around that body till animation was restored? If it was into their house that Paul was led, and by their hands that he was nursed through the night, the mystery of his speedy recovery is in part at least explained. What a scene was that to be witnessed by a boy of fifteen, who had been trained from infancy to the holiest sentiments of the Jewish Scriptures, who was but newly born into the kingdom of the Redeemer, and whose soul was responsive to everything noble in human character! No wonder that his heart was ever

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<sup>1</sup> As this event occurred not later than the year 48, and as Timothy was still a youth at the date of Paul's first epistle to him (I. Tim. iv. 12), which was written not earlier than 64, Timothy could not at the time of the stoning have been much older than fifteen.



after bound to Paul's like that of a dutiful son to a loving father. And what a compensation did Paul himself afterward find for all his sufferings in Lystra, in the lifelong devotion of him concerning whom he could say, "I have no man likeminded?" The very hour in which the whole world seemed to forsake him and hate him brought to his side the dearest friend he ever knew.

10. SUCCESS IN DERBE, AND RETURN TO ANTIOCH,  
21-28.

Vv. 21, 22. Having been compelled to fly from Antioch, from Iconium, and from Lystra, who can tell the feelings of the wounded missionary as he approached the gates of another heathen city, bearing visible marks of the indignity which he had suffered? But He who brings light out of darkness caused a refreshing light to shine on the dark pathway of his faithful servant by granting him here a peaceful and abundant harvest of souls. (21) And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, (22) confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

At Derbe, where the apostles seem to have suffered no persecution, they were some miles farther eastward than at Lystra, and were not far from the well known pass called the Gates of Cilicia, which leads through the Taurus mountains down into the plain of Cilicia in the direction of Tarsus. Had Paul allowed the thought of rest for a time among friends and kindred to control his movements, he would now have revisited the home of his childhood; but he thought of the disciples whom he

had left behind him to an unknown fate, and he turned back at great hazard to revisit them. How he succeeded in re-entering Lystra, and Iconium, and Antioch, and remaining in each long enough to instruct and organize the disciples, without a renewal of the persecutions which had driven him away from all of these cities, Luke does not inform us. It is possible that the fury of the mob had spent itself, and that his presence was tolerated because he made no further effort to gain converts to the new faith. The meetings were doubtless held in private, and perhaps in the night. The apostles confirmed the souls of the disciples by exhorting them to continue in the faith, and by assuring them that the pathway into the everlasting kingdom, at least in their day, was through many such tribulations as they had already endured. They were made to realize that the prize at the end of the journey was worth all the hardships of the way, and thus they were made strong to endure. There were many tearful scenes, as the two brethren, who had come among these people like visitors from a better world, were bidding them a final farewell, and leaving them to make their own way through the temptations and conflicts which beset them.

VER. 23. They were left as "sheep in the midst of wolves;" but they were committed to the care of the great Shepherd of the sheep, and were supplied with under-shepherds to keep them in the fold. (23) And when they had appointed<sup>1</sup> for them elders in every

<sup>1</sup> The word here translated appointed (*χειροτονέω*) means primarily to stretch out the hand; secondarily, to appoint by a show of the hand; and thirdly, to appoint or elect without regard to the method. See Grimm's N. T. Greek Lexicon. Whether it designates here an act of Paul and Barnabas, or one which they caused the people to do, is not made clear. The force of the

church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed. Here we see fasting and prayer connected with the appointment of elders, as we saw prayer and the imposition of hands in the appointment of the seven servants of the church in Jerusalem (vi. 6), and as we saw the last two with fasting in the separation of Barnabas and Saul to their appointed work (xiii. 3). The laying on of hands, which was part of the ceremony in those two services, is not mentioned here; but as we have seen that it was a part of the service of appointment to office, we may safely infer that it was not omitted.

It should be observed that a plurality of elders were appointed in "every church;" and this, so far as we are able to trace the facts, was the universal practice of the apostles. In appointing these, Paul and Barnabas were but following the example of the older apostles, by whom this office was instituted in the churches of Judea (xi. 30). An elaborate discussion of the subject would belong properly to a separate treatise, or to a Commentary on I. Timothy. If any one is surprised that men were found in these newly founded congregations possessed of the high qualifications for the office laid down by Paul in his epistles to Titus and Timothy, he should remember that although these disciples had been but a comparatively short time in the church, many of them were, in character and knowledge of the Scriptures, the ripest fruits of the Jewish synagogue; and they needed only the

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word favors the former view, while the previous act of the twelve in requiring the multitude to choose the deacons (vi. 1-3), favors the latter. For a summary of many opinions on the subject, see Meyer's commentary, note L by the American editor after chapter xiv.

additional knowledge which the gospel brought, in order to be models of wisdom and piety for the churches. They were not "novices" (I. Tim. iii. 6) in the sense of being newly turned away from wickedness. Cornelius the centurion might represent the class, as respects Gentile converts, and Nathaniel those brought in from the Jews.

Vv. 24-26. Having done all in their power for the churches which they had planted, the apostles continued their homeward journey by descending from Antioch to Perga, where they had first landed in their voyage from Cyprus. (24) And they passed through Pisidia, and came to Pamphylia. (25) And when they had spoken the word in Perga they went down to Attalia; and thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. Why they did not "speak the word" in Perga at their first visit, and what success they had now, are alike left out of the account of Luke, whose omissions, like those of all other New Testament writers, are not less remarkable than what he records. It is probable that the preaching done here now was actuated more by the desire to usefully occupy the time of waiting for a vessel bound to Antioch, than by a decided hope of accomplishing visible results; and this view is confirmed by the fact that they at last went by land to Attalia,<sup>1</sup> about sixteen miles distant on the sea coast, where they would be more certain to find a vessel than up the river Cestrus at Perga. Thence they "sailed to Antioch," without going ashore at any intermediate point.

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<sup>1</sup> Attalia is still a seaport of some importance at which the coasting steamers of the Levant make regular calls.

Vv. 27, 28. It is doubtful whether the church in Antioch had heard from Paul and Barnabas since they first left Perga. John, on his return, may have brought them news of the journey to that point. When, therefore, they appeared unheralded on the streets of the city, after an absence of three or four years, we may well suppose that they were met with hearty greetings and much questioning. They had gone on the first mission ever sent out to the heathen world, and they were as eager to tell their story as the disciples were to hear it. He who returns from a hard fought field bearing good tidings, pants beneath the burden of his untold story. (27) And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and how that he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. (28) And they tarried no little time with the disciples. The metaphor of an open door to represent men's access to the privileges of the gospel, or the access of the preacher to the hearts of the people, was first employed by our Lord (Jno. x. 1, 2, 7, 9); it was a favorite with Paul (I. Cor. xvi. 9; II. Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3); and it is found in the lips of our Lord after his glorification (Rev. iii. 8, 20). Its employment here to represent the access to faith which had now been opened to the heathen world by the mission of the apostles, is probably, as Plumptre suggests, an echo in Luke's narrative of Paul's own language, in the report under consideration. The "no little time" which the apostles now spent in Antioch counts forward to their journey to Jerusalem mentioned in the next chapter, and if we estimate it by comparison with their previous stay in the same city, it was more than a year (*cf.* xi. 26).

## SEC. II. A CONTROVERSY ON CIRCUMCISION.

(xv.)

## 1. THE BEGINNING OF THE CONTROVERSY, 1-5.

VER. 1. At this point our historian makes a sudden transition from the conflicts of the disciples with Jews and Gentiles, to one of momentous importance among themselves. One phase of this controversy had taken its origin from the baptism of uncircumcised Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. The question then was whether such persons should be baptized; and by the evidences of the divine will which had been presented to Peter, and which he presented to the brethren, it was settled, definitely and finally (xi. 18). This fact, strangely overlooked by many commentators, it is necessary to bear distinctly in mind, if we would distinguish the successive phases which this controversy assumed. The question now raised in Antioch was a different one. Without controverting the propriety of baptizing Gentiles, as Paul and Barnabas had been doing, both abroad and here in Antioch, the disputants took the position that after being baptized, and receiving forgiveness of sins, they must be circumcised as a condition of their final salvation. The position, and the men who assumed it are thus introduced: (1) And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye can not be saved. The fact that these men came from Judea, where the gospel was first preached, and where the original apostles had been the teachers, gave their utterances much authority with the Antioch brethren, so it

is not necessary to suppose that they claimed express authority from the apostles for their teaching, though it is possible that they did. They insisted on circumcision, not because of the covenant with Abraham, which was the original ground of the obligation, but because of the law of Moses; and they did so because, as a part of the law of Moses, circumcision bound those who submitted to it to keep all of the law, while circumcision as a mere Abrahamic rite did not; for the Ishmaelites, the Edomites, the Midianites, and other descendants of Abraham, were confessedly not brought under the law of Moses by their circumcision. The phraseology employed shows, what is brought out expressly farther on (5), that they insisted on circumcision "after the custom of Moses," because they held that all the baptized, whether Jews or Gentiles, must keep the law of Moses in order to final salvation. They could not conceive, as yet, that this divinely given law, which had been in existence so long, and for the preservation of which their fathers had suffered so much, could be disregarded by any who would be heirs of eternal life. When they thought of the apostolic commission, they must have included circumcision and the keeping of the law among the things referred to in the words, "teaching them [the baptized] to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 20).

VER. 2. Paul, who had long ago received by direct revelation from Christ a correct knowledge of the gospel which he preached (Gal. i. 11, 12), knew perfectly that this teaching was erroneous, and Barnabas had learned the same from him, if not from some other source; so the two united with all their might in opposing the Judean teachers. We have to think of a congregation in our



own day, distracted by an earnest controversy between its teachers over a vital question of doctrine, in order to realize the distress and confusion which must have racked the minds of the brethren in Antioch while this controversy was in progress. Paul and Barnabas did not succeed in silencing their opponents, but they so conducted the discussion as to bring about a fortunate decision of a provisional character. (2) And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, the brethren determined<sup>1</sup> that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders about this question.

If the brethren at Antioch had properly estimated the authority of an inspired apostle, they would have accepted implicitly Paul's decision without this mission to Jerusalem; but their familiarity with the person of the apostle, like that of the Nazarenes with the person of Jesus, made them slow to realize that he spoke with divine authority; and the fact that he was not one of the original twelve caused them to think his utterances less authoritative than theirs. They learned, as the result of the mission, what they should have realized at first; and it is not probable that they ever doubted Paul's teaching again.

As the proposal to send Paul and the others to Jerusalem about this matter involved the implication that the former was inferior in authority to the apostles and elders there, it is probable that Paul, for the maintenance of his apostolic prerogative, would have refused to go, had not the Lord expressly commanded him to do

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<sup>1</sup> On the correctness of the rendering, "determined," instead of "appointed," (R. V.), see the discussion under xiii. 48.

so; for he himself says in reference to this journey, "I went up by revelation" (Gal. ii. 2). This revelation requiring him to go was made because it was the divine purpose to settle the question at issue, not for the church in Antioch alone, but for all the world and for all time.

Before we leave this verse, let it be distinctly noted that this procedure was not an appeal from the decision of a church to some higher tribunal; for in fact no decision had been rendered. Neither was it an overture from a congregation to a representative body, asking for instruction; for the body applied to was composed of the elders of another single congregation, together with such apostles as might be found there. In truth only three of the older apostles, as the sequel shows, took part in rendering the decision (Gal. ii. 9). In these two essential particulars the step taken by the Antioch church differs from all modern appeals from lower to higher ecclesiastical courts, and it furnishes no precedent for the latter.

VER. 3. The journey to Jerusalem was made by land, and the messengers passed through two districts which had been evangelized already to a considerable extent. (3) They therefore being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. The Samaritans, although circumcised like the Jews, had far less antipathy to Gentiles than the latter; while the disciples in Phœnicia, though made up largely of Jews, were closely identified with Gentiles; and so both were prepared to rejoice at the triumphs of the gospel in the heathen world.

VER. 4. After a pleasant journey through the midst of rejoicing churches, they reached Jerusalem, where the name of Barnabas was held in sacred remembrance on account of his usefulness in the church's infancy; where Paul was now well known as a courageous and self-sacrificing evangelist; and where the news of the successful tour of both into heathen lands had preceded them. The reception which was accorded them was most natural. (4) And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them.<sup>1</sup> It was a thrilling story which

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<sup>1</sup> There has been much discussion as to whether this visit of Paul to Jerusalem is the one mentioned in the second chapter of Galatians, or some other; but recent writers are almost unanimous in deciding that it is the same. Farrar puts the decisive evidence in a nutshell as follows: "In the two narratives the same people go up at the same time, from the same place, for the same object, in consequence of the same interference by the same agitators, and with the same results. Against the absolute certainty of the conclusion that the visits described were one and the same, there is nothing whatever to set but trivial differences of detail, every one of which is accounted for in the text." (*Life and Work of Paul*, 228, n. 5). Rationalists admit this, but they use the fact to show that as Paul represents this as his second visit to Jerusalem since his conversion, therefore Luke's account of his visit with Barnabas on the alms-giving trip mentioned in xi. is false. (Banr, *Life of Paul*, i. 114, 115; Zeller on Acts ii. 8). But Paul does not say that the visit of Gal. ii. was his second visit. He merely says, "Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again" (Gal. ii. 1). This was, however, the second visit with which his line of argument in Galatians was concerned; for his purpose is to show that he had not before this enjoyed an opportunity to be instructed by the older apostles, except during the fifteen days of his first visit (Gal. i. 18); and during his brief visit mentioned in the eleventh chapter, Peter, the only apostle in the city, was shut up in prison during the passover week,

they told, and it must have drawn many tears from the eyes of the sympathizing audience, while it aroused them to fresh enthusiasm in the cause of human redemption.

VER. 5. Touching and inspiring as was the occasion, some brethren in the church were not willing to miss the opportunity of suggesting what they regarded as a serious defect in the instruction which Paul and Barnabas had given their Gentile converts. (5) But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.<sup>1</sup> After reading so much in the earlier chapters of Acts respecting the hostility of the sect of the Pharisees to the church, it is a surprise to here meet with some of that party inside the church, and occupying a position of some influence, though it is not a surprise to find them on the wrong side of an important question. They found it no longer possible to resist the evidence in favor of Jesus, and had therefore been baptized into his name; but they still clung tenaciously to some of their former ideas. Long after this meeting, when Paul had come to fully understand their motives, even if he did not at the time, he styles them "false brethren privily brought in, who came

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and then fled from the city. Paul and Barnabas seem not to have gone into the city at all until their mission among the churches of Judea was accomplished, and then their stay must have been very brief on account of the danger imminent. See xi. 29—xii. 25.

<sup>1</sup> Baur (*Life of Paul*, i. 117–119; *Church Hist.* i. 52), followed by the whole school which he represents, declares, without reason worthy of the name, that Luke here falsifies the facts, and that the older apostles themselves, and not certain Pharisees who believed, were Paul's opponents. Paul's own statements about the perfect agreement between himself and the other apostles (Gal. ii. 6–10), show clearly the falsity of this assertion, and the truthfulness of Luke.

in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage" (Gal. ii. 4). From this judicial sentence upon them we ascertain that when they despaired of destroying the church by persecution from without, they deliberately confessed Christ and came into the church for the purpose of controlling it from within. It was their design to keep the church under the bondage of the law, and thus prevent it from very seriously modifying the state of things among the Jews in which the Pharisees were the predominant party. Partisan zeal, the bane of their former life, was still their controlling passion. It is highly probable that among them Paul recognized some of his old acquaintances, who had once been his helpers in persecution, and had more recently been of the number who sought to put him to death. He knew them through and through.

The essential issue between Paul and the Pharisees had reference to the perpetuation of the law of Moses in the church of God; and the same issue has been in debate under different phases from that day to this. Paul defeated the attempt to fasten circumcision on the church, but later Judaizers succeeded in perpetuating it under the form of infant immersion, and afterward of infant sprinkling. That which the Pharisees failed to accomplish openly was thus accomplished under a thin disguise. The Pharisees failed to consolidate the law and the gospel; but their imitators have largely succeeded in teaching men that the church of Christ originated in the family of Abraham, and that the Jewish tribes and the Christian congregations constitute one identical church. The Roman apostasy perpetuates the daily sacrifice and pompous ritual of the temple; relig-

ious zealots have slaughtered Canaanites in the persons of modern heretics; professed Christians go to war under the old battle-cry of the "sword of the Lord and of Gideon;" the "Latter-day Saints" emulate Solomon in the multiplication of wives; and for all these corruptions authority is found in the laws and customs of ancient Israel. The intelligent reader of the New Testament knows scarcely which of these errors is farthest from the truth; and he feels bound to struggle with untiring energy and ceaseless vigilance to uproot them all from the minds of men.

## 2. ANOTHER MEETING, AND A SPEECH BY PETER, 6-11.

VER. 6. After the Pharisees had stated their position, distinctly affirming that the Gentiles should be circumcised and keep the law, the assembly adjourned without discussing the question. The second meeting is announced in these words: (6) **And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter.** Neither this nor the first meeting was composed exclusively of the apostles and the elders; for we have seen (4) that at the first the messengers were "received by the church," and from verse 22 below we learn that the church was now present. There was, however, between these two public meetings a private meeting of Paul and Barnabas with the three apostles who were then in the city. This we learn from Paul's epistle to the Galatians, in which he both states the fact, and gives his reason for seeking the interview. He says: "Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me. And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them

the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain." The force of the reason given is seen in the fact that if he had found the old apostles on the side of the Pharisees, their influence would have overborne his with the brethren, and all of his work, both past and future, would have been overthrown by bringing his converts under the bondage of the law.<sup>1</sup> The result of the interview he states in these words: "But from those who were reputed to be somewhat—whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me; God accepteth not man's person—they, I say, who were of repute imparted nothing to me; but contrariwise, when they saw that I had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of circumcision, (for he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also unto the Gentiles); and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circum-

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<sup>1</sup> I can not withhold my surprise that Farrar has so completely misunderstood Paul's meaning here as to write the following sentence: "When he says to the Galatians that he 'consulted them about the gospel he was preaching, lest he might be or had been running to no purpose,' he shows that at this period he had not arrived at the quite unshaken conviction, which made him subsequently say that, 'whether he or an angel from heaven preached any other gospel, let him be anathema,' (*Life of Paul*, 228.) This is totally inconsistent with Paul's repeated declaration in the previous chapter of Galatians, that he had received his knowledge of the gospel by direct revelation, and that therefore he could not have any doubts concerning it. Compare Lightfoot on the passage in his commentary on Galatians.



cision" (Gal. ii. 6-10). From this account of the interview it appears that as soon as the three older apostles heard Paul's statement of the case, they heartily approved it, and indicated the fact by extending their right hands to him and Barnabas. The words, "imparted nothing to me," are well chosen; for the question was whether or not Paul had taught the Gentiles their whole duty; if not, something additional would have been imparted. With this information as to the perfect understanding and agreement between the inspired apostles before us, we can plainly see that the second public meeting of the whole church was called, not for the purpose of bringing about an agreement between the apostles, but for the purpose of enabling the apostles to bring the whole church into agreement with themselves. In this light we must study the proceedings, or we shall totally misconstrue them.

Vv. 7-11. Men who are in error can never be convinced that they are wrong by denying them freedom of speech. Not till they have been allowed to express themselves to the last word are they capable of listening dispassionately to the other side. The apostles, knowing this, or at least acting on it, permitted the judaizers in the church to say all that they wished to say before any reply was made to their position and arguments. Then, when they had completely emptied themselves, the apostles, one by one, and in a succession apparently prearranged, gave utterance to facts and judgments which compelled assent. (7) And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them,

Brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. (8) And

God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us ; (9) and he made no distinction between them and us, purifying their hearts by faith. (10) Now therefore why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear ? (11) But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they.

The Greek word rendered questioning in verse 7 (*ζητῶσις*) literally means a question ; but here it has the sense of debate or disputation (Grimm's Lexicon) ; and it is used here rather than the more usual word for debate (*συζητῶσις*), to indicate, I think, that the discussion was conducted chiefly by asking questions— a very common way of putting an adversary to a disadvantage. The debate was probably one-sided, the Pharisees putting all the questions, and putting them so that each one carried in it an argument, or implied a conclusion. It is perhaps because they had adopted this form of argumentation that Peter put the main point of his answer (10) in the same form.

Peter's speech contains just three points of argument : First, that in the well known case of the first Gentile converts in the house of Cornelius, God, by giving them the Holy Spirit as he had given it to the apostles, made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles ; from which the silent inference is that as God had made no distinction men should make none. Second, to put on the necks of these Gentile converts the yoke of the law, which no generation of Jews had been able to bear, would be, in the light of the preceding fact, tempting God ; that is, trying his forbearance by their own presumption. Third, the settled belief, indicated in the

words "we believe," that both Jews and Gentiles were to be saved through grace, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, implies necessarily that they were not to be saved by keeping the law. In affirming that the law was a yoke that the Jews had not been able to bear, he meant that they had not been able so to keep it as to be saved by the perfection of their obedience to it. This speech, it would seem, should have been enough to end the whole controversy; but it was wisely planned among the apostles that the evidence on the subject should be multiplied in a way to leave no room for more, and no room for subsequent caviling.

### 3. SPEECHES BY BARNABAS AND PAUL, 12.

VER. 12. After Peter sat down, Barnabas spoke next, and then Paul, each setting forth other evidences of God's will on the question at issue. (12) And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. Their line of argument was a continuation of Peter's. As the miracle of giving the Holy Spirit in the case of Cornelius and his friends gave proof of God's approval in that case, so the "signs and wonders" which he wrought by the hands of Barnabas and Paul while they were bringing in the Gentiles and organizing them as congregations without circumcision, and without requiring them to keep the law, gave proof of his approbation in these cases also. The argument of the three speeches was exactly the same, though based upon different facts, and these facts were presented in their chronological order.

## 4. A SPEECH BY JAMES, 13-21.

Vv. 13-21. As in the case of the death and resurrection of the Messiah, no amount of contemporary evidence could convince the average Jew, unless he could be made to see that such a death and resurrection were spoken of in the predictions concerning the Messiah, so, in reference to the question in hand, they could not be silenced without evidence from the prophets. To James was assigned the task of setting forth the evidence on this point, and also of proposing a decision in harmony with the result of the private conference. (13) And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying,

Brethren, hearken unto me: (14) Symeon hath rehearsed how first God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. (15) And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, (16) After these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; (17) that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, (18) saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world. (19) Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them who from among the Gentiles turn to God; (20) but that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood. (21) For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.

The words, "James answered" (13), indicate that this speech was in answer to the positions of the Phari-

secs. The argument is, that the statements of Peter, of which those made by Barnabas and Paul were a mere supplement, and needed not special mention, were in fulfillment of prophecy concerning the Messiah's reign; and it supplied all that was lacking to convince the brethren. While he quotes only one prophet (Amos ix. 11, 12), he says, "to this agree the words of the prophets," meaning that other prophets besides the one quoted had used words of the same import. The quotation is made from the Septuagint, as appears from its agreeing more closely with that version than with the Hebrew. The prophet had in previous verses predicted the downfall of the Jewish kingdom, which would be the overthrow of the tabernacle or house of David, whose descendants were the reigning kings; and in the verses quoted he predicts the rebuilding of the same, which could occur only by some descendant of David again ascending the throne. But after that downfall, no man of David's race became a king until Jesus was enthroned in heaven. This, then, was the rebuilding of the ruins, and it was to be followed by "the residue of men," that is, the Gentiles, seeking after the Lord, as Gentiles had been doing ever since Peter's visit to the house of Cornelius.

The fact that James introduces the decision which he proposes with the words, "Wherefore my judgment is," has been construed by many as evidence that he was president of the conference, and as such rendered a decision which the others were bound to accept. But there is no evidence whatever that he acted in this capacity, or that his judgment in the case was more authoritative than that of Peter, or of John, who also was present. The four things from which James proposed that the Gentiles should be required to abstain had been

made unlawful, not by the Mosaic law, but by the revelations of the patriarchal age. From the beginning it had been known to the patriarchs that it was sinful to have any responsible connection with idols, or to indulge in fornication; and from the time of the law given to the race in the family of Noah, eating blood, and consequently eating things strangled which retained their blood within them, had been wrong, and it will continue to be until the end of the world.<sup>1</sup> So, in regard to the question at issue, whether the Gentile disciples must observe the law of Moses, James' proposal that "we trouble them not," was fully carried out by imposing nothing on them that was peculiar to the law.

The remark with which James closes his speech, that Moses was preached in every city by being read in the synagogues, was intended, I think, to meet an objection which he knew to be in the minds of some of his hearers, and it may have been expressed by some of the speakers

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<sup>1</sup> Farrar and Lightfoot, followed by others, hold that these provisions were intended to be temporary and local. Both refer for proof of this to Paul's subsequent discussion of eating things offered to idols, assuming that he permitted it; and the former appeals to the fact that the Judaizing party in the church afterward disregarded the decree (*Farrar's Life of Paul*, 243, 244; *Lightfoot on Galatians*, 127 [1].) But the fact that it was repudiated afterward by the Judaizers only, shows that they deserved the stern rebukes which Paul administers to them in the epistle to the Galatians (i. 6-9; iv. 17; v. 1; vi. 12, 13); and in Paul's discussion of the question, while he admits that to eat meat offered to idols is not sinful when the fact of its being so offered is not known to the eater; and while he shows that, if for no other reason, one should abstain on account of the harm which eating might do to weak brethren; he finally takes the very position of the decree, forbidding it altogether as a communion with demons. See I. Cor. viii. 8-13; x. 14-22.

whom he was answering—the objection that, if the Gentiles were not required to keep the law of Moses, the law would fall into disrepute, and be forgotten among men. Of this James would assure them there would be no danger, seeing that the synagogue service would prevent such a result.

It naturally seems strange to our generation that the apostles thought it worth while to warn the Gentile disciples against “pollutions of idols, and fornication.” But they had been trained for generations back to regard the latter vice as an innocent gratification of a natural desire, and to look upon the former as a solemn religious duty; and it was not easy, when they became believers, to shake off convictions which had been thus imbedded in their moral nature. The same difficulty is encountered to this day by missionaries among the heathen.

#### 5. THE DECISION OF THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS, 22-29.

Vv. 22-29. The speech of James brought the discussion to a close. The combined force of the four speeches made the will of God so clear that the opposition was totally silenced, and the only remaining question was, how best to carry out the proposal submitted by James. (22) Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: (23) and they wrote thus by them, The apostles and the elder brethren unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: (24) Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled



you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; (25) it seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, (26) men who have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (27) We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. (28) For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; (29) that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

Although this document was written in the name of "the apostles and the elder brethren" (23), the latter expression being the equivalent of "the elders" of 22, yet "the whole church" (22) was present, and the expression of verse 25, "having come to one accord," refers to the apostles having brought all the members of the church to the judgment in which they themselves had previously united. Observe that it begins by repudiating all responsibility for the teaching of the men who had started the trouble in Antioch, declaring that the apostles and elders had given them no commandment at all. The wisdom of sending Judas and Silas is seen in the fact that they had not been connected at all with the work among the Gentiles, and that their personal influence would tend to silence any objections which might be raised by refractory Jews. They could explain, without suspicion of bias, anything in the written document which might appear to any one obscure.

This is the earliest document, so far as we know, that issued from the pen of any apostle. It antedated all of

the Gospels, and all of Paul's epistles. It circulated as a separate document among the churches until it was incorporated into Acts, when previously existing copies of it were naturally allowed to perish. It is called an epistle (30), and also the "decrees [ $\tau\acute{\alpha}$   $\delta\acute{o}\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ ] which had been ordained by the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem" (xvi. 4). It makes a formal claim of inspiration by the words, "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." No uninspired men could dare to use such language; and this circumstance differentiates it from all the decrees and deliverances of all the ecclesiastical courts from that day to this, not excepting those of the Roman Catholic Church, which makes blasphemous pretences of infallibility. Be it observed, too, that while this conference is constantly referred to by Romanists and other supporters of episcopacy, as the first general council, it was no general council at all. It was not composed of representatives from the congregations of a district, however small, but of the members of a single church.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, it decided, on the authority of the inspired men who directed its decisions, a question of doctrine affecting the salvation of souls; and this no set of men except the apostles have ever had the right to do. In no sense, then, can its action be pleaded as a precedent for the existence of any ecclesiastical court

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<sup>1</sup> It is gratifying to observe that Archdeacon Farrar, himself a high dignitary of the Church of England, with a tender side toward Romanism, unites with the non-episcopal writers in the view expressed above. He says: "The so-called Council of Jerusalem in no way resembled the general councils of the church, either in its history, its constitution, or its object. It was not a convention of ordained delegates, but a meeting of the entire church of Jerusalem to receive a deputation from the church at Antioch." (*Life of Paul*, 243).

whatever outside of the individual congregation, or for the purpose of settling by authority any question of doctrine.

## 6. PEACE RESTORED IN ANTIOCH, 30-35.

Vv. 30, 31. The return journey of the messengers, and the effect in Antioch of the decision which they brought, is briefly stated. (30) So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. (31) And when they had read it they rejoiced for the consolation. As the Jewish brethren in Antioch had not become partisans in the controversy, and had desired only a peaceable settlement of the question, their rejoicing at the result was a natural consequence. If any of those who had raised the question at first were still in the city, doubtless they were crestfallen, but their mouths were stopped, and it is possible that, like their sympathisers in Jerusalem, they acquiesced in the decision. Thus the triumph of Paul and Barnabas was most signal and complete. It was rendered more so in the eyes of the Antioch brethren from the fact mentioned by Paul (Gal. ii. 1-4), but not by Luke, that Titus, a Gentile, had gone with Paul; that a strenuous effort was made to have him circumcised; and that he had come back uncircumcised, Paul having refused to give place to the Judaisers for a single hour.<sup>1</sup>

Vv. 32-34. Judas and Silas had now accomplished the main purpose for which they were sent to Antioch,

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<sup>1</sup> The attempt of some writers, including Farrar (*Life of Paul*, 233-237), to make it appear that Titus was circumcised, and that Paul's language about the incident means, he was not *compelled* to be circumcised, but I circumcised him for the sake of peace, appears to me like a mere conceit. Even Baur repudiates it, saying, "Nothing can be more absurd." (*Life of Paul*; i. 122, n. 1).

but they found opportunity to make themselves still further useful. As they had been "chief men among the brethren" in Jerusalem, it was a source of delight to the brethren in Antioch to hear them. (32) And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren in many words, and confirmed them. (33) And after they had spent some time there, they were dismissed in peace from the brethren to those who had sent them forth.<sup>1</sup> The fact that they were "themselves also prophets," gave inspired authority to all their utterances, and made their exhortations the more edifying to the brethren.

VER. 35. The city of Antioch was still a profitable field for apostolic labor, and the scene of interesting events. (35) But Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. To justify the united labors of so many eminent men, the number of disciples to be taught and the number of others willing to hear the preaching must have been very great.

It is during this period that the most judicious commentators, and I may say all recent scholars, locate the visit of Peter to Antioch, and the rebuke administered to him by Paul, as recorded in the second chapter of Galatians. It has been erroneously affirmed that in this affair Peter acted in direct conflict with the epistle which he and others are represented as having so recently written to this church. The harshness of this supposition has led some to deny the truthfulness of Luke's representations about that epistle. It is argued that

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<sup>1</sup> Verse 34 of the A. V., from the *Textus Receptus*, is rightly omitted from the corrected Greek text and R. V., for want of MS. evidence.

Peter would not have been guilty of such inconsistency ; and if he had, Paul, instead of rebuking him in the terms which he reproduces in Galatians, would have appealed to the epistle itself as the most direct method of refuting Peter.<sup>1</sup> Both of these considerations involve a misconception of the relation between that epistle and Peter's present conduct. The epistle, or the decree, as we should rather style it, had reference to imposing the law of Moses on the Gentiles, and it said nothing at all about the kind of social intercourse which should be maintained between them and the Jews. Now it was with reference to the latter alone that Peter was at fault in Antioch. "When Cephas came to Antioch," says Paul, "I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles ; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision" (Gal. ii. 11, 12). To quote the decree against him for this would have been irrelevant ; therefore Paul says nothing about the decree ; but he brings up that which was strictly in point, Peter's eating with Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, which he had defended and justified when censured for it in Jerusalem (xi. 1-3). Paul alludes to this in the remark : "If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles [he had done this only in Cæsarea before this time], and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" "For if I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a transgressor" (Gal. ii. 14-18). Peter had lived like a Gentile in the house of Cornelius, and had done the same for a time in Antioch ; but now, by withdrawing, he was virtually

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<sup>1</sup> Baur, *Life of Paul*, i. 28 ff., followed by all of his school.

saying to the Gentiles, You must live like the Jews if you have social intercourse with me. The trouble doubtless lay in the fact that Gentiles placed on their table dishes which the Jews had been taught to consider unclean, and they also neglected the legal purifications of their own persons. It would be hazardous to say that James agreed with the men who came from him ; for we are warned against this by the fact that the men from Jerusalem who stirred up the first strife in Antioch had received no commandment at all (xv. 24).

The truthfulness of Luke's whole account of the mission of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem has been denied by rationalists, because in his account of it there is an omission of almost every particular which is mentioned in Paul's own account given in Galatians. We have seen, as we passed along, that there is no contradiction between the two ; but it can not be denied that the difference just mentioned exists. It is accounted for, in a most natural way, by the fact that Paul's epistle was written at least five years before Acts, and a much longer time before according to the estimates of the rationalists themselves, and probably the facts mentioned in it were well known to Luke's readers, and needed not to be repeated. All that was needed was to set forth those details which Paul had omitted.

## SEC. III. PAUL'S SECOND TOUR.

(XV. 36—XVIII. 22.)

## 1. CHANGE OF COMPANIONS, AND BEGINNING OF THE TOUR, 36-41.

VER. 36. We have lingered long on the interval spent by Paul and Barnabas in Antioch. We are now to follow the former in his second tour among the Gentiles. (36) And after some days Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare. We shall find as we proceed that the visit extended far beyond the remotest church which they had previously planted; but Paul's proposal contemplated, as the primary purpose of the tour, the care of the brethren whom they had baptized. This shows that his solicitude for the congregations which he had planted was no less ardent than his zeal for the conversion of sinners.

Vv. 37-39. The best of friends sometimes differ on questions of expediency and of personal preference; and we now learn that on such questions even inspired men were liable to differences. (37) And Barnabas was minded to take with them John also, who was called Mark. (38) But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. (39) And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other, and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cyprus: Paul's judgment was controlled in the matter by his high estimate of the courage and self-sacrifice which ought to characterize a preacher of the gospel, while



Barnabas was undoubtedly warped by his personal relationship to Mark, who was his cousin (Col. iv. 10). Which of the two acted the more wisely we are not now able to determine, for want of acquaintance with the motives which actuated Mark in turning back, and with the circumstances under which he did so; and even if we could decide, the decision might be of no practical utility. Suffice it to say, that Mark was afterward fully restored to Paul's confidence, and that no permanent alienation from Barnabas took place, as we learn from the manner in which Paul afterward expressed himself in regard to both.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding their disagreement and separation, they did not allow the good cause to suffer, nor did they fail to accomplish separately that which Paul proposed that they should accomplish together; for Barnabas, in revisiting Cyprus, saw a portion of the brethren to whom he and Paul had preached, while Paul, by a different route, visited the others. The separation of Barnabas from Paul is our separation from Barnabas; for his name is not again mentioned by Luke. But as we bid him a final farewell, the sails are spread which are to bear him over the sea, that he may make the islands glad with the knowledge of salvation; and the later incidents of his noble life will be made known to us when we sit down with him in the everlasting kingdom.

Vv. 40, 41. We turn with Luke to follow the steps of him who was in labors more abundant and in prisons more frequent than all the apostles, and to form a better acquaintance with his new companion. (40) but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. (41) And he went

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<sup>1</sup> I. Cor. ix. 6; Col. iv. 11; II. Tim. iv. 11.

through Syria, and Cilicia, confirming the churches. The fact that Silas, who had been one of the "chief men among the brethren" in Jerusalem (22), and had been selected by the apostles and elders there to represent them in settling the controversy at Antioch, consented now to unite with Paul in his work among the heathen, is a proof to us of the perfect agreement which existed between Paul and the authorities of the church in Jerusalem; and it was a guarantee to the Jewish brethren whom the two might visit in their journey that there was no antagonism between their teaching and that of the older apostles. The fact that, in addition to this, Silas was a prophet (32), completed his fitness as Paul's fellow laborer.

The statement that "they were commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord" implies a meeting of the church for this purpose; and it is not improbable that the prayer of commendation was accompanied, as in the case of Barnabas and Paul in the beginning, by imposition of hands (*cf.* remarks under xiii. 3).

During the interval between Paul's departure to Tarsus (ix. 30) and his arrival in Antioch (xi. 25, 26), he had preached the gospel in Syria and Cilicia (Gal. i. 21); and now he revisits with Silas the churches which he had planted at that time. His proposal to Barnabas (36) contemplated only a revisitation of the churches which they together had planted; but as Barnabas went with Mark to some of these, Paul was left free to revisit some which he alone had planted, and thus the work of revisitation was made the more complete by the separation which took place.

Some of the advocates of the episcopal rite of confirmation affect to find in the words, "confirming the

churches" (41), authority for this rite; but it requires only a glance at the four passages in which the original term occurs ( $\xi\pi\iota\sigma\tau\eta\rho\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$ ) to see that it has reference not to laying hands on new converts in order to admit them to full fellowship, but to making firm by proper instruction and exhortation the souls of those already in the full fellowship of the church.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. CHURCHES OF THE FIRST TOUR REVISITED, XVI. 1-5.

Vv. 1, 2. Omitting the details of Paul's labors in Syria and Cilicia, Luke hurries us forward to his arrival in Derbe and Lystra, the scenes respectively of the most painful and the most consoling incidents of his former tour. Had he been disposed to indulge in descriptions of scenery, which he never does, he might have given us a vivid picture of the Gates of Cilicia, the magnificent pass through the Taurus mountains which opens a way from the lowlands of Cilicia to the uplands of Lycaonia. The grandeur of the view must have deeply impressed Paul and Silas, as it does all modern travelers; but Luke found no room on his living pages for even an allusion to such things. He is hurrying to introduce to us a new and most interesting character, destined to play an important part in the subsequent portion of the narrative. (1) And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold,

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<sup>1</sup> This is clearly perceived and admitted by Plumptre, and yet he makes an attempt, though a feeble one, to connect the term with the episcopal rite of confirmation: "Confirming is, it need hardly be said, used in the general sense of strengthening; but as the bestowing of spiritual gifts by laying on of hands was a chief part of the work so done, it at least approximates to the idea of confirming in the later and more technical sense of the term." (*Com. in loco*).

a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess who believed; but his father was a Greek. (2) The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. The grandmother as well as the mother of this disciple was a believer, and both had preceded him into the kingdom. By these two godly women he had been instructed from his infancy in the Holy Scriptures (II. Tim. iii. 14, 15); he had been baptized during Paul's previous visit to Lystra; he had witnessed the stoning of Paul; had wept over his prostrate form; had seen him, as if raised from the dead, rise up and return into the city; and had seen him depart on the next day with unconquerable determination into another field of conflict for Christ.<sup>1</sup> It is not wonderful that now, with several added years of Christian experience, he was well spoken of by the brethren. The fact that he was thus attested not only at Derbe and Lystra, close about his home, but also at the distant city of Iconium, renders it probable that he was already a young preacher, and that the imposition of hands by the elders of the church, which is mentioned later, had already taken place.<sup>2</sup>

VER. 3. The discerning eye of Paul soon discovered in this youth qualities which would render him a fit companion and assistant, and he secured him for this position. (3) Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek. The "Jews who were in those parts," like all other Jews, could not look favorably on

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<sup>1</sup> See remarks under xiv. 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> See I. Tim. iv. 14, where the original word, *πρεσβυτέριον*, is improperly rendered presbytery, instead of eldership.

a man of Jewish blood who was uncircumcised. He appeared to be repudiating his nationality. His father having been a Greek is mentioned as the cause of the neglect of the rite in Timothy's infancy.

To a reader not fully informed as to Paul's position in regard to circumcision, it seems very strange that he circumcised Timothy so soon after refusing to do the same with Titus in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> It seems also to conflict with statements of Paul in his epistles, especially with that in Galatians v. 2-4: "If ye receive circumcision Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man who receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace." But the very terms of this passage show that he is contemplating one who receives circumcision in order that he may come under the law, and be saved by keeping the law. To cases in which this was not the purport of the act this censure could not apply. If Titus had been circumcised, this would have been precisely the import of it; for it was for the purpose of bringing him under the law as a means of final salvation, that it was demanded by the Pharisees. But the circumcision of Jews like Timothy stood on an altogether different footing. Circumcision, as our Lord had taught, was "not of Moses, but of the fathers" (Jno. vii. 22). The obligation to observe it did not originate in the law, but in the covenant with Abraham; and its connection with the law grew out of the fact that the law was given to a portion of Abraham's circumcised offspring. As then the obligation did not originate with the law, the abrogation of the law could not annul it. For this reason the propriety

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<sup>1</sup> See the remarks under xv. 30, 31.

of circumcising children of Jewish blood was never called in question by Paul; but he and all the disciples recognized it to the very last (xxi; 20-25). The covenant with Abraham in regard to this rite is an everlasting covenant, and the only penalty of neglecting it is the same to-day that it has ever been, that of being cut off from Abraham's recognized posterity (Gen. xvii. 9-14). As it was a national mark,<sup>c</sup> it had no connection with salvation, or with a man's relation to Christ; hence Paul's declaration, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love" (Gal. v. 6).

At some time Paul laid hands on Timothy to impart to him a spiritual gift (II. Tim. i. 6); but whether at this time, or after he had tried him in the field for a while, we have no means of knowing. The same is true of the imposition of hands by the eldership mentioned in I. Timothy iv. 14. It is highly probable, though, that inasmuch as Paul himself had been separated to this work by imposition of hands (xiii. 3), the elders followed this precedent in the case of Timothy. At any rate, there can be no reasonable doubt that this ceremony on the part of the eldership was intended to set him apart to the work of preaching; for there is no other purpose that can account for it. The conceit that Paul ordained him on the recommendation of two or three churches, is read into the text by those who think they find it there.

Vv. 4, 5. Resuming now the thread of his narrative where he had broken it to speak of Timothy, Luke tells us of the other work done by the apostles in the cities which they had reached. (4) And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the de-



crees for to keep, which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. (5) So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily. This statement shows that the decrees were not intended for Syria and Cilicia alone, but for all the Gentile churches. They were everywhere needed to unite in harmonious fellowship the Jewish and Gentile converts. As Paul had founded these churches, and as Silas had been sent out from Jerusalem by the apostles for the express purpose of coöperating with him in maintaining the teaching of the decrees, the latter came to the ears of both Jews and Gentiles with all their force, and produced the happiest effects. The churches "increased in number daily," in consequence of being "confirmed in the faith."

### 3. PREACHING IN PHRYGIA AND GALATIA, AND A CALL TO MACEDONIA, 6-10.

VV. 6-8. A line drawn from Derbe westward to Antioch of Pisidia might be styled, in military phraseology, the base line of Paul's present advance into the interior of Asia Minor, with a view to spreading the gospel over all its districts. In person he went no farther in this direction than Phrygia, which lay to the northwest from Antioch; and Galatia, which lay to the north; but churches planted in these regions, if active and zealous, would soon cause the truth to be sounded out through more distant provinces. Journeys and labors which must have occupied many months are recounted by Luke in the few words which follow: (6) And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; (7) and when they were come over against Mysia, they



assayed to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; (8) and passing by Mysia they came down to Troas. We are warned by this brief sentence not to assume from the brevity of Luke's narration at any given point that he is brief because he has nothing interesting or important to tell, for we learn from Paul himself that it was far otherwise with the journeys here so hurriedly passed over. Many congregations sprang into existence under his labors in Galatia (I. Cor. xvi. 1), and their subsequent unhappy condition called forth one of his most valuable epistles. The Galatians were Gauls, whose ancestors, as predatory warriors, had wandered from Gaul (modern France) over into Asia Minor before the Christian era, and had by the time of Paul's visit become a settled agricultural people.<sup>1</sup> It was not Paul's intention at first to preach among them, because doubtless he was looking to what he supposed more fruitful fields; but he was constrained by sickness to tarry until he found among them unexpectedly a field ripe for the sickle. He wrote to them afterward, "Ye know that because of an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you the first time." The infirmity, as we ascertain from what he further says about it, was that "thorn in the flesh" which he had prayed the Lord in vain to take from him. It was of such a character that strangers like these would be likely to despise and reject him on account of it; but they received him so differently that he wrote to them afterward these grateful words: "That which was a temptation to you in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but ye received me

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<sup>1</sup> An elaborate account of the Galatians is given by Bishop Lightfoot in an essay on their history and character appended to his commentary on the epistle written to them.

as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." And he adds, "I bear you witness, that if possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me" (Gal. iv. 14, 15). His distress of mind and weakness of body may have imparted a mellow tone to his preaching which at once awakened the quick sympathies of the excitable people, and encouraged him to continue his labors far beyond his first intention. Out of the most unpropitious circumstances under which he had ever introduced the gospel to a new community, with the single exception of his going from Lystra to Derbe, there sprang up the sweetest fruits of all his labors; for there are no other churches of whose devotion to him he speaks in similar terms. Such experiences as this illustrated to him the Lord's meaning, when he said to him in answer to his prayer about this thorn in the flesh, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my power is made perfect in weakness;" and it was experience like this which enabled him at length to say, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (II. Cor. xii. 9, 10).

Another new and strange experience befell Paul in this interval. Not only had he been led by sickness to preach in Galatia contrary to his intention, but when he formed the purpose of carrying the gospel next into the province of Asia, the Holy Spirit would not permit him to do so. The name Asia at that time was chiefly used for the Roman province of which Ephesus was the principal city; and doubtless Ephesus, in which he afterward preached two years and three months, was his objective

point. This is the first time of which we read that his own judgment as to his next field of labor was overruled by the Holy Spirit. But this was not all ; for when he was forbidden to go into Asia, which was southwest of him, he next proposed to go into Bithynia, a rich and important province to northward, and he was likewise forbidden to go thither. Having finished up the work behind him, and being thus forbidden to turn either to the left or the right, he had no alternative but to go right forward ; and this took him through Mysia in a northwesterly direction. He went through this district without stopping (for such is the meaning of the expression, " passing by Mysia "), because he saw no opening for work on the way, and he came down to Troas, which was on the seashore, and here he ran upon the barrier of the sea. It is not possible that he and his companions failed to be very much puzzled by these mysterious directings of the Holy Spirit. The questions must have pressed upon them with increasing interest at every step, Why are we turned back from these inviting fields? and whither is the Lord directing us?

Vv. 9, 10. During the first night of their stay in Troas the mystery was solved, at least in part. (9) And a vision appeared to Paul in the night ; there was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. (10) And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us for to preach the gospel to them. They now understood a part of God's purpose ; they afterward understood it more fully. At this point our author first indicates his own presence by the use of the pronouns " we " and " us." The words, " concluding that God had called us

to preach the gospel to them," imply that the author was one of those who had been turned aside from the places in which they had intended to preach (6, 7), and that therefore he had joined the company in the interior of Asia Minor. The traveling companions are now Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke.

#### 4. ARRIVAL IN MACEDONIA, AND BAPTISM OF CERTAIN WOMEN, 11-15.

Vv. 11, 12. It was not every day that a ship could be found in the harbor of Troas, and still less frequently one bound for the unimportant seaport of Neapolis, and ready to set sail. When, therefore, the apostolic company found one to suit their purpose, and just ready to weigh anchor, they must have realized that God was at last favoring their journey. (11) Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; (12) and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. The remark, "we made a straight course to Samothrace," implies a favorable wind; for only with such a wind can a sailing vessel make a straight course. We have evidence, too, that this favorable wind was blowing a stiff breeze, which bore the ship along rapidly; for on a subsequent journey (xx. 6) five days were occupied in the same voyage. Here was another indication of a favoring providence which the voyagers, after their strange experience just past, could not fail to observe.

Samothrace is an island in the Archipelago, and Neapolis (Newtown, now called Kavalla) was a seaport for Philippi. The latter city is about ten miles from Neap-

olis in a northwesterly direction. The road passes over a high ridge which runs east and west, and thence descends into an extensive plain in which Philippi stands on an elevation. As the travelers approached the city, they crossed the river Gangites, on opposite banks of which the armies under Brutus and Cassius on one side, and Octavianus and Antony on the other, were formed in order of battle before that final struggle which decided the fate of the Roman Republic. The missionaries walked through the field of battle as they drew near the city. They found it a Roman city with a Greek population all around it; for such is the force of the remark that it was a colony. Augustus Cæsar, in commemoration of the great battle, had made it such by filling it with Romans transported from Italy. The apostles were now in Europe, and this was their first contact with a community of Romans. The remark that Philippi was "the first city of the district," can not mean that it was the most important city of one of the four parts into which Macedonia was divided; for Amphipolis occupied this distinction in the part to which Philippi belonged: but it refers to a smaller district, and the comparison is to the small cities and villages not far away.

Vv. 13-15. On entering this strange city the apostles found no Jewish synagogue in which they might be invited to speak "a word of exhortation to the people;" and they were doubtless no little perplexed as to how they should introduce the gospel to the heathen population. The way in which the problem was solved is stated in the next words of our text: (13) And on the Sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who were

come together. (14) And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. (15) And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us. From this it seems that they remained until the Sabbath before they decided how and where to begin their work. Had they met with Lydia and her household sooner, it might have been different. The cause of their thinking that there was a place of prayer on the bank of the river may have been that they saw something indicative of it as they crossed the river in approaching the town, or it may have been that, in the course of inquiry as to the presence of Jews in the city, they had heard of some women being accustomed to go out to this place for some purpose every seventh day.

Thyatira, the home of Lydia, was a city of proconsular Asia (Rev. i. 11), situated on its northern border; and Paul's company, in "passing by Mysia" on their way to Troas, had probably passed near it. It was noted for the excellence of its purple dyes,<sup>1</sup> and it is still a pleasantly situated town of about ten thousand inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> As purple was a very costly dye, it was used on none but costly goods; and the fact that Lydia was a dealer in these implies that, while she was not above the necessity of labor, she was in comparatively easy cir-

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<sup>1</sup> Citations to this effect are made from Homer's *Odyssey*, i. 14; iii. 9; and from Strabo, xiii. 4-14.

<sup>2</sup> For a description of its present condition and appearance, see the author's *Lands of the Bible*, 585.



cumstances. The same is implied in the fact that she had a house called her own, which was large enough to entertain Paul and his three companions, and that her household included a plurality of women (13 *cf.* 15). Her character is indicated, not only by the statement that she was "one that worshiped God," but by the considerations that in this heathen city, where the Sabbath was unknown to the inhabitants, she was faithful in observing it; that while the other dealers in purple goods were busy on that day, she closed her shop regardless of the demands of competition; and that, although there was no synagogue in which to worship, and no male Jews to conduct the accustomed worship, she and her employés habitually left the noisy city, and spent the holy day in prayer on the bank of the river. Such fidelity to God, under circumstances so unfavorable, is not often witnessed in our own more favored times. It was observed from on high, and it met its reward.

We can now begin to see the design of God in turning Paul back from Asia, and back from Bithynia, when he desired to go to these countries; in leading him across Mysia to Troas; in sending him the vision by night in that city, and in bringing him and his company by so singular a chain of providences to this Roman colony. These women had been wont to repair to this river bank on the Sabbath day for prayer. God had heard their prayers, as in the case of Cornelius, and he chose this mysterious way of bringing to them the preachers through whose words they might believe in Christ and learn the way of salvation. He had directed the journey of Paul by land and sea, and had timed the motion of the ship with reference to that weekly prayer-meeting, as he had once directed the flight of an angel



from heaven, and timed the steps of Philip with reference to movements of the eunuch's chariot. Now, as in those instances, he answers the prayers of the unconverted, not by direct operations of his Spirit within them, but by bringing to them the gospel on the lips of a living preacher ; and it is quite a singular circumstance, as noted by Alford, that though Paul had been forbidden to preach in Asia, his first converts in Philippi were Asiatics.

The statement that the Lord opened Lydia's heart implies that previously her heart was in some way closed. It was certainly not closed by the hardness of a sinful life, or by inherited depravity ; for such a supposition is forbidden by the steadfastness with which, under great temptation, she had previously clung to the worship of God. It was closed in the sense in which the pious and earnest heart of a Jewish worshiper might be closed. Every Jew, and every Jewish proselyte, was at that time so wedded to the belief that the coming Christ would establish an earthly kingdom, as to have the heart very tightly closed against the conception of a crucified Christ, whose reign as a king is purely spiritual. It was this that had caused the mass of the Jews to reject the Christ while he was still on earth, and it continued to be their "stumbling block" (Jno. v. 44 ; I. Cor. i. 23). Whether Lydia was a Jewess or a proselyte, this was "the hope of Israel" in which she had been instructed, and for which she had been taught to devoutly pray ; and if the natural effect of it had not been removed from her heart, she must have rejected the gospel, as did the mass of those who had been her teachers. The statement then that the Lord "opened her heart" means that he removed this mistaken conception which would have

prevented her from receiving the Christ. The effect of the opening was precisely that which was aimed at; it led her "to give heed to the things which were spoken by Paul." The Greek verb here rendered "to give heed" means, in some connections, to fix the mind upon a matter, and in others, to put something in practice.<sup>1</sup> Here it can not mean the former, for Lydia had already fixed her mind upon the preaching, as is declared in the words, "a certain woman named Lydia *heard* us." She first heard, then the Lord opened her heart, and then she gave heed to the things which Paul had spoken. The meaning is, that she put in practice the things spoken by Paul. What these things were, Luke has told us so often that he does not reiterate them here, but he indirectly shows that baptism is one of them by the way in which he mentions her observance of that ordinance. He says, "and when she was baptized," implying that this was one of the things that she gave heed to. We know that in preaching to such persons Paul always directed them to believe the gospel, to repent of their sins, and to be baptized; and if Lydia gave heed to the things which he spoke, she did these three things.

We have yet to notice, from another point of view, the statement nowhere else found in connection with a case of conversion, that the Lord opened Lydia's heart.

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<sup>1</sup> The word is *προσέχειν*. It is used in the sense of fixing the attention, in such expressions as these: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men?" (Matt. vi. 1); "Beware of false prophets" (vii. 15); "Take heed to yourselves" (Luke xvii. 3); "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies" (I. Tim. i. 4); *et al.* It has the other sense in these clauses: "Not given to much wine" (I. Tim. iii. 8); "Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching" (iv. 13); "From which no man hath given attendance at the altar" (Heb. vii. 13).

We have seen what the opening was, and what were its effects ; we now inquire in what way it was done by the Lord. It is too common to understand such expressions as this in the sense of immediate actions of God or of his Holy Spirit, and to ignore the secondary agencies or instrumentalities employed. In this instance we are likely to jump to the conclusion that the Lord opened Lydia's heart by a direct operation of his Spirit, and thus to ignore a very different method clearly indicated by the context. In order to see this, we must put ourselves in the place of our author, and inquire what led him to make a remark in regard to Lydia, which he has not made in regard to any other person whose conversion he has described. It can not be because God did for Lydia something which he omitted in other cases ; for in the case of every Jew and proselyte the same process was necessary. The difference is only in the phraseology employed. This is accounted for by the fact that Luke, together with Paul and all his company, had been very much puzzled for weeks past, as to what God was doing and intending to do, by turning them away from fields of labor which appeared to them the most promising, and leading them on, they knew not whither, until he had brought them to this heathen city where there appeared to be no opening for a ready introduction of the gospel. In the very midst of their perplexity they unexpectedly met with these women ; and though they had never met them before, and though they might have expected, under the circumstances, a long and ardent struggle to overcome their natural repugnance to a crucified Messiah, they are surprised to find Lydia's heart immediately opened, and they see at once what the Lord has done and has been doing since they were first for-

bidden to go into Asia. Had not the Lord interfered, Paul would now have been in Asia or Bithynia, and these simple hearted women would have still prayed on in ignorance of the salvation which had been provided for them. It was so strikingly the Lord's doing, that Luke was moved to this mode of expressing it. The Lord opened Lydia's heart, as he did that of the eunuch, by bringing from afar, at the proper juncture, the living preacher through whose word the end was accomplished.

The fact that Lydia's household were baptized with her has been taken by some Pædobaptist scholars as presumptive evidence in favor of infant baptism. Albert Barnes argues as follows: "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 would be difficult to find an instance of more fallacious reasoning. In the expression, "household or infant baptism," it is tacitly assumed that the two are identical, the very thing to be proved. The statement that "her belief is particularly mentioned" is misleading; for her belief is not mentioned at all; it is only implied. Finally, the assumed implication that "*they* did not believe," and that "*they* were baptized because *she* believed," has not the slightest support in a word of the text. It was read into the text from Mr. Barnes' imagination. Dr. Alexander states the case thus: "The real strength of the argument lies not in any one case, but in the repeated mention of whole households as baptized;"

and in thus stating it, he follows the oft quoted demand of Bengel: "Who can believe that in so many families there was not an infant?" The answer is, that there are only four whole households mentioned in the New Testament as being baptized, and that there is positive proof that in three of these there was not an infant. In that of Cornelius there was none, for they all spoke in tongues and believed (x. 46 ; xv. 9) ; none in that of the jailer, for they all believed and rejoiced in the Lord (xvi. 34) ; and none in that of Stephanas, for "they set themselves to minister to the saints" (I. Cor. i. 16 ; xvi. 15). The inference, therefore, in reference to the household of Lydia is reversed ; for, inasmuch as one peculiarity of all the households baptized, of which the facts are known, is the absence of infants, we are justified in the conclusion, no evidence to the contrary appearing, that this was also a peculiarity of the household of Lydia. If the number of whole households baptized were much greater than it is, the argument would remain the same ; and it should not be forgotten that it is an every day occurrence now, among the large number of evangelists who are constantly baptizing multitudes in our western states, to baptize whole households without an infant in them. Almost any active evangelist can relate many such instances within his own experience. The ablest of Pædobaptist commentators are more candid on this subject ; thus Alford, commenting on the case of Lydia, says : "It may be that no inference for infant baptism is hence deducible." Gloag says : "Evidently the passage in itself can not be adduced as a proof either for or against infant baptism ; there is in it no indication whether there were or were not infants in the household of Lydia." Meyer says that of the baptism of infants

“no trace is found in the New Testament;” and Dean Plumptre expresses himself in these words: “The statement that her household were baptized has often been urged as evidence that infant baptism was the practice of the apostolic age. It must be admitted, however, that this is to read a great deal between the lines, and the utmost that can be said is that the language of the writer does not exclude infants. In this instance, moreover, there is no evidence that she had children, or even that she was married. The household may well have consisted of female slaves and freed-women whom she employed, and who made up her *familia*.” In this last remark this acute and candid writer hits upon the explanation really given in the text; for when Paul reached the river bank he “spoke to the women who were come together” (13); and when, in the second verse after this, the writer speaks of Lydia’s household, he evidently means to identify those women as the household. It is entirely within the range of probability, as Plumptre also suggests, that among these women were Euodia and Syntyche, who subsequently labored with Paul in the gospel, and whose alienation from each other at a still later period became a subject of deep solicitude to the apostle (Phil. iv. 2, 3).

The baptism of this whole family opened to the apostle and his companions a lodging place far more congenial than that in some heathen household, which they had hitherto endured; and yet a proper feeling of delicacy forbade him to accept Lydia’s hospitality, until her plea showed clearly that she would regard a final refusal as evidence that she was not fully trusted as “faithful to the Lord.” By this plea, Luke says, “she constrained us.”



## 5. PAUL AND SILAS ARE SCOURGED AND IMPRISONED, 16-24.

Vv. 16-18. We are next introduced to an incident which led to the first persecution experienced by the apostles at the instigation of Gentiles. (16) And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by sooth-saying. (17) The same following after Paul and us cried out, saying, These men are servants of the most high God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation. (18) And this she did for many days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour. Literally translated, it was a Python spirit by which the maid was possessed, the word Python identifying its manifestations with those of the women who gave out the oracles at Delphi in Greece; and who were supposed by the heathen to be inspired by the serpent called Python, to whose wisdom these oracles were accredited. Luke's language can not be regarded as an indorsement of this supposed inspiration; but he distinctly recognizes a real spirit in the maid, and styles it a Python spirit for the reason given. The case was undoubtedly one of demon possession, such as so frequently occur in our gospel narratives, and with which Luke's readers were presumed to have become acquainted through his former narrative. It is worthy of remark, too, that the title "most high God," which is used by this spirit, is the same that was used by "the legion" in Gadara (Mark v. 7).



As the maid was proclaiming the truth to a people who had some confidence in her utterances, and the very truth which Paul was most solicitous that they should accept, why did he reject her coöperation, and shut the mouth of an apparent friend? The answer can only be, that to have accepted demons as witnesses to the gospel would have convinced the people that there was an alliance between them and the apostles; and thus all the good repute of the apostles would have been reflected on the demons, and all the evil repute of the demons would likewise have been reflected on the apostles. To guard against this double evil both Jesus and the apostles invariably cast out all demons who ventured to speak in their favor. Paul was "sore troubled" in this instance, and delayed for many days the act which at last became unavoidable, because he knew that the money value of the slave would be greatly reduced by the expulsion of the demon, and he dreaded the consequences of appearing in this heathen city to interfere with the rights of property. That the maid followed the preachers to the place of prayer many days before the demon was expelled, indicates that the place of prayer was chosen as their daily place of preaching. It is highly improbable that they could find so suitable a place inside the city. What became of the maid thus miraculously relieved of demon possession, we are not informed; but gratitude for so great a deliverance should have thrown her under the influence of Paul and of the good women who were now actively coöperating with him, and who would be naturally interested in her behalf.

Vv. 19-21. The consequences which had troubled Paul in anticipation (18) were soon realized. (19) But

when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone,<sup>1</sup> they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers, (20) and when they had brought them unto the magistrates, they said, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, (21) and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans. The officers here called magistrates were styled in Latin *duumviri*,<sup>2</sup> two men in whom was lodged the supreme power in a Roman colony. It seems that the apostles were first brought before rulers of a lower rank in the agora, the open square improperly called "market place" in our version, and that by these officers they were referred to the two chief rulers. The real cause of complaint was suppressed, and a false one preferred, because, in the first place, to have stated the fact in the case would have reflected credit on Paul in the eyes of the magistrates; and in the second place, it was easy in a heathen city like this to get up an outcry against Jews on almost any pretence. When Paul reached Corinth on his present tour all Jews had but recently been expelled from Rome by order of the emperor (xviii. 2), and perhaps this had already taken place. If so, the circumstance could but intensify in the minds of all loyal Romans the common hatred of this persecuted race.

Vv. 22-24. The hypocritical outcry of the slave owners had the effect aimed at on the heathen rabble, and on the magistrates. (22) And the multitude rose up

<sup>1</sup> Luke here makes a somewhat humorous play upon a word, which is lost to the English reader. He says that when the evil spirit ἐξῆλθεν "went out," the masters saw that the hope of their gain ἐξῆλθεν "went out."

<sup>2</sup> The Greek word employed is στρατηγοί, the equivalent of the Latin, prætors.

together against them : and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods. (23) And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely : (24) who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. Here we have an example of that same truckling to the clamor of a mob which has made infamous the name of Pontius Pilate ; for the magistrates gave the prisoners no opportunity to defend themselves, so that even the forms of justice were disregarded. The rods with which the apostles were beaten were those habitually borne in a bundle by the lictors, who always attended Roman prætors ; and in order that the beating might be effectually applied, the victims were doubtless strapped, as usual, to the whipping post. The jailer entered fully into the spirit of the mob, and carried out the order to “ keep them safely ” with the utmost rigor. Locking them up in the inner prison would have kept them safely ; but to safe keeping he added torture by means of the stocks. With their legs locked in these clamps, and their feet projecting beyond them, they could neither lie down nor sit up without pain, nor could they find relief by a change of position. The pain grew more intense continually, and no one who has never experienced it can imagine how intense it was.

6. THE JAILER AND HIS FAMILY ARE BAPTIZED,  
25-34.

Vv. 25, 26. The condition of the two prisoners as night drew on was piteous in the extreme. Besides the physical pain of sitting in a dark dungeon with their backs bleeding from the scourge, and their legs cramped

in the stocks, they were racked in mind by a sense of the cruel injustice which they had suffered at the hands of men whom they came to bless; and their faith was heroic indeed if some painful questioning did not intrude as to why God allowed them to receive such a reward for their faithful service. The historian leaves all this to our imagination as respects the first half of the night. (25) But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; (26) and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened; and every one's bands were loosed. Men do not pray when they are enraged, or sing when they are in deep distress. That these men prayed at midnight is therefore proof that ere this the tempest of their feelings, which at the whipping post, and when first thrust within the dungeon and fastened in the stocks, made them almost wild, had now subsided. The cheerfulness necessary to singing must have been a consequence of their prayer; and thus Paul was learning by experience the lesson which he afterward taught the disciples in this very city, saying: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 6, 7). That singing was a strange sound to the criminals in the prison; and when, as they listened attentively, they suddenly felt the rocking of the earthquake, heard the slamming of the prison doors, and felt their own fetters slipping off their limbs, they instinctively connected these frightful phenomena with the singers, and with

the God whose praises they sang. The effect was paralyzing.

Vv. 27, 28. The jailer seems not to have heard the singing. He was awakened by the motion of the earthquake, and he doubtless heard the slamming of the doors, and the clanking of the fetters as they fell on the stone floor. (27) And the jailer being roused out of sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword, and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. (28) But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm : for we are all here. Knowing that death was the penalty for allowing prisoners to escape, he was about to act upon the Roman code of honor, which required a man to die by his own hand if necessary to escape that of an enemy or an executioner. It is not likely that he rushed to this desperate resort without some outcries which indicated his purpose, and which were caught by the quick ear of Paul, whose loud voice snatched him back, in the very nick of time, from the brink of eternity.

Vv. 29, 30. As soon as the jailer could collect his senses he remembered that the speaker who had called to him had been preaching salvation in the name of the God of Israel, and he instantly perceived that the earthquake, the opening of the doors, and the unlocking of the fetters were connected with him, and were the work of his God. Seizing this thought, and glancing into the black eternity from which he had just been rescued, his own salvation, rather than the security of his prisoners, at once absorbed his thoughts. (29) And he called for lights, and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, (30) and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?

At sunset, when coldly thrusting the apostles into the dungeon, he cared nothing for them, or for the salvation which he knew they had been preaching; for then he was in the midst of life and health, and all went well with him; but at midnight, when he had been within an inch of death, a change as sudden as the earthquake passes over him, and he falls trembling at the feet of his prisoners. The other prisoners are forgotten; and even Luke is so absorbed in the excitement of the jailer that he fails to tell us what became of them. We may infer that they were so paralyzed with fear that they remained quiet in their places until Paul and Silas were led out, and the outer door was locked.

Vv. 31-34. Leading the apostles into his family apartment, he received at once a full and satisfactory answer to his questions. (31) And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. (32) And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with 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, immediately. (34) And he brought them up into his house, and set meat<sup>1</sup> before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God. The jailer had not previously listened to Paul very attentively, if at all, or he would have known what to do to be saved; for the apostles, unlike many modern preachers, never left their hearers in doubt on that supreme question. The first part of Paul's answer would have been vain without the remainder. Had he stopped with the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus," the jailer might have answered, as did the

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, *set a table before them* (παρέθηκε τράπεζον), equivalent to our household phrase, *set the table*.

man born blind (Jno. ix. 36), "Who is he, sir, that I may believe on him?" For this reason the preachers "spake the word of the Lord unto him." As Plumptre happily expresses it: "The very title of Christ; the acts and words that showed that Jesus was the Christ; his life and death and resurrection; the truths of forgiveness of sins and communion with him, and the outward signs which he had appointed as witnesses of these truths; all this must have been included in the word of the Lord which was preached to that congregation so strangely assembled between the hours of midnight and dawn." All this was included in the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved;" and the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," are but the beginning of it. Those therefore who catch at these words of Paul, and draw the conclusion that salvation is by faith alone, leave the jail too soon. They should remain till they hear all—till they hear Paul tell the man to repent and be baptized; till the design of baptism is explained to him; till he is baptized; till he is found rejoicing greatly immediately after his baptism. It would not require a long delay; for it was all done "the same hour of the night." If we compare Paul's answer with those given by Peter and Ananias when the same question was propounded, we find that Ananias said, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins;" for the questioner in that case had already believed and repented; that Peter said, "Repent and be baptized;" for his questioners had already believed; while Paul says to his questioner, who had done neither of the three, "Believe on the Lord Jesus," and then added the other two commands. Thus the three inspired oracles perfectly agree. The conse-



quence of faith, "and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," is stated in connection with the command to believe, not because salvation would follow faith unattended by repentance and baptism; but because the right degree of faith always wrought repentance, and, in the apostolic practice, was always promptly followed by baptism. In other words, belief, in such connections, was put for the whole process which it constantly superinduced.

While some Pædobaptist writers are candid enough to admit that the baptism of the jailer and his family furnishes no evidence for infant baptism,<sup>1</sup> others have tried to show that it favors both this practice and affusion. In support of the latter it is assumed that the baptism took place in the prison, and it is claimed that facilities for immersion could scarcely have been found there. But it is clearly stated that the jailer "brought them out of the prison" (30) before they preached "unto him, with all that were in his house." It is made equally clear that he "took them" somewhere to wash their stripes and to be baptized (33); and then it is said (34) that after the baptism "he brought them up into his house." It follows that the baptism occurred neither in the prison nor in the house, but in the place to which "he took them." Whether this was in the court of the prison, if it had a court, or in the river in which Lydia was baptized, we have no certain means of deciding; but in either case

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<sup>1</sup> Thus Plumptre, in commenting on the passage, remarks: "What has been said above (see note on verse 15) as to the bearing of the narratives on the question of infant baptism, applies here also, with the additional fact that those who are said to have been baptized are obviously identical with those whom St. Paul addressed (the word "all" is used in each case), and must, therefore, have been of an age to receive instruction together with the gaoler himself." (*Commentary in loco*).

there is nothing unfavorable to the practice of immersion. The idea advanced by the English translator of Leechler's Acts is worthy of notice here, because it presents this issue from the point of view held by some extreme controversialists. He demands: "If Paul had stealthily gone forth during the night, in order to immerse the jailer in a neighboring stream, how could he, as an honest man, have on the next day declared that, after being ignominiously conducted within the prison walls he would not leave them until the magistrates personally led him forth?" To this it is answered, that it is very absurd to represent Paul as going forth "stealthily," if he went to administer a solemn ordinance of the Lord which he had reason to believe he would not be permitted to administer the next day; and this, too, when God had himself opened the prison doors and prepared the way for this baptism. It would be equally absurd to suppose, as others have done, that the jailer would have scruples about going out for this purpose with his prisoners; for he did so in obedience to manifestations of divine power and authority. As to Paul's honesty in doing this, and then refusing to leave the prison the next morning until escorted by the magistrates, the question of honesty has no place in the matter; for the demands of duty to God in the salvation of his converts required the former, while the protection of his own reputation, as we shall see below, required the latter. The supposition that there is here evidence for infant baptism is not only unfounded, but it is precluded by the facts; for Paul spake the word of the Lord to all the household, and in common with the head of the house they all rejoiced, and all believed in God. There were certainly no infants in the family.

## 7. THE PRISONERS ARE RELEASED, 35-40.

Vv. 35, 36. When the magistrates ordered Paul and Silas to prison, we would naturally suppose that they intended to make some further inquiry into the charges preferred against them. (35) But when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. (36) And the jailer reported the words to Paul, saying, The magistrates have sent to let you go : now therefore come forth, and go in peace. This order was issued without knowledge of what had taken place in the night, so far as we are informed. As for the earthquake, by which some scholars suppose that the magistrates had been alarmed, as it was undoubtedly a miraculous and not a natural one, there is no ground for supposing that it extended beyond the prison. The order for release is most naturally accounted for by the fact that, as the scourging and imprisonment had been inflicted only to silence the clamor of the mob, there was now no need of protracting the imprisonment. It was thought that the prisoners, released thus early in the morning, would be glad to escape from the city, and no further agitation of the multitude would occur. The magistrates little knew the kind of men they were dealing with.

Vv. 37-39. To be thus released from prison, as though they had merely suffered punishment which they deserved, would be injurious to the apostles, if a report of it should follow them to other cities ; and fortunately the means of escaping it were at hand. (37) But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison ; and do they now cast us out privily ? nay, verily ; but let them come themselves and bring us out.

(38) And the serjeants reported these words unto the magistrates : and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans ; (39) and they came and besought them ; and when they had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city. The word serjeants is a modern English title improperly used here in our version for lictors, the real title of these officers. They habitually attended Roman prætors with bundles of rods in their hands, and by them the "many stripes" had been laid on Paul and Silas the day before. The purpose of Paul's demand is obvious ; if now the fact of his having been scourged and released should follow him to other cities, there would also follow the fact that the rulers by whose order it was done had made amends for it, while the victims had spared their persecutors deserved punishment.

As it was a crime under Roman law to scourge a Roman citizen,<sup>1</sup> the apostles might have avenged themselves for the outrage perpetrated upon them, but Paul taught his brethren not to avenge themselves (Rom. xii. 19), and he acted according to his own precepts. The incident justifies Christians in appealing to the civil law for protection ; but not for the punishment of their enemies.

Baur attempts to discredit this whole story by arguing that if the apostles had really asserted their citizenship they would have done so before the scourging, as Paul did on a subsequent occasion (xxii. 25) ; and that, if they allowed themselves to be scourged when they

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<sup>1</sup> The " Porcian law," enacted B. C. 300, forbade absolutely the scourging of a Roman citizen (Livy, x. 9). A climax used by Cicero, in pleading against Verres for a violation of this law, is often quoted : " It is a misdeed to bind a Roman citizen—a crime to scourge him—almost parricide to put him to death."

could so easily have prevented it, they had themselves alone to blame for it (*Paul*, i. 154). But how does Baur know that they did not assert it before the scourging? Certainly the silence of the historian does not furnish this information, and it is highly improbable in itself. Much more probable is it that, as these men were arraigned under the guise of Jews who exceedingly troubled the city by introducing unlawful customs, their claim of Roman citizenship, though proclaimed by them, was disbelieved and scoffed at in the excitement of the moment; but that, when repeated the next morning in connection with a refusal to leave the prison without an apology from the magistrates, it was believed and respected.

VER. 40. When the prisoners were discharged they took their own time to comply with the request of the magistrates, and they did so with becoming dignity. (40) And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed. The brethren here mentioned were doubtless those who had been baptized during the "many days" (18) which the apostles had spent in the city before their imprisonment. Luke and Timothy, as we shall see farther along (xvii. 1), were also among the number. These, together with the jailer's family, constituted the church now planted in Philippi, and Paul has learned more fully the divine purpose in bringing him thither instead of permitting him to go to Asia or to Bithynia.

8. PREACHING AND PERSECUTION IN THESSALONICA,  
XVII. 1-9.

Vv. 1-3. The pronoun of the third person which Luke now resumes, after using that of the second person since the apostolic company left Troas, implies that he himself remained at Philippi; and as the pronoun used refers grammatically to Paul and Silas, it is implied that Timothy also remained with Luke, to still further instruct and organize the church. We find this church at a later period fully equipped with officers (Phil. i. 1); and the appointment of these was doubtless the work of these two brethren. Leaving the cause thus guarded in their rear, Paul and Silas advance to another field of labor. (1) 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 custom was, went in unto them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures, (3) opening and alleging, that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ. The distance from Philippi to Thessalonica is about one hundred miles. It was doubtless the synagogue in this city which drew the apostles on without stopping to preach in Amphipolis or Apollonia, for a synagogue in a city indicated the presence of a considerable Jewish population, with a nucleus of Gentile proselytes about it, and furnished an open avenue for the introduction of the gospel. Thessalonica, on account of its commercial importance, was then, and continues to be, under its modern name Salonica, a great resort for Jews.

The course of argument followed by Paul on these three Sabbath days was substantially the same as his

own in Antioch of Pisidia, and Peter's on Pentecost ; and doubtless, if we had reports of his sermons preached to Jews elsewhere, we would find them very much the same. It was the course dictated by the state of mind of the hearers. The preaching of the Christ as one who had been crucified was to the mass of the Jews a scandal, because it appeared to them totally inconsistent with the glorious reign of the Christ as they read it in the prophets. Until they could be made to see that in this particular they misread the prophets, it was impossible to convince them that the crucified Jesus could be their Christ ; so to this end Paul first addressed his remarks, and when he had proved according to the prophets "that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead," it was a very easy task to show that "this Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." It was well known that he had suffered death ; and Paul had abundant means of proving that he had risen. This latter proof was not limited to the testimony of the original witnesses, but he gave ocular demonstration of the living and divine power of Jesus, by working miracles in his name. This we learn from the first epistle to the church which he established here, in which he says : "Our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance ; even as ye know what manner of men we showed ourselves toward you for your sake" (I. Thess. i. 5). The power of the Holy Spirit working miracles before them gave an assurance of the resurrection and glorification of him in whose name they were wrought, which "the word only" of all the men on earth could not give. Without such attestation the word of man in reference to the affairs of heaven has no claim on our confidence ;



but with it, it has a claim which none can honestly reject.

During the two weeks intervening between the three Sabbaths mentioned, the two brethren carefully avoided everything which might raise a suspicion of selfish motives. They would not burden any one by even asking for their daily bread; and although they received some contributions from the church at Philippi, the amount was so scanty as to leave them to the necessity of "laboring night and day" (I. Thess. ii. 9; Phil. iv. 15, 16).

VER. 4. Such arguments and demonstrations, accompanied by such a life, could not fail of good results. (4) And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. It seems from this statement that the largest class of the converts were "devout Greeks," that is, Gentiles who had learned to worship God according to the example of the Jews. Next to these were the chief women, also Gentile proselytes; and least of all, Jews. The great majority, then, were Gentiles; and Paul, on account of this preponderance, could afterward write to them, "Ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God" (I. Thess. i. 9).

Vv. 5-9. Such a movement among the devout Gentiles, whose presence in the synagogue was a source of pride to the Jews, was exceedingly mortifying to those Jews who remained in unbelief, and they were able, by their number and their influence with the rabble of the city, to give serious trouble to Paul and Silas, which they were not slow to do. (5) But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an

uproar ; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. (6) And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also ; (7) whom Jason hath received : and these all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. (8) And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. (9) And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. The Jews seem not to have had the same influence with the chief men of the city as in Antioch of Pisidia (xiii. 50) ; so they stirred up the rabble, and through them brought the affair before the rulers. Knowing that Paul and Silas lodged in the house of Jason, " they sought to bring them forth to the people," with the evident purpose of subjecting them to mob violence ; but failing to find them, their proceedings with Jason himself were more orderly—they dragged him and some of the other disciples before the officers, styled in the Greek *politarchs* (city-rulers). The charge of turning the world "upside down" was based on the mob violence which had attended their labors in other cities, of which these Jews of Thessalonica had evidently heard a great deal, and for which they unjustly laid the blame on the apostles, while they were themselves repeating the wicked procedure of other mobs. The other charge was true in a proper sense, for they had preached Jesus as a king ; but the charge was a perversion, deliberate and intentional, on the part of the Jews, though not detected as such by the rabble. The people and the rulers were troubled, because they feared the consequences of permitting treasonable plots against Cæsar to

be propagated in the city. If Paul and Silas had themselves been brought before the politarchs, it is not certain that they would have fared better than at the hands of the prætors of Philippi; but as the only accusation against Jason was that he had entertained the preachers, he was released after giving bond to keep the peace.

The title *politarch*, which Luke here applies to the chief magistrates of Thessalonica, is nowhere else found as an official title in all Greek literature; and it is easy to see what a clamor the enemies of the faith would have made over this use of the term, but for the fact that an ancient triumphal arch of marble until recently spanned the principal street of the city, with an inscription in which this very title is applied, and the names of seven of the *politarchs* are preserved. When the arch was torn down, the slabs containing the inscription were secured by the British consul then at Thessalonica, and they are now kept in the British Museum. Three of the names are *Sosipater*, *Secundus* and *Gaius*, the names of three well known fellow laborers of Paul (xix. 29; xx. 4).

#### 9. SUCCESS IN BERŒA, 10-15.

VER. 10. Although Paul and Silas suffered less in Thessalonica than in Philippi, their departure from the former was more humiliating than from the latter. When they heard the result of the attempt to seize them, they saw at once that their further continuance in the city would be likely to involve Jason and the others in a forfeiture of their bond, and would bring personal violence to themselves; so they sought safety for all in flight. (10) And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berœa: who when they were come

thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. This flight by night must have reminded Paul of that from Damascus in the beginning of his apostolic career; and it may have been effected by a similar method of escape.

From Philippi to Thessalonica, Paul and Silas had followed one of those splendid military roads constructed by the Romans for the passage of armies at all seasons of the year, which were properly graded, and then paved with flag-stones. Remnants of them are still found in almost every country then included in the empire; and this one, called the *Via Egnatia*, connecting the Hellespont with the Adriatic sea, was the great thoroughfare across the peninsula of Macedonia toward the distant East. On leaving Thessalonica in the night they did not have to grope their way; for they still followed the same highway westward till, probably after daylight, they left it and turned more to the southwest in order to reach Berœa. Their route all the way lay across a level country traversed by historic streams; and Berœa itself, about sixty miles from Thessalonica, is thus described: "Berœa, like Edessa, is on the eastern slope of the Olympian range, and commands an extensive view of the plain which is watered by the Haliaemon and the Axios. It has many natural advantages, and is now considered one of the most agreeable towns of Rumili. Plane trees spread a grateful shade over its gardens. Streams of water are in every street. Its ancient name is said to have been derived from the abundance of its waters; and the name still survives in the modern Verria, or Kara-Verria."<sup>1</sup> It is still a walled city with a population of between fifteen and twenty thousand

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<sup>1</sup>Conybeare and Howson, following the description of the traveler Leake.

Here again the apostle found a synagogue, and made it the starting point of his labors.

VV. 11, 12. We now have the pleasure of seeing one Jewish community listen to the truth and examine it like rational beings. (11) Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. (12) Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men, not a few. The conduct of these Jews can not be too highly commended, or too closely imitated. A common sin of men is a refusal to examine candidly and patiently the claims of the gospel. The Jews, having fallen into error by their traditions, resisted with passion and uproar every attempt to give them the true light; and their folly has been imitated ever since by both unbelievers and the partisans of religious error. If such persons live and die in ignorance of the truth, and in consequent neglect of duty, their ignorance, instead of excusing them, will be one of their chief sins. There is scarcely a greater sin than to stop our ears when God speaks, or to close our eyes to truth which he brings before us. All who profess to be disciples of Christ should search the Scriptures upon the presentation of everything offering a decent claim to be God's truth, and see "whether these things are so." To follow implicitly wherever the word of God leads can never be unacceptable to its Author. As a consequence of the noble conduct of the Berean Jews, the result was not, as in Thessalonica, that *some* of them believed, and a *great multitude* of the Greeks, but *many* of them believed, and *not a few* of the Greeks. Let us not fail to notice, too, that their believing

is ascribed by Luke expressly to the fact that they searched the Scriptures, whether these things were so ; again showing that faith comes by hearing the word of God.

Vv. 13, 14. There seems to have been no serious obstacle to the gospel in Berea, and the disciples may have begun to flatter themselves with the hope of turning the whole city to the Lord, when an unexpected foe assailed them from the rear. (13) But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the multitudes. (14) And then immediately the brethren sent forth Paul to go as far as to the sea : and Silas and Timothy abode there still. (15) But they who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens : and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timothy that they should come to him with all speed, they departed.

Here is an exhibition of that same malevolent zeal which characterized the Jews of Antioch and Iconium when they pursued Paul to Lystra (xiv. 19), showing that the Jews were the same the world over. Again it was the heathen population that they stirred up, and one of their pleas, no doubt, as in the case at Lystra, was that these men had been compelled to fly from the city of Thessalonica. Thus one persecution was made the plea for another.

When Paul left Berea, it seems from the expressions used, that he had formed his plans only so far as to go to the sea, which was about sixteen miles distant at the nearest point ; but on going that far it was determined that he should sail to Athens, and this determination made it necessary for him to send back word to Silas

and Timothy. The obvious purpose of leaving these two brethren behind, at some risk no doubt to their personal safety, was to still further instruct and encourage the newly baptized disciples ere they were left to their own resources for edification. As Timothy had been left with Luke at Philippi (xvi. 40), and now first appears again in the narrative, it is uncertain whether or not he overtook Paul in Thessalonica. In leaving Macedonia Paul left behind him three churches, planted at radiating points, from which the gospel could be successfully spread throughout the province, if the disciples proved faithful and zealous. Thessalonica occupied the central position, with Philippi one hundred miles to the northeast, and Berea sixty miles to the southwest. We have the testimony of Paul that from at least one of these the light shone with great brilliancy; for he afterward wrote to the Thessalonians: "From you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to Godward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything" (I. Thess. i. 8). There was no need of Paul's voice at any but central points when he could leave such congregations behind him. No doubt much of their zeal and fidelity was due to the fostering care of Luke, Timothy and Silas, who alternately lingered behind the apostle for this purpose.

#### 10. PAUL IN ATHENS, 16-21.

Vv. 16, 17. In the ancient world there were two distinct varieties of civilization,<sup>f</sup> which had reached their culmination in the days of the apostles. One was the result of human philosophy; the other, of a divine revelation. The chief center of the former was the city of



Athens ; of the latter, the city of Jerusalem. If we compare them with respect either to the moral character of the peoples brought under their influence respectively, or with reference to their preparation for the perfect religion of Christ, we shall find the advantage in favor of the latter. Fifteen hundred years before, God had placed the Jews under the influence of revelation, and left the other nations of the earth to "walk in their own ways." By a severe discipline, continued through many centuries, the former had been lifted out of the idolatry in which they were sunk at the beginning, and which still prevailed over all other nations. As a consequence they presented an example of purity in private morals which stands unrivaled in ancient history previous to the advent of Christ. On the other hand, the most elegant of the heathen nations were now exhausting in their social life, as Paul testifies in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, the catalogue of base and beastly practices of which men and women can be guilty. In Athens itself, where flourished the most profound philosophy, the most glowing eloquence, the most exquisite poetry, and the most refined creative art which the world has ever seen, there was the most complete and studied abandonment to every vice which passion could prompt or imagination invent. In the center of Jewish civilization the gospel had now been preached, and many thousands who had embraced it had attained to an excellence in human virtue not known before since the fall of man. In surrounding countries, and in distant lands, wherever the Jewish synagogue was found, devout and honorable men and women by the thousands had done the same ; but nowhere had this blessed light penetrated far into the darkness of heathenism. The

struggle now about to take place in Athens is to demonstrate still further, by contrast, how successful a "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" had been the law and the prophets. Paul knew well the reputation of Athens, but he could not have realized, until he saw it, the extent to which it was given to idolatry. (16) Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him, as he beheld the city full of idols. (17) So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market place daily with them that met with him. Though a lonely stranger, who might have been awed into silence by the magnificence with which sin had fortified itself in this great city, his soul was stirred to make a mighty struggle for the triumph of the gospel even here. His first effort, as usual, was in the Jewish synagogue; but the Jews and proselytes were so completely under the spell of the gilded iniquity around them, that his efforts were unsuccessful. Having access to no other formal assembly, he next goes upon the streets, and the places of public concourse, and discourses with "them that met with him."

VER. 18. By persistent efforts Paul succeeded in attracting some attention from the idle throng, but it was of a character at first not at all flattering. (18) And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What would this babblers say? Other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of foreign demons:<sup>1</sup> because he preached Jesus and the

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<sup>1</sup> Instead of "strange gods," as in our version, the more correct rendering is "foreign demons." Our English translators have dealt very strangely with the term *δαίμονιον*. In every other place they have rendered it *devils*, though there is but one devil, and

resurrection. The persistency with which he pressed his message on every one he met suggested the epithet babbler, while the prominence which he gave to the name of Jesus, a man who had died and risen again, suggested the idea of demon-worship, because the demons worshiped by the Greeks were dead men deified.

The two classes of philosophers which he encountered were the antipodes of each other, and the practical philosophy of each was antipodal to the doctrine of Paul. The Stoics taught that the greatest good in life was to be attained through a total indifference to both the sorrows and the pleasures of the world; the Epicureans, that it was to be obtained through the prudent gratification of every passion and propensity; and they united in denying conscious existence after death. In opposition to the former, Paul taught that we should weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice; in opposition

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here they have most inconsistently rendered it *gods*. But while demons were worshiped by the Greeks, they were a class of beings distinct in the minds of Jews from the devil and fallen angels, and distinct in the minds of Greeks from those gods which they styled "The Immortals;" and it is inexcusable in a translator to confound to the minds of his readers things which are so distinct in the original. A uniform use of the word demon throughout the N. T., which was insisted upon by the American Committee of the Revisers, is plainly demanded by fidelity to the original. The term *ζένοι*, here rendered *strange* in our version, as it is everywhere else except in one passage where there is a necessity for a variation (Rom. xvi. 23), has a more definite meaning than our word *strange*. It means foreign, in the sense of belonging to another country, or a different system. Here, and in verse 20, it has specific reference to the origin in a foreign land, that is, in Judea, of the teaching to which it is applied; and in verse 21 those called strangers in our version were foreigners, and not mere strangers to the Athenians, which they might have been if they were Greeks who had not visited Athens before.

to the latter, that we should deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts; and in opposition to both, that the final goal of human hopes is a resurrection from the dead to life everlasting.

Vv. 19-21. Notwithstanding the contempt with which Paul was regarded by many, he succeeded at last in arresting the earnest attention of a few. (19) And they took hold of him, and brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? (20) For thou bringest certain foreign things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (21) (Now all the Athenians and the foreigners sojourning there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear some new thing.) They "took hold of him" in a familiar way, to lead him from the noisy crowd to a better place of hearing. The agora (inaccurately rendered "market place" in our version), in which Paul was talking to the people, was bounded on the whole northern side by a ridge of coarse marble which rises abruptly to the height of about thirty feet. Toward the west it slopes downward gradually until in the course of about a quarter of a mile it descends to the level of the plain. This is the Areopagus, or, as rendered into English, the hill of Mars—so called because a temple of Mars once stood on its summit. Its summit is reached from the agora by a flight of steps cut in the natural rock, the most of which remain unbroken to the present day; and here in the open air sat the court of the Areopagus, by whose decisions grave questions in religion were settled, and sometimes great criminals were condemned. The informal character of the proceedings on this occasion shows that it was not the court that had summoned Paul; but merely that the philosophers who

wished to give him a quiet hearing chose this spot for the purpose. The agora was spread out in full view below, and the hum of its confused sounds could be distinctly heard; but these would not prevent the small audience from hearing the voice of the speaker.

Luke's parenthetical statement, that all the Athenians and the foreigners dwelling there spent their time in nothing but hearing and telling something new, though not true, of course, of the laboring classes and tradesmen, who are evidently not contemplated in the remark, was strictly true of the great mass; for in those days men came to Athens from every nation to extend their education by hearing the numerous lecturers on all topics; and to learn about countries foreign to their own from visitors therefrom; so that every one was both a hearer and a teller of something that was new to others. It was in perfect keeping with this habit that these philosophers desired to hear the foreign teaching which Paul seemed anxious to impart.

#### 11. PAUL'S DISCOURSE ON "THE UNKNOWN GOD," 22-31.

Vv. 22, 23. After his persevering but necessarily disconnected conversations in the agora, Paul was delighted to have now an audience assembled for the express purpose of hearing him. He could not begin by opening the Scriptures, and speaking of the long expected Messiah; for of the Scriptures, and even of the God who gave them, his auditors were profoundly ignorant. Before he could preach to them Jesus as the Son of God, he must make them acquainted with God himself; and for this purpose his observations in the city had supplied him with a most admirable text. (22) And Paul stood

in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very demon-fearing.<sup>1</sup> (23) For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you. The people of Athens were worshipers of demons, or of dead men deified, and they regarded it as a virtue to be scrupulous in all the forms of this worship.<sup>2</sup> Paul's audi-

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<sup>1</sup> The Greek word here rendered "too superstitious" in the A. V., and "somewhat superstitious" (margin, "religious") in the R. V., is *δεισιδαιμονεστέρον*, the comparative degree of *δεισιδαίμων*, which means demon-fearing. It is compounded of *δεῖδω*, to fear, and *δαίμων*, a demon. As *θεοσεβής* is properly translated god-fearing, *δεισιδαίμων* is with equal propriety rendered demon-fearing. The comparative degree of the adjective does not institute an explicit comparison between the Athenians and others in this respect; for the context furnishes no basis for such a comparison; and therefore, according to a common rule of Greek grammar, it is to be construed as indicating an unusual degree of the quality referred to, and should be preceded by the adverb *very* in the English rendering of it. "Very demon-fearing," then, is the exact meaning of the word. While the Athenians were, from either a Jewish or a Christian point of view, "somewhat superstitious," "too superstitious," and "somewhat religious," in thus fearing demons, these expressions fail to translate the term employed by Paul, and therefore they should not be employed. They really express an inference of the translators, and therefore have the nature of a comment, rather than that of a translation. It is as if one were translating a single word from some foreign tongue which meant the fear of ghosts, and were to render it too superstitious; or a Chinese word meaning *the fear of Joss*, and were to render it *somewhat religious*. See more on the subject of demon worship in the next note below, and the note under xxv. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Paul says (I. Cor. x. 20): "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God." He probably meant to stigmatize all of their deities as demons; or it may be that he had in mind their own distinction between demons and



tors therefore were complimented by his opening remark. His next remark presented a proof of the first.

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gods, and meant that not all, but the great mass of their sacrifices were offered to the former, which was true. One of the most prominent of the complaints brought against the Christians of the second century by Celsus was based on their refusal to honor the demons, and in making it he seems to have been in earnest. He says: "We must either not live, and indeed not come into this life at all, or we must do so on condition that we give thanks and first fruits and prayers to demons, who have been set over the things of this world; and that we must do as long as we live, that they may prove good and kind." (*Origen vs. Celsus*, viii. 33). "The satrap of a Persian or Roman monarch, or ruler, or governor, or general, yea, even those who fill lower offices of trust or service in the state, would be able to do great injury to those who despised them, and will the satraps and ministers of earth and air be insulted with impunity?" (*ib.* 35). He styles Jesus the Christian's demon, and says: "Do you not see, good sir, that even your own demon is not only reviled, but banished from every land and sea, and you yourself, who are as it were an image dedicated to him, are bound and led to punishment, and fastened to the stake, whilst your demon, or, as you call him, the Son of God, takes no vengeance on the evil-doer?" (*ib.* 39; see also vii. 67-69). As to the nature of these beings, there was in the minds of Greek writers some confusion; but Plato says: "The poets speak excellently who affirm that when good men die they obtain great honor and dignity, and become demons" (*Cratylus*). He also says, "Every demon is a middle between God and mortal;" and he shows the ground of the worship of these good demons by the further statement: "Demons are reporters and carriers from men to the gods, and again from the gods to men, of the supplications and prayers of the one, and of the injunctions and rewards of devotion from the other" (*Sympos.* iii. 202, 203). It is not difficult to see here the source of the invocation of saints practiced by Greek and Roman Catholics. But in the Greek system there were also wicked demons. Plutarch writes: "It is a very ancient opinion that there are certain wicked and malignant demons, who envy good men, and endeavor to hinder them in their pursuit of virtue, lest they should be partakers of greater happiness than they enjoy" (*Dion.* i. 958). The



The unknown god, to which the altar mentioned had been erected, could not be one of the immortals, who were all well known, and therefore he must have been a demon not hitherto worshiped by name. After erecting altars and statues to all the known gods, so that a Roman satirist<sup>1</sup> said that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens, they had shown their zeal for demon-worship by honoring a being whom they did not know. The commentators have suggested many hypotheses to account for the erection of this altar; but there are so many causes which may have led to it,<sup>2</sup> that it is impossible to fix upon any one with much assurance. It is sufficient that it answered Paul's purpose in proving that the Athenians were very demon-fearing, and in introducing to them the only true and living God, as though he were the God whom they thus already worshiped. In this way he avoided the appearance of inviting them to a worship which was foreign to their customs, and which they otherwise might have regarded as unlawful.

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Jewish conception was precisely the same, except that they limited their use of the term to the spirits of wicked men. Thus Josephus says: "Demons are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men that are alive, and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them" (*Wars*, vii. 6. 3). This being the accepted meaning of the term with both Jews and Greeks, we must understand it when used by Jesus and by Paul in the same sense. Similar information is furnished in a condensed form in the Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon, under the word *δαίμων*.

<sup>1</sup> Petronius, Satire 17.

<sup>2</sup> Individuals as well as the state were in the habit of erecting small marble altars to the honor of gods or goddesses from whom they supposed themselves to have received special favors. Some of these, recovered from the ruins, are even now standing, as they did in ancient times, in the court of the Acropolis.

Vv. 24-28. He next introduces the God to whom he refers, by making a series of statements concerning him, every one of which presents him in striking contrast with the gods of the Greeks. (24) The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; (25) neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; (26) and he made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; (27) that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: (28) for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. With Paul's hearers there was no God who "made the world and all things therein;" so, by this thought he lifted his God above all that they conceived of theirs. As he had made all things, this made him Lord, not of the sea, as Neptune, nor of the sky, as Jupiter, but "Lord of heaven and earth." From this it was easy to see the conclusion, that he dwells not in handmade temples—that these are too small to contain him. Here Paul had allusion to the magnificent marble temples which were in sight all around him, and especially to the Parthenon, the glory of Greek architecture, which towered above the Areopagus just to the east. Both from this consideration, and from another next mentioned, this God is not served by men's hands, as though he needed something which men could supply, seeing that from him, as the final source, men receive their life, their breath, and all that they enjoy. Of no

heathen god had this been said ; for to none of them did their worshippers ascribe such power. He next shows that this God, instead of being the god of some single nation, over whose destiny he presides, while he defends it against all other nations, actually created every nation, made them all from one man, to dwell on the face of the whole earth ; and further, that the seasons of prosperity and adversity of all these nations, together with their national boundaries, instead of being regulated, as the heathen supposed, by separate national gods, were all controlled by this one God. Finally he shows them that the purpose of God in all these things was to induce men to obtain the very knowledge of himself which Paul was now trying to impart to his hearers. What nobler pursuit of knowledge than to seek such a God, even though we have to “feel after him” like blind men. But such obscure seeking, he lets them know in the same breath, is not needful, seeing that he is not far away, but round about us at all times and in all places. One of their own poets had very nearly expressed this thought, in saying, “We are also his offspring ;” for God, like an earthly father, would not leave his children to grope after him in the dark, and to call him an “unknown god.” By this train of thought, more fully expressed no doubt than we have it in Luke’s epitome, the God whom they had worshiped without knowing him was brought before them ; and let it be observed that they had worshiped him in a closer sense than we are apt to suppose ; for whatever may have been the benefit received, which had led some one to set up the altar in question, that benefit had really come from the true God, and this expression of gratitude had been offered unwittingly.

VER. 29. From these reflections, and especially from the last, Paul next draws a logical conclusion inimical to all forms of idol worship. (29) Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the God-head is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. Their own self-respect should forbid them to think of him from whom they derived their being as like these dead works of their own hands, however skillfully and beautifully wrought out.

The statement in verse 26, that God "made of one all the nations of men," is an incidental assertion of the unity of the human race; and it accords with the Mosaic history. To deny it because we find some difficulty in reconciling it with the present diversities in the types of men, is to deny an assertion of the Scriptures, not because of what we know, but because of what we do not know; for if we knew the whole history of our race, we should doubtless know the causes of these varieties, and the times in which they came into existence.

Vv. 30, 31. Having now made known the true God to his hearers, Paul next calls upon them to repent of their idolatry; and he presents, as a motive to this, the solemn fact of the future judgment. (30) The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: (31) inasmuch as he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. By saying that God had overlooked the times of ignorance, Paul does not mean that he had excused it; for this would be inconsistent with this call to repentance. He means that God had not hitherto attempted to break

it up, as he now does, by sending forth preachers of the truth. True, the message of Jonah to Nineveh, the proclamations concerning the true God forced from the pens of Nebuchadnezzar, Darius and Cyrus, together with many overthrows of heathen armies like that of Sennacherib, were loud voices from heaven reminding heathen nations of the God whom they had forgotten; but these were isolated acts, and not parts of a continuous and systematic call to repentance, such as was sent forth by the mission of the apostles.

The soul-stirring fact that God has "appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness," is a powerful motive to repentance, because a judgment in righteousness must inevitably involve the condemnation of all the unrighteous; and Paul's hearers could now see the unrighteousness of their idolatry. In thus presenting the final judgment as the first and foremost motive to bring men to repentance, Paul was but following the example of Jesus, and proceeding according to the demands of human nature. The terrors of that great day, and of the awful fate awaiting those who shall then be condemned, constitute the heavy artillery of the gospel, by which the fortification that sin has constructed about the hearts of wicked men must be battered down, ere the tenderer motives of the gospel can be brought to bear. The wicked man must be made afraid to continue in sin, before the goodness of God can lead him to repentance; and the preacher of the gospel who neglects to employ the thunders of this heavenly artillery not only fails to preach according to the divine model, but he will preach a feeble gospel that can never work deep seated repentance.

It is just at this point in his discourse that Paul first introduces Jesus ; and he introduces him first, not as a loving Saviour, but as a universal judge ; he introduces him not in his birth of the virgin, or in his baptism by John, or in his healing power, or in his death for the sins of men ; but in the closing act of his Messianic reign, the everlasting judgment ; and he presents, as the proof that Jesus will thus judge, the fact that God has raised him from the dead. This fact, considered in itself alone, would not furnish this proof ; but considered in connection with the statement of Jesus before his death, that all judgment had been given into his hands (Jno. v. 22-29), it does. Of course Paul's hearers did not yet see the force of this ; for what is here said about Jesus, even without naming him, was evidently intended by Paul as the mere introduction of a theme which he intended to expand in the remainder of his remarks. Indeed, he had just now reached that which was to be the chief theme of his discourse ; and we can see that his plan of discourse was, first, to make these idolaters acquainted with the true God ; second, to call on them to repent toward God ; and third, to present Christ as he through whom their repentance might be available in enabling them to obtain forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.

Vv. 32, 33. But Paul was not permitted to finish his discourse. Just as he had reached its most vital part he was interrupted. (32) Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked ; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again. (33) Thus Paul went out from among them. From a modern point of view there are two strange features in the conduct of this audience : first, that they listened quietly while Paul

was demonstrating the folly of their idolatrous worship, which we should naturally expect them to defend; and second, that they interrupted him when he spoke of a resurrection from the dead, which we should have expected them to welcome as a relief from the gloom that shrouded their thoughts of death. But the former is accounted for by the infidelity which then prevailed among philosophers in reference to the heathen deities, rendering formal and heartless with them the worship which was still observed by the ignorant masses with some devoutness and sincerity; while the latter is explained by their pride of opinion and their party zeal. The two sects of philosophy to which they belonged had long ago proved, by arguments which the Platonists, they fondly thought, could never set aside, that there is no future state, and that therefore the idea of a resurrection from the dead is preposterous. Thus a false philosophy had crushed out of their hearts some of the better instincts of our nature, and caused them to mock at that which is the dearest of all hopes to the chief part of mankind. Still, those who said, "We will hear thee concerning this yet again," began, perhaps, to feel a rekindling of their better instincts; and let us hope that some of these may yet be found among the sons of light.

VER. 34. Although his discourse was broken off by the mockery of a portion of his audience, the apostle's effort was not altogether fruitless. (34) But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them. Among these converts Dionysius is selected for special mention, because, as his title indicates, he was one of the judges of the Areopagus, and



therefore a man of high official standing in the city; and Damaris is made conspicuous because it was unusual for a woman to be found in an audience of philosophers. That she was there, however, proves the freedom of the Greek women of the period, and is quite inconsistent with the notions often expressed by shallow interpreters concerning some of Paul's remarks about women in his epistles.<sup>1</sup>

12. PAUL BEGINS THE WORK IN CORINTH,  
XVIII. 1-4.

VER. 1. Paul's comparative failure in Athens aptly illustrates, if it did not suggest, his subsequent remark to the Corinthians, "God made foolish the wisdom of the world. For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good-pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe" (I. Cor. i. 21). Having thus failed in the literary capital of Greece, he next resorts to its political and commercial capital. (1) *After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth.* This city was situated on the western coast of the isthmus which connects the Peloponnesus with Attica. It was only nine miles distant across the isthmus from Cenchrea at the head of the Saronic gulf, and in this direction it had easy communication with all the great cities of Asia; and, being at the head of the gulf of Corinth on the west, it enjoyed, through it and the Adriatic sea, close communication with Italy and the west. It was therefore a city of great commercial advantages, and these had drawn into it a large Jewish population.

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<sup>1</sup> I. Cor. xiv. 34-37; I. Tim. ii. 8-15.

Vv. 2-4. Paul entered this great city alone, a total stranger, and penniless. The little means which he had brought with him from Macedonia was exhausted, and his attention was turned first to the supply of his daily bread. By a combination of providences he found most desirable lodgings, and the means of livelihood. (2) And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; (3) and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tent-makers. (4) And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks. To be thus under the necessity of laboring as a journeyman tent-maker, when he was aiming to evangelize a proud and opulent city, was anything but encouraging. From the calm and unimpressive style of Luke's account, we might imagine that Paul's feelings were callous to such considerations; but his own pen, which often reveals emotions unnoticed by Luke, gives a far different representation. Writing to the Corinthians several years afterward, when all transient emotions had been forgotten, he says: "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (I. Cor. ii. 3). He was keenly sensitive to the weakness of his situation; he feared a failure similar to that in Athens; and he trembled at the thought that the salvation of so many souls was dependent on so feeble an instrumentality. Whether he found in Aquila and Priscilla immediate Christian fellowship and encouragement, we are not able to determine; for while it is possible that they were among the Jews from Pontus who were present on the

great day of Pentecost (ii. 9); or that they may have been baptized more recently in Rome by disciples there who had heard Peter's great sermon (*ib.*); and while there is nothing said by Luke about their being baptized by Paul; yet if they were already disciples, it is very difficult to account for Luke's entire silence in reference to the fact. At any rate, Paul found them true hearted worshipers of God, and formed a personal attachment to them which lasted to the latest day of his life. We shall meet them again and again in the course of the narrative, and always to hear of something praiseworthy in their conduct.

The preaching in the synagogue, which [continued through several Sabbaths, seems to have been slower than usual in taking effect. Perhaps this was because the preacher was a tent-maker, as well as a stranger; and possibly it was due in part to the less aggressive manner of Paul, superinduced by the weakness and fear and trembling of which we have just spoken.

### 13. THE ARRIVAL OF SILAS AND TIMOTHY, AND A BREACH WITH THE JEWS, 5-11.

Vv. 5-7. The loneliness of Paul's situation was at length relieved, and a change came over his manner of preaching. (5) But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. (6) And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. (7) And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshiped God, whose house joined

hard to the synagogue. It will be remembered by the reader that Silas and Timothy, whose arrival is here mentioned, had tarried in Berea, that Paul had sent them word to rejoin him as soon as possible, and that he had waited for them in Athens (xvii. 15, 16). Luke is silent as to whether they overtook him at Athens; but we learn from Paul that Timothy did. He writes: "When we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone, and sent Timothy . . . to establish you and comfort you concerning your faith" (I. Thess. iii. 1, 2). This remark not only shows that Timothy had overtaken Paul at Athens, but that he had been sent back thence to Thessalonica. It also proves the correctness of our judgment as to why Paul had habitually left behind him for a time, with almost every church planted, some one of his fellow laborers—that is, "to establish them and comfort them concerning the faith." Timothy's present arrival in Corinth, as we now see, was not from his original stay in Berea, but from a recent visit to Thessalonica. Probably Silas had remained until now in Berea.

The statement that on the arrival of Silas and Timothy Paul was "constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ," implies, I think, that hitherto he had only argued, as at the beginning in Thessalonica, that according to the Scriptures the Christ must suffer and rise again from the dead, without advancing as yet to the further proposition, that "this Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." The former might cause no outbreak; the latter was sure to do so among Jews who had already heard something of Jesus, as the Corinthian Jews almost certainly had. The anticipated crisis came, and the breach followed. Fortu-

nately, one Gentile proselyte, who was a man of means, was favorably impressed by Paul; and as he had a house close to the synagogue, he threw it open for the subsequent meetings. Justus was not yet a disciple, but, as suits the meaning of his name, he desired to see justice done to the apostle and his cause.

VER. 8. Although Paul left the synagogue in apparent discomfiture, he was not without fruits of his labor. (8) And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized. It was very seldom that men of high positions in the synagogue obeyed the gospel; and it is therefore greatly to the credit of Crispus that he did so, and this at the moment when the opposition and blasphemy of the other Jews was at its height. He must have been a man of independence and sincerity—the very kind of man to form the nucleus for a congregation of disciples. His conversion, and that of the other Corinthians here mentioned, are not so fully described as those of the eunuch, of Saul, and of Cornelius; yet enough is said to show that the process was the same. “Hearing, they believed and were baptized.” To hear the gospel preached, to believe it, and to be baptized, is the whole process briefly expressed.

Vv. 9, 10. Although his success when leaving the synagogue must have been a source of comfort to Paul, we have evidence that he was far from being relieved as yet from the “weakness, and fear, and much trembling,” which had oppressed him since his coming to Corinth. We have now reached the period of his letter-writing, and we shall henceforth have his epistles as contemporary documents to fill some of the blanks in his personal

history left by Luke. The first epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Corinth soon after the arrival of Silas and Timothy, as is proved by the concurrence of the two facts, that these two brethren overtook Paul in Corinth, and that in the epistle Paul speaks of Timothy's arrival as having just taken place at the time of writing (iii. 6). Several statements in this epistle throw light on the inner experience of Paul at the time. He was racked by uncontrollable anxiety for the brethren in Thessalonica, for whom he would willingly have laid down his life, and who were suffering the severest persecution (ii. 8; 14-16). The good report of their constancy brought to him by Timothy gave him much joy; but it was joy in the midst of distress; for he says: "When Timothy came even now unto us from you, and brought us glad tidings of your faith and love, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, longing to see us, even as we also to see you; for this cause, brethren, we are comforted over you in all our distress and affliction through your faith: for now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord" (iii. 6-8). Undoubtedly a part of this "distress and affliction" was the result of his failure to save those Jews in Corinth who were now reviling him, and who, he well knew, would leave untried no device by which they might hope to drive him from the city. It was just at this crisis that the Lord Jesus, in whose behalf he was suffering, drew aside the intervening veil, and gave a word of cheer. (9) And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: (10) for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city. The Lord never broke his accustomed silence to comfort a servant except when

comfort was needed. The comfort which he gave on this occasion was not the assurance of personal safety alone, but that which Paul valued far higher, the assurance that his labors and sufferings in Corinth would yet be rewarded by the salvation of many souls.

In the words, "I have much people in this city," the Lord speaks of persons who were as yet unbelievers, and perhaps idolaters. This accords with the Calvinistic idea that God's people are a definite number whom he has individually selected from all eternity; but it does not prove it; for the language equally accords with the supposition that he called them his merely because he foresaw that under Paul's preaching they would yet believe. The same style is employed in Revelation, when the angel, announcing the downfall of mystic Babylon, cries, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (xviii. 4). God knew that in answer to his call a people would come out of Babylon whom he would accept, and he calls them his people by way of anticipation.

Vv. 11. Supported by the assurance given in the vision, Paul continued his labors long and patiently. (11) And he dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. This is longer than he had ever yet stayed in any one city, and the word "teaching," which describes his work, shows that during this long period he was executing chiefly the second part of the apostolic commission, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 20). From this we can see that, notwithstanding the many disorders which were afterward found in the Corinthian church, it was probably the best taught of all the



churches thus far planted by Paul. If they had been less fully instructed, what might have been their later condition?

#### 14. PAUL ARRAIGNED BEFORE GALLIO, 12-17.

Vv. 12, 13. The attempt of the Jews to suppress the preaching, which Paul had been looking for ever since he left the synagogue, came at last, but it came in an unusual form, and with unusual results. (12) But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him before the judgment seat, (13) saying, This man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. The charge preferred was that of law-breaking, as in Philippi and Thessalonica; but in those instances it was preferred by Gentiles with reference to Roman law, while in this the Jews had the boldness to prefer it in their own name, and with reference to their own law. This indicates a degree of confidence in their own influence which we have not met with in any other Gentile city. They hoped that Gallio would be willing to silence a Jew who was teaching contrary to the law of his own people.

Vv. 14-16. In this instance, however, the Jews had to deal with a man far different from the prætors of Philippi, or the politarchs of Thessalonica. Gallio was a brother of Seneca, the famous Roman moralist, who speaks of him as a man of admirable integrity, amiable and popular.<sup>1</sup> He was true to this representation on the

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<sup>1</sup> He says: "No mortal man is so sweet to any single person as he is to all mankind." "Even those who love my brother Gallio to the very utmost of their power, yet do love not him enough" (*Questiones Naturales*, iv. præf. Secs. 10, 11.) It is a sad comment on the superstition which shrouded their minds, that both the brothers perished by suicide.

present occasion. (14) But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villainy, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you : (15) but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves ; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters. (16) And he drove them from the judgment seat. Gallio's phraseology, " words and names and your law," shows that he had a very confused conception of the issue between Paul and the Jews ; but he knew enough to justify his decision. This is the only instance in all the experience of Paul in which his accusers were dealt with justly and summarily.

VER. 17. Prompt and energetic vindication of the right nearly always meets the approval of the masses of the people, and it sometimes reverses the tide of popular prejudice. We do not know how the masses of the city stood toward Paul before this decision, but they expressed themselves very vigorously as soon as the decision was rendered. (17) And they all laid hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things. The judgment seat, the chair of state in which the proconsul sat, was not erected inside of a court room, as with us, but in the open air, and usually in the agora, or forum. Consequently, all trials which excited public interest were witnessed by a crowd of spectators made up largely of the idlers on the streets. These are the only parties who could have been tempted to thus lay hands on Sosthenes, who, as the leader of the Jews, had preferred the charge against Paul. With that keen sense of the fitness of things which often characterizes such a crowd, they saw that Sosthenes deserved the beat-

ing which he had laid up for Paul ; and perhaps with a laugh and a yell they gave it to him.<sup>1</sup> The reason that Gallio "cared for none of these things" was because, as respects the question between Paul and the Jews, he did not understand it ; and as respects the beating of Sosthenes, he rather enjoyed it, because Sosthenes so richly deserved it. The disappointment and rage of the Jews were unbounded, but they had learned from bitter experience how to choke down such feelings, and to keep quiet.

Before Paul left Corinth, and perhaps previous to the arraignment before Gallio, he wrote the second epistle to the Thessalonians. The indications of time and place in the epistle are meager, but in the absence of conflicting evidence they are conclusive. First, there is such a connection in thought and subject matter between it and the first epistle as to indicate that there was no long interval between them ; and second, Silas joined with Paul in the salutation (i. 1) ; but Silas was not with Paul after the latter left Corinth. If we knew just when the separation from Silas took place, whether on Paul's departure from Corinth, or at some previous time, we could come nearer fixing the exact date ; but it is commonly supposed that it was written within the

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<sup>1</sup> The grammatical connection points to the term Jews in the preceding context as the antecedent of "they ;" but this would make the Jews the party that beat Sosthenes, which is altogether improbable ; for why should they beat their own synagogue ruler merely because Gallio had driven both him and them from the court ? The grammatical connection must then yield, as it does in xix. 33, and John viii. 33, two parallel cases, to the demands of the context, in determining the meaning. Farrar, who takes the same view of the meaning, says of it, "I give the view which seems to me most probable, passing over masses of idle conjecture" (*Life of Paul*, 323, n 4).

same year as the first, and this would fix the date of both in the year 52.<sup>1</sup> The epistle reveals the fact that this church was still suffering severe persecution, but that they were enduring it with marvelous patience, so that Paul could say to them, "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, even as it is meet, for that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of each one of you all toward one another aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure" (i. 3, 4). The extreme anxiety which he had felt for them at the time of writing the first epistle, and his diligence both in sending Timothy back to them and in writing to them, had been abundantly rewarded by their perseverance. Paul was moved not only to thanksgiving, but to many tender prayers in their behalf, which he briefly quotes in the epistle.<sup>1</sup> He had heard that "either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle" as from him, they had been troubled concerning the second coming of the Lord (ii. 2); and in order to guard against imposture in the future, he gives them a token by which they may test the genuineness of any epistle claiming to come from him. He says: "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: thus I write" (iii. 17). This shows that he ordinarily employed an amanuensis in writing his epistles (*cf.* Rom. xvi. 22), but that he wrote the salutation with his own hand as an evidence of genuineness. The employment of a skillful scribe, such as could be found in every city, if he had no companion possessed of this accomplish-

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<sup>1</sup>See Vol. I. Intro., pages xxxix, xxxiv. <sup>2</sup>See i. 11, 12; ii. 16, 17; iii. 16.

ment, insured such perfection in the manuscript as to leave no word illegible, while the autographic salutation attested the genuineness of the document. As these two epistles are the earliest of the New Testament books, we can readily believe that Paul's example, in thus guarding the inspired documents against liability to misreading or to imposture, was followed by the other writers.

### 15. PAUL'S RETURN TO ANTIOCH, 18-22.

VER. 18. The last incident which Luke chooses to mention in Corinth was the arraignment before Gallio, though Paul continued there yet for a considerable time. (18) And Paul, having tarried after this yet many days, took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. His stay of eighteen months in Corinth may be taken as an indication of the time which he would have spent with some other churches had he been permitted to do so. Thanks to Gallio, this was the only church in Macedonia and Greece in which he was permitted to remain as long as he thought proper. We shall hereafter see, however, that this church, which was free from persecution, was none the better for it as compared with those in Thessalonica and Philippi.

In aiming to sail to Syria, it was necessary to cross the isthmus to Cenchrea, where we find a church at a later period, which had probably been planted during Paul's stay in Corinth. On arriving at this port, the time of some vow which he had taken expired. In imitation of the Nazirite, he had permitted his hair to grow during the period of the vow, and at its close he resumed the regular shaving of his head which is customary with

turban-wearing nations. Many have mistaken this for the Nazirite vow itself, through failure to remember that at the close of this vow the hair was to be shaved off at the temple, and burned in the fire of the altar (Num. vi. 13-18).

Vv. 19-22. A vessel sailing from Cenchrea to Syria could very conveniently touch at Ephesus, which was the destination of Aquila and Priscilla. (19) And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. (20) And when they asked him to abide a longer time, he consented not; (21) but taking his leave of them, and saying, I will return again unto you, if God will, he set sail from Ephesus. (22) And when he had landed at Cæsarea, he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch. Paul had now decided that it was time for him to return once more to Antioch, and report progress, before undertaking the evangelization of another great city. Having fixed on Ephesus as his next point of attack, he feels the pulse, as it were, of the Jews there, by a few remarks in the synagogue; and finding it to beat favorably, he leaves Priscilla and Aquila there for the evident purpose of preparing the ground as well as they can, and of being there when he returns, to help him as they had done in Corinth; then, promising to return, he hurries on. The voyage to Cæsarea, and thence to Antioch, is without recorded incident, except that on landing at the former city he "went up and saluted the church." This is the church which had been planted there by the baptism of Cornelius and his friends.<sup>1</sup> On reaching Antioch we

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<sup>1</sup> The commentators in general, misled by the interpolated clause in the *Textus Receptus*, and the old English versions, "I

can not doubt that he once more gladdened the hearts of the brethren who had commended him and Silas to the favor of the Lord, by rehearsing to them all that God had done with him, and how he had opened still wider "the door of faith to the Gentiles." It may be that Silas had preceded him; if not, he doubtless stated to them, as Luke has not stated to us, the circumstances under which they had separated. As to the changes which may have taken place in Antioch during the three years of Paul's absence, Luke is equally silent; for he has his eye, as Paul had his, on the contemplated labors in Ephesus, which he hastens to describe.

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## SEC. IV. PAUL'S THIRD TOUR.

(XVIII. 23—XXI. 16.)

### 1. SECOND VISIT TO GALATIA AND PHRYGIA, 23.

Ver. 23. In a single brief sentence Luke disposes of a journey which must have occupied several months at least; for it covered five or six hundred miles. (23) And having spent some time there, he departed, and went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, establishing all the disciples. In order to reach Galatia and Phrygia,

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must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem." (21), assume that the church which Paul went up and saluted was the Jerusalem church; but in the absence of that clause there is nothing to justify this conclusion. He had doubtless landed at Caesarea because the ship in which he sailed was bound for that harbor, and he had been contented to sail in that ship, rather than lose time waiting for another, because it was but a short sail from Caesarea to Antioch, and coasting vessels for the voyage could be found almost daily.



the only districts in the route that are mentioned, he must have made the circuit once more from Antioch around through Syria into Cilicia, and thence by way of the Gates of Cilicia into the elevated tablelands of Lycaonia and Pisidia, past Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and the Pisidian Antioch. This was his third visit to these communities, and his passage through Galatia and Phrygia was a second visit to the churches which he had planted there. If we may judge from the rapidity of his passage, he found the churches in all the regions in such a condition that they did not specially need a protracted visit from him, yet his work among them, brief as it was, consisted in "establishing all the disciples." He had this work in view, as well as the report in Antioch, when he declined the invitation to stay in Ephesus (20, 21).

## 2. APOLLOS IN EPHESUS AND ACHAIA, 24-28.

Vv. 24-26. We have expressed the opinion that Paul's purpose in leaving Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus was that they might do such preparatory work as they could during his absence (19); and now Luke gives us a specimen of the work of this kind which they did. (24) Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race,<sup>1</sup> a learned man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. (25) This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: (26)

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<sup>1</sup> Apollos is here called "an Alexandrian by race," (τῷ γένει), rather than by birth, as in the A. V., to indicate that he was not only born there, but born of an ancestry native to that city. The term serves a similar purpose when used of Aquila in xviii. 1.

and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of the Lord more carefully. The distinguished position which Apollos afterward acquired in the church at Corinth, and the familiarity of his name among the disciples of subsequent ages, make it a matter of interest to observe closely what is here said of him. That he was an Alexandrian accounts in part for his learning, and indicates the character of it; for Alexandria, having been for at least two centuries the chief point of contact between Greek and Hebrew literature, had now become the chief seat of Hebrew learning. This learning included a knowledge of the Greek version of the Old Testament, of the other Greek literature of the later Jewish ages, and to some extent of Greek philosophy. The statement that he was "mighty in the Scriptures" means not merely that he was familiar with them, but that he knew how to handle them in argument and exposition with great effect. In a day when a knowledge of the Scriptures had to be acquired from manuscripts, and in which even the art of reading was acquired by only a few, it was no ordinary accomplishment to be thus familiar with the Scriptures. Such an attainment is rare even in this day of printed Bibles, and even among preachers, who are presumed by those who know no better to devote their whole lives to the study of the Bible. Preachers would be more mighty in preaching, and would have less need to search for might where it can not be found, if they would be more careful to follow the example of Apollos.

But while Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures, and while with a fervent spirit he "taught carefully the

things concerning Jesus," Aquila and Priscilla, on hearing him, soon discovered that he did not understand Christian baptism—that he knew "only the baptism of John." They were not so ignorant on this subject as to suppose, with some of our moderns, that there is no difference between the two baptisms; nor so indifferent to it, as a "mere external rite," that they considered the difference of no importance. On the contrary, they took the powerful and zealous preacher to their own home, and taught him the truth on the subject. To his credit as a candid seeker after truth, he appears to have accepted gladly the correction. He learned that, while John's baptism had attached to it no promise of the Holy Spirit, this was one of the distinctive features of Christian baptism; and that while John baptized into no name, the apostles were taught to baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (ii. 3; Matt. xxviii. 19). The question, whether he was rebaptized, will come before us in connection with xix. 5.

It should be observed that Priscilla took part with her husband in giving more perfect instruction to Apollos, and this illustrates the manner in which certain faithful women were eminent helpers of the apostles and evangelists in the spread of the gospel; yet it can not, without a deceitful handling of the Scriptures, be urged as proof that even the most eminent of the female helpers took part in public preaching.

Vv. 27, 28. For a reason not given, Apollos decided to leave Ephesus, and visit the churches planted by Paul in Achaia. (27) And when he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he helped them much who had believed through grace: (28)

for he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. This is the first mention of letters of commendation given to disciples going from one Christian community to another. They are mentioned at a later period as being in common use (II. Cor. iii. 1, 2). The brethren "encouraged him" to go, because they knew his peculiar power, and they knew that the churches needed it in their controversies with the Jews. Who these brethren were, besides Aquila and Priscilla, Luke does not just here inform us; but we learn a little farther on (xix. 1). Their expectations concerning the labors of Apollos in Achaia were happily realized in the great help which he gave to the disciples, and his successful confutation of the Jews. His special power being in the use of the Scriptures, he was the very man to reach the Jews, and to strengthen the faith of the believers. To confute is not always to convince; but we have evidence that in addition to confuting the Jews, Apollos brought many into the church; for Paul afterward referred to his labors as a watering of the church which he had planted, and then, changing his figure, said, "I laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon" (I. Cor. iii. 6-10). As Paul had made a comparative failure with the Jews of Corinth, the success of Apollos illustrates the value of a variety of talents and acquirements among preachers, in order to the successful evangelization of the great variety of minds and characters often found in a single community.

### 3. PAUL REACHES EPHESUS, AND REBAPTIZES A DOZEN MEN, XIX. 1-7.

Vv. 1-7. The historian now reaches the point for which he had so hurriedly passed over the voyage of Paul from Ephesus to Antioch, and his land journey thence through Galatia and Phrygia. Paul is permitted at last to begin a work which he had in mind when, on his preceding tour, he was "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia" (xvi. 6); and also to fulfill the appointment which he had left here on his journey homeward (xviii. 21). (1) And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: (2) and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given. (3) And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. (4) And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him who should come after him, that is, on Jesus. (5) And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. (6) And when Paul had laid his hands upon them the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied. (7) And they were in all about twelve men. This passage, in connection with what is said in the previous paragraph about Apollos (xviii. 25), shows that John's baptism was still preached and practiced in some places; and it also shows how the apostles dealt with persons thus baptized. These men were introduced to Paul as disciples of Jesus, and they were doubtless "the brethren"

who had united with Aquila in giving a letter to Apollos (xviii. 27). Paul's first question, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" had reference not to the ordinary indwelling of the Spirit; for this all receive who repent and are baptized (ii. 38), and therefore he could have no ground for doubting that they received this. But some disciples, after baptism, received through imposition of apostolic hands the miraculous gift of the Spirit; and it is of this that Paul inquired, as is proved not only by these considerations, but by the fact that it is this which he conferred upon them at the close of the conversation. When they answered, "We did not so much as hear that the Holy Spirit was given," he saw at once that there was something wrong about their baptism; hence his next question, "Into what then were ye baptized?" He meant not into what baptism, but into what name; for when he hears their answer, he directs them to be baptized "into the *name* of the Lord Jesus," which is but an abbreviation for "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," the form of expression employed by Jesus himself (Matt. xxviii. 19). If they had been thus baptized they could not have been ignorant about the Holy Spirit into whose name they were baptized. Moreover, in that case they would already have been told, as Peter told the people on Pentecost, that on being baptized they would receive the Holy Spirit. Having no knowledge of this baptism into a name, and therefore missing the aim of Paul's second question, the men answered, "Into John's baptism;" and thus Paul discovered the cause of their ignorance about the Holy Spirit; for John's baptism had no promise of the Holy Spirit, and he did not baptize into any name. Paul's brief explanation was promptly accepted, and when

the men were baptized he bestowed upon them the miraculous gift to which his first inquiry had reference.

As this is an instance of the rebaptism of men who had received John's baptism, it raises the question whether all of John's disciples were rebaptized in order to admission into the church; and if not, why were these? It seems necessary to answer the first part of this inquiry in the negative; for the reason that the apostles, some (if not all) of whom had received John's baptism, and the one hundred and twenty who with the twelve constituted the church before Pentecost, of whom the same is almost certainly true, were not rebaptized;<sup>1</sup> and if these were not, then the same must be true of the rest of John's original disciples. Why then were these at Ephesus baptized again? The most probable answer, and the only one which harmonizes with the facts, is that they had been baptized by Apollos, or by some one teaching as he taught, since John's baptism had ceased to be a valid ordinance. It certainly had not been valid since the baptism of the apostolic commission was introduced on the great day of Pentecost; and no one had rightly administered it since John was shut up in prison.

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<sup>1</sup> That these were not rebaptized is evident from the statement that those who were baptized on Pentecost "were added unto them" (ii. 41). But if they were not baptized at that time, they must have been previously; and as the only baptism administered previously, even that ministered by the disciples of Jesus (Jno. iv. 1. 2), was John's baptism, it was this which they had received. Furthermore, as Jesus insisted that it was the duty of all to submit to John's baptism (Luke vii. 29, 30), it is in the highest degree improbable that he acknowledged any as his own disciples who had refused to do so. Certainly the five disciples whom he gained at the Jordan shortly after his own baptism were John's disciples before they became his, and had been baptized already (Jno. i. 35-51).



Even Jesus, who administered it for a short time before John's imprisonment, did so no longer. From the very nature of the case it could be no longer accepted as a baptism when it had ceased to be a living ordinance. These twelve were accordingly regarded as not having been baptized at all; and now for the first time they received real baptism. If Aquila was acquainted with their condition before Paul's arrival in Ephesus, he had evidently awaited Paul's decision in the case, instead of settling the question himself. It is not certain that he felt competent to say what should be done. It is more probable, however, that Paul's question, intended to ascertain whether they had as yet received any miraculous gifts, brought to Aquila at the same moment that it did to Paul a knowledge of the facts. If Apollos was not rebaptized (and the implication is rather that he was not), the reason may be that Aquila did not know what should be done in such cases; or it may be that Apollos, while on some visit to Judea, had been baptized by John himself.

This incident shows that Paul was in the habit of inspecting the condition of the disciples already found in a place, before adding to their number; and it is a precedent worthy of careful imitation by modern evangelists.

#### 4. PREACHING IN THE SYNAGOGUE, AND IN THE SCHOOL OF TYRANNUS, 8-12.

Vv. 8, 9. Having corrected what he found wrong in the little band of disciples, Paul next grapples with the Jewish and pagan errors which abounded in the city. (8) And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God. (9) But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking

evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them; and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. The scene in the synagogue is quite uniform in its details with others which we have observed—the same earnest argument and persuasion by Paul, on the same invariable theme; the same increasing obstinacy and evil speaking on the part of the unbelieving Jews; and the final separation of Paul and the believers from the synagogue and the majority that controlled it. As a private dwelling had been Paul's refuge in Corinth, the school-room of Tyrannus was his resort in Ephesus. Such incidents have their counterpart in the history of all men who have attempted to correct the religious teachings of their contemporaries.

Vv. 10-12. Here once more, as in the case of Paul's stay in Corinth, Luke gives us a definite note of time. (10) And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. (11) And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: (12) insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out. The two years here mentioned, added to the three months in the synagogue, give us two years and three months as the length of Paul's stay in Ephesus—his longest stay in any one city, and mentioned, no doubt, on that account.<sup>1</sup> The miracles mentioned are styled "special," because of their extraordinary character, reminding us of some witnessed once in the career of Peter (v. 15), and once in that of the Master

<sup>1</sup> When Paul himself afterward spoke of the time as three years (xx. 31), he followed the uniform Jewish method of counting a part of a year at the close or the beginning of a period as if it were a whole year (*cf.* note under x. 30).

(Mark vi. 56). Such miracles are no more incredible than others. They were brought about by the increasing zeal of the people in seeking the benefit of the healing power. No wonder that "all who dwelt in Asia," by which is meant all in the Roman province of that name, "heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." All who could would naturally come to Ephesus to hear, and all who came would instinctively repeat what they had heard wherever they went. The result was that we read later of "the seven churches of Asia" (Rev. i. 4).

#### 5. EXORCISTS EXPOSED, AND BOOKS OF MAGIC BURNED, 13-20.

Vv. 13-17. It is difficult to imagine how men could witness these miracles, and not acknowledge the presence of divine power. We should suppose that even atheism would be confounded before them, and that the most hardened sinner would tremble. Yet Simon the sorcerer had sought to purchase such power from Peter with money; Barjesus had sought to convince Sergius Paulus that it was a cheat; and a similar display of human depravity, followed by a castigation almost as severe as in the last instance, occurred here in Ephesus. (13) But certain also of the strolling Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, Saying, I adjure thee by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. (14) And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, who did this. (15) And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? (16) And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and mastered both of them, and pre-

ailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (17) And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. These exorcists, as their title indicates, pretended to the power of casting out demons; and they appeared to the people to succeed often enough to keep up some reputation. Doubtless the fact that they were seven brothers added to the mystery of their pretensions, just as a fortune-teller at the present day who is the seventh daughter of the seventh daughter is more highly credited than others of her class. They employed for the purpose incantations over the demoniacs, in which they uttered certain unmeaning words that they claimed to have derived from Solomon,<sup>1</sup> and they naturally supposed that the secret of Paul's power was something of the same kind; so they watched him as he cast out demons, to see if they could discover his talismanic word. They were not long in observing that in every instance he used the name of Jesus; and they concluded that the charm was in that word; so two of them put the matter to a test by getting a demoniac into a room where they would be unobserved if they met with a failure, and intending, if they succeeded, to go before the public as rivals of Paul. The evil spirit seems to have been outraged by the wickedness of the two villains, and the manner in which he exposed them seems like a grim joke. Certainly all Ephesus must have laughed at them as they fled naked and bruised along the street; but when the people took a second thought, and remem-

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus gives a detailed account of an expulsion of a demon in the presence of Vespasian during the siege of Jerusalem (Ant., viii. 2, 5; Wars.?)

bered that this discomfiture had come from a misuse of the name of Jesus, it was but natural that this name was magnified, and that fear came upon all.

Vv. 18-20. The exposure of the seven exorcists, by the mysterious but very effective way in which it was accomplished, threw discredit on all the pretenders to magic in Ephesus. The visible results were immense and astonishing. (18) Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. (19) And not a few of them that practiced curious arts brought their books together, and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. (20) So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed. It is not to be understood that the believers who confessed had continued to practice magic after they became believers; but only that they now confessed and declared the secret processes by which they had formerly deceived the people. Of the book-burners, many, apparently, and possibly all, were not as yet disciples, though they were deeply impressed with the wickedness of their deceptive practices. The fifty thousand pieces of silver were doubtless Attic didrachmas; for Ephesus was a Greek city, and this was the most common silver coin. Its value was about the same as that of the Roman denarius, so often translated "penny" in our version, which equals a little more than sixteen cents of American money. The whole value then of the books was more than \$8,000. Their value depended not so much on their number or their size, as on their contents; for they contained plainly written directions for the performance of tricks of jugglery, and the purchaser, by a little practice, could be as skillful a juggler as the original owner. The book, like

the secret in the compound of a patent medicine, which could be written on a small scrap of paper, was the stock in trade of the juggler, and its value depended upon its being kept secret. This whole account fully confirms the reputation assigned to Ephesus by ancient writers as the chief center of magical arts in the whole Roman empire.<sup>1</sup>

6. PAUL FORMS A PLAN FOR FUTURE JOURNEYS,  
21, 22.

Vv. 21, 22. The great triumph of the word of the Lord which followed the book-burning brought the affairs of the church to such a point that Paul began to think of leaving Ephesus. (21) Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. (22) And having sent into Macedonia two of them who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. We shall see hereafter that this plan of future journeying was carried out to the letter, but in a way far different from that which Paul purposed. The words, "he purposed in the Spirit," have been taken by the majority of the commentators to mean no more than that he formed the purpose; and our revisers seem from their use of the small s with the word spirit, to have understood them in the same way. But if this is the meaning of the expression, it is tautological, the words "in the spirit" being redundant. These writers forget the facts mentioned before by Luke, which account for the expression. When Paul first pur-

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<sup>1</sup> See the citations on this subject in Conybeare and Howson, ii. 21, and in Farrar's *Life of Paul*, 358.

posed to come to this very city of Ephesus, as the capital of Asia, he was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to do so; and when he then purposed to go into Bithynia he was likewise forbidden (xvi. 6, 7); and by this experience he had learned to lay out no plans for the future without an expressed allowance for this divine overruling. Even when he promised, on leaving Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, to return thither, his words were, "I will return again unto you if God will" (xviii. 21). So now, when forming a purpose concerning journeys which might require years for their accomplishment, he purposes "in the Spirit" to make them. A few interpreters understand the expression as meaning that the Spirit moved him to form the purpose; but in that case we should not find him so uncertain as he afterward was, as to whether they could be carried out (see Rom. xv. 24; 30-32). The real meaning, determined by both his previous and his subsequent experience, is that he formed this purpose subject to the approval of the Holy Spirit, and with a conscious reference to the probability that the Spirit might overrule it. Timothy was sent into Macedonia, that he might go thence to Corinth, and give the brethren there some instruction concerning Paul's ways and teaching (I. Cor. iv. 17); while Erastus was sent because, being the treasurer of Corinth (Rom. xvi. 23), that was his home; and perhaps, also, that he might render assistance to Timothy.

Some scholars have argued with much plausibility that Paul had made a short visit to Corinth before this, and returned to Ephesus, using as evidence certain statements in Second Corinthians. The question is not an important one; and consequently, while I regard the evidence for the position as inconclusive, I will not dis-



cuss it. The reader who is curious to investigate it will find the arguments in the affirmative well set forth by Mr. Howson, and those in the negative by Paley.

The first epistle to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus, and at a time of great prosperity in the work there, as appears from the following words in the epistle: "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; for a great and effectual door is opened to me, and there are many adversaries" (I. Cor. xvi. 8, 9). This language fixes not only the place of writing, but almost exactly its date. The opening of the "great and effectual door" can refer only to the triumph attending the book-burning. The epistle was written, then, about the time that Timothy and Erastus were sent forward into Macedonia on their way to Corinth, and there can be no reasonable doubt that one of them was the bearer of it.

This is not really the first epistle written by Paul to the church at Corinth; for in it he speaks of another which he wrote previously on the subject of fornication: "I wrote you an epistle not to keep company with fornicators" (v. 9). This single statement contains all we know of this epistle; and perhaps the document was allowed to perish because the contents of it were repeated, and the subject treated more elaborately in the epistle now called the first.

Subsequent to the date of the lost epistle some members of the household of Chloe, a sister in the church at Corinth, had brought Paul information of great disorders and corruption in the church (i. 11), and it was for the purpose of correcting these that the epistle was written. He learned that the congregation was distracted by party strife (i. 12; iii. 1-4); that fornication, and even incest were being tolerated (v. 1-13); that some mem-

bers were engaged in litigation against the brethren in the civil courts (vi. 1-8); that his own apostolic authority was being called in question (iv. 1-6; 14-21); that their women, contrary to the prevailing rules of modesty, engaged in the public worship with unveiled faces (xi. 1-16); that some confusion and jealousy had arisen in reference to spiritual gifts (xii. xiii. xiv.); that some among them were even denying the resurrection (xv. 12); and that the Lord's supper was profaned by feasting (xi. 17-34). Besides, he had received a letter from the church calling for information in reference to marriage and divorce, and the eating of meats offered to idols (vii. 1; viii. 1). Although the epistle in which these questions are answered, and all these disorders rebuked, is calm and severe in its tone, it is not conceivable that Paul could hear of this state of things in a church which had cost him so much labor and anxiety, without great pain and sorrow. He suppressed these feelings as he wrote, but afterward he confessed them, saying, "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears" (II. Cor. ii. 4). It was with a heart full of anguish, then, in reference to some of the results of his past labors, but buoyed by the opening of a wide and effectual door in his present field, that he sent forward Timothy and Erastus with this epistle, while he tarried for a season longer in Asia.

#### 7. THE MOB OF THE SILVERSMITHS, 23-41.

\*Vv. 23-27. By the same stroke of the pen with which Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "a great and effectual door is opened unto me," he also wrote, "and there are many adversaries" (I. Cor. xvi. 8, 9); which shows that he was not unmindful of the power of that

foe over which he had won a great victory. Idolatry and superstition had been crippled in one of their strongholds, but they could not be expected to die without a desperate struggle. Sooner than Paul may have anticipated, the powers of darkness rallied. (23) And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way. (24) For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines for Diana, brought no little business unto the craftsmen; (25) whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth. (26) And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: (27) and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the world worshipeth.

This is the most truthful and candid of all the speeches made against Paul by any of his contemporaries. All the charges were strictly true, and the dangers apprehended from his influence were accurately stated. Even the motive actuating the speaker was not disguised. He was not ashamed to acknowledge that his love of gain was that which inspired his zeal. At the same time, he and the craftsmen whom he addressed had reason to know, even better than any one else in Ephesus, that the pieces of silver which they had hammered and polished with their own hands were not gods. His allusion to the temple can be better appreciated when we remember that it was one of the seven wonders of

the ancient world, and the glory of the city of Ephesus. It was four hundred and twenty-five feet long, and one hundred and twenty wide. All around this vast space stood a row of white marble columns sixty feet high, and less than four feet apart. They were one hundred and twenty in number, and they supported an entablature of vast marble slabs which constituted the roof of the peristyle. The interior was adorned with paintings and sculptured figures wrought by the most famous artists of antiquity, and an inner sanctuary contained a rude image of a many-breasted woman, the symbol of fecundity, which was believed to have been dropped down from heaven by Jupiter. Three or four temples like Solomon's could have been placed within the circuit of its magnificent colonnade. No wonder that the wrath of the heathen populace was kindled against Paul, when it appeared that by his preaching this magnificent structure was to be brought into contempt.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The process by which, through a long series of ages, this temple was brought to utter ruin, is so happily sketched by Plumptre, that we quote his words entire: "The first real blow to the worship which had lasted for so many ages was given by the two years of Paul's work of which we read here. As by the strange irony of history the next stroke aimed at its magnificence came from the hand of Nero, who robbed it, as he robbed the temples of Delphi, and Pergamos, and Athens, not sparing even villages, of many of its art treasures for the adornment of his golden house at Rome. Trajan sent its richly sculptured gates as an offering to a temple at Byzantium. As the Church of Christ advanced, its worship, of course, declined. Priests and priestesses ministered in deserted shrines. When the empire became Christian the temple of Ephesus, in common with that of Delphi, supplied materials for the church erected by Justinian in honor of the divine wisdom, which is now the mosque of St. Sophia. When the Goths devastated Asia Minor, in the reign of Gallienus (A. D. 263), they plundered it with a reckless hand, and the work which

Vv. 28, 29. The artisans were enraged at the prospect of financial ruin, but they were shrewd enough to see that reverence for the temple and the goddess was the better theme on which to cry out before the people. (28) And when they heard this they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. (29) And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theater, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel. The outcry, and the tone in which it was uttered, awakened the old-time enthusiasm of the idolaters who heard it, suggesting, as it did, some assault on the honor of the goddess. The gathering mob was in a frenzy, and it was a kind providence that Paul was out of their reach. They rushed into the theater because there was not room in the narrow streets common to all Asiatic cities for such a multitude. That theater still remains with its marble seats intact, by far the best preserved ruin on the site of Ephesus.<sup>1</sup> It was capable of seating several thousand spectators.

Vv. 30, 31. When Paul heard that his two companions had been seized by the mob and dragged within the theater, he feared that they would be torn to pieces in his stead, and he instantly resolved that this should not be. (30) And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. (31) And certain also of the chief officers of Asia, being his friends, sent unto him, and besought him not to adventure. They began was completed centuries later by the Turks" (*Commentary in loco*).

<sup>1</sup> When the author visited the spot in 1879 he took a solemn pleasure in standing on one of the highest tiers of marble seats and reciting to his companions the speech of the town clerk which follows below.

ture himself into the theater. The feelings which impelled him were confessed afterward to his brethren in Corinth: "We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, inasmuch that we despaired even of life; yea, we ourselves have had the answer of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead: who delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver" (II. Cor. i. 8-10). Both he and his friends were fully persuaded that to go into the theater was certain death; and his resolve to go in was a resolve then and there to die. The timely inhibition of his brethren and the friendly officials he regarded as the hand of God delivering him from "so great a death." The words, "chief officers of Asia," represent only the single word *Asiarchs* in the original, the title of ten men of wealth and reputation, who were chosen annually to preside over the athletic games of the province. That some of these were friends of Paul, is an indication of the extent to which his preaching and his personal character had become known in the highest circles of heathen society in Asia.

Vv. 32-34. After showing what it was that kept Paul out of the theater, and saved his life, Luke next leads us inside that enclosure, to witness the further proceedings of the mob. (32) Some therefore cried one thing and some another: for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. (33) And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made a defense unto the people. (34) But when they



perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. The Jews had good reason to fear the wrath of this mob; for it was well known in Ephesus that they were as much opposed to idolatry as Paul was, and it was also known that Paul himself was a Jew. Fidelity to their own principles should have prompted them to stand by Paul; but if the defense which they wished to make through Alexander had been heard, it would have been an attempt to show that Paul was an apostate from the Jewish faith, and that the Jews must not be held responsible for what he might say. The quick-witted in the crowd saw through the trick at once, and gave it the rebuke which it deserved by drowning Alexander's voice in their yells.

Vv. 35-41. The fury of a mob, when at its height, is always inflamed by opposition, as a fire by fresh fuel; but when it begins to be exhausted a few well chosen words will often restore quiet. Recognizing this, the city authorities did not at first interfere; but when the long continued vociferation of the people had nearly exhausted their strength, the following well timed and well worded speech was addressed to them. (35) And when the town clerk had quieted the multitude, he saith, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? (36) Seeing then that these things can not be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. (37) For ye have brought hither these men who are neither robbers of temples, nor blasphemers of our goddess. (38) If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen who are with him, have a matter against any man, the



courts are open, and there are proconsuls : let them accuse one another. (39) But if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. (40) For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot, there being no cause for it : and as touching it, we shall not be able to give account of this concourse. (41) And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly. This is evidently the speech of a man well skilled in the management of excited crowds ; and we may suppose that the town clerk was selected for the task by those in authority, because of his known skill in this particular. His assertion that no man could be ignorant of the devotion of Ephesus to the worship of Diana, or of the fact that the image was heaven-descended, was an open espousal of their cause ; and the remark, that the unquestionable certainty of these facts ought to make them feel quiet, even though some one should contradict them, was the very remark to bring about the composure at which he aimed. Advancing then to the cause of the disturbance, like a trained advocate he ignores the real charge against the disciples, that of denying that images made with hands are gods, and declares that the men are neither temple-robbers, nor blasphemers of the goddess. Clearing them of this charge appeared to the majority, who "knew not wherefore they had come together," a complete vindication of the prisoners. Then, as for the men who had disturbed the multitude with private matters of their own, their proper recourse was to the proconsular court. This was calculated to turn the feeling of the people against the silversmiths, as having made tools of their neighbors for the benefit of their craft. Finally, the remark about the unlawfulness of the assembly, and their inability to

account for the riot, was a hint of danger from the Roman authorities in the way of fines which might be imposed on the whole community; it made every man of property feel anxious to get away. The formal dismissal, as if the assembly had gotten through with its business, and a motion to adjourn had been adopted, was the last skillful device of the clerk, and it sent the people down the streets in perfect quiet. The city authorities congratulated themselves and their clerk that so fierce a mob had been so easily quelled; and the disciples were very thankful to God that they had escaped so easily. Even Gaius and Aristarchus, who had doubtless despaired of life, escaped, and lived to labor and suffer much longer in the Master's cause.<sup>1</sup>

#### 8. PAUL'S SECOND VISIT TO MACEDONIA AND GREECE, XX. 1-6.

VER. 1. (I) And after the uproar was ceased, Paul having sent for the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of them, and departed to go into Macedonia. Thus ended the long-continued abode of Paul in Ephesus. The "great and effectual door" which was open to him but a few weeks previous had been suddenly closed; and the "many adversaries," for the noble purpose of resisting whom he had resolved to remain in Ephesus until after Pentecost (I. Cor. xvi. 8, 9), had prevailed against him. He had accomplished much in the city and province, but there had come a fearful reaction in favor of the time-honored idolatry, threatening to crush out the results of his protracted and arduous

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<sup>1</sup> Both of them traveled with Paul afterward from Corinth to Jerusalem (xx. 3, 4), and Aristarchus was his fellow prisoner on his voyage from Jerusalem to Rome (xxvii. 1, 2; Col. iv. 10).

labors. When the disciples, whom he had taught and warned with tears both publicly and from house to house for the space of three years (verse 31), were gathered about him for the last time, and he was about to leave them in a great furnace of affliction, no tongue can tell the bitterness of the farewell. All was dark behind him, and all forbidding before him, as he turned his face toward that shore across the *Ægean* on which he had been welcomed before with stripes and imprisonment. We have no expression of his feelings until he reached *Troas*, where he was to embark for *Macedonia*, and where he expected to meet *Titus* with news from *Corinth*. At this point a remark of his own reveals the pent up sorrow of his heart. He writes to the *Corinthians*: "When I came to *Troas* for the gospel of Christ, and when a door was open to me in the Lord, I had no relief for my spirit, because I found not *Titus* my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went forth into *Macedonia*" (*II. Cor. ii. 12, 13*). We have followed him through many disheartening scenes, and will yet follow him through many more; but only on this occasion do we find his heart so sinking within him that he can not enter an open door to preach the gospel. He had hoped that the weight of sorrow which was pressing him down, above his strength to bear, would be lightened by the sympathy of *Titus*, and especially by some good news from the distracted church in *Corinth*; but the pang of disappointment added the last ounce to the weight that was crushing him, and he rushed on, blinded with tears, in the direction from which *Titus* was coming. A heart so strong to endure, when once crushed, can not readily resume its wonted buoyancy. Even after the sea was between him and *Ephesus*, and he was once more

among the beloved disciples of Philippi, he was constrained to confess, "When we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no relief, but we were afflicted on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (II. Cor. vii. 5). Finally, the long-looked-for Titus met him with good news from Corinth, and thus the Lord, who never forgets his servants in their affliction, brought relief to the overburdened heart of Paul, and enabled him to change the tone of his second epistle to the Corinthians, and to say: "Nevertheless he that comforteth the lowly, even God, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but also by the comfort wherewith he was comforted in you, while he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoice yet more" (*ib.* 6, 7). And this shows us that it was not on account of himself, but on account of his children in the gospel, that he had been so distressed. Titus told him of the good effects of the former epistle; that the majority of the church had repented of their evil practices; that they had excluded the incestuous man (ii. 5-11); and that they were forward in their preparation for a contribution to the poor saints in Judea (ix. 1, 2). But the news was not all of a cheering kind. He also brought word that Paul had some personal enemies in the church who were endeavoring to impair his influence and break down his apostolic authority (x. 1; xi. 13-15). For the purpose of counteracting the machinations of these "ministers of Satan," encouraging the faithful brethren in their renewed zeal, and presenting to all many touching reflections suggested by his own sufferings, he addressed to them another epistle, and forwarded it by the hands of Titus and two other brethren whose names are not given (viii. 16-20). That we are

right in regard to the date of this epistle, is easily proved ; for first, Paul refers in the epistle to having recently come from Asia into Macedonia (i. 8 ; vii. 5) ; and this he had just done according to the paragraph of the history now before us. Second, he wrote from Macedonia when about to start from that province to Corinth (ix. 3, 4 ; xii. 14 ; xiii. 1), which he had not done previous to this, except when there was as yet no church in Corinth, and which he never did afterward. The time was the summer of the year 57, the first epistle to the same church having been written in Ephesus the previous spring.<sup>1</sup>

Vv. 2, 3. The labors of the apostle on this visit to Macedonia and Greece are summed up in this brief statement. (2) And when he had gone through those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. (3) And when he had spent three months there, and a plot was laid against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia. Several events of great importance occurred in the interval thus hurriedly passed over, a knowledge of which can be gleaned from Paul's epistles.

We remember the promise made by Paul to Peter, James and John, that while laboring among the Gentiles he would "remember the poor" in Judea (Gal. ii. 6-10). In accordance with this agreement we find that Paul was now urging a general collection in the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, as he had done in Galatia, for this purpose (I. Cor. xvi. 1, 2 ; II. Cor. viii. 1-15). For prudential considerations, such as prompted him so often to labor without compensation, he declined to bear the gift himself, though the churches in Macedonia had

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<sup>1</sup> See Introduction, Chronology, xxviii.

entreated him to do so (II. Cor. viii. 4). At first indeed he had not fully intended to go to Jerusalem in connection with it, but had said to the churches, "Whomsoever ye shall approve by letters, them will I send to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me" (I. Cor. xvi. 3, 4). The importance of the mission, however, grew as time advanced, so that he resolved to go himself; and the enterprise assumed a most absorbing interest.

The circumstance which led to this change of purpose was the increasing alienation between the Jews and the Gentiles within the church. The decree of the apostles, as we have seen, gave great comfort to the church in Antioch, where the controversy originated, and it had done good everywhere it had been carried (xv. 31; xvi. 4, 5); but other judaizing teachers had renewed the controversy, and were ignoring the decree. They had persisted in their schismatical efforts until there was now a widespread disaffection between the two sections of the church. By their influence the churches in Galatia had become alienated from Paul, for whom they once would have been willing to pluck out their own eyes, and they were being rapidly led back under the bondage of the law (Gal. i. 6; iv. 15-20). The church in Rome, at the western extremity of the territory which had been evangelized, was also disturbed by the controversy, the Jews insisting that justification was by works of law, and that the distinction of meats and holy days should be perpetuated in the church (Rom., iii., iv., v., xiv.). This state of affairs filled Paul with inexpressible anxiety, and while the danger was imminent he bent all his energies to the task of averting it.



Already engaged in a general collection among Gentile churches for the poor in Judea, and knowing the tendency of kindness to win back alienated affection, he pushed the work forward for this additional consideration, as we see from the following appeal which he made to the Corinthians: "For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God; seeing that through the proving of you by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution unto them and unto all; while they themselves also, with supplication on your behalf, long after you by reason of the exceeding grace of God in you" (II. Cor. ix. 12-14). So great was his confidence in the good results of the enterprise that he here speaks as if they were already accomplished—as if the Jews were already offering many thanksgivings and prayers for the Gentiles in consideration of their kindness.

Thus Paul felt while he was stimulating the liberality of his brethren; but when the collections had all been made, and he was about to start from Corinth to Jerusalem with the money, he began to fear that the Jews in Palestine would not accept the gift, and that by their refusal the breach which he was trying to close would be opened wider. We know this by the almost painful earnestness with which he besought the brethren in Rome to pray with him that this calamity might be averted. He says: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that are dis-



obedient in Judea, and that my ministration which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints ; that I may come unto you in joy through the will of God, and together with you find rest" (Rom. xv. 30-32). If he called thus earnestly for the prayers of the distant church in Rome, how much more must he have enlisted those of the churches in Achaia and Macedonia, who were immediate participants in the enterprise. We have here the spectacle of a man who was regarded with suspicion, if not with positive dislike, by a large portion of his brethren, securing from others, who were involved with him in the same reproach, a self-denying contribution for the temporal wants of the disaffected party ; and then, fearing lest their disaffection was so great as to cause them to reject the gift—a fear which would cause most men to withhold it entirely—he calls upon all the donors to unite in persistent prayer that it might not be rejected. No nobler example of disinterested benevolence can be found in the history of men. The prosecution of the enterprise, as we shall see hereafter, was in keeping with the magnanimity of its inception. But before we consider it further we must notice briefly some kindred facts.

For the same noble purpose which prompted the great collection, Paul wrote, during his three months in Corinth, his epistles to the Galatians and the Romans. This date we have already assumed in referring to them as contemporaneous documents. The most conclusive evidence for assigning them this date may be briefly stated as follows : In the epistle to the Romans Paul expressly states that he was about to start for Jerusalem with a contribution which had been made by the churches in Macedonia and Achaia (xv. 25, 26) ; and

this could have been said only at the close of his present stay in Corinth. Moreover, Gaius, who lived in Corinth, was his host at the time of writing (xvi. 23; *cf.* I. Cor. i. 14); and Phœbe, of the Corinthian seaport Cenchrea, was the bearer of the epistle (xvi. 1). As for Galatians, it contains an allusion to Paul's first visit to Galatia, implying that he had been there a second time. His words are: "Ye know that by an infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you the first time" (iv. 13). It was written then, after this second visit, and another remark shows that it was not very long after that visit. He says, "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel" (i. 6). When at Corinth he had been away from Galatia only a little more than three years; and this was a short time for so great a revolution in sentiment and faith as had occurred in those churches. Finally, the close correspondence in subject matter between this epistle and that to the Romans, both being devoted principally to setting forth the doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to the scheme of salvation by works of law which was propagated by the judaizers, indicates that they were both written under the same condition of affairs, and therefore about the same time. As in Romans Paul speaks of his departure to Jerusalem as imminent, it is probable that Galatians had been written a short time previous. In both the apostle contended by argument and by authority against the destructive teaching of the judaizers, at the same that he was aiming, by a noble act of self-denial, to win back their good will both to himself and the Gentiles whose cause he had espoused.

Having dispatched these two epistles, and collected about him the messengers of the various churches, the apostle was about to start for Syria by water, which was much the swifter route, when, as the text last quoted affirms, he learned that a plot was laid against him by the Jews, which led him to change his course. This plot probably consisted in a notification to highwaymen to lie in wait for the company in the mountains between Corinth and Cenchrea, and rob them of the money which they were bearing to Jerusalem. By the change of route, the road to Cenchrea could be avoided, and the waiting robbers left in the lurch. A much longer journey was necessitated; but it led Paul once more by the way of churches which he would otherwise have failed to revisit.

Vv. 4, 5. (4) And there accompanied him as far as Asia Sopater of Berœa, the son of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. (5) But these had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas. These seven brethren were the messengers chosen by the churches, as Paul had directed (I. Cor. xvi. 3), to bear their contributions to Jerusalem. There being no banks or paper currency in those days, the money had to be carried in silver on the persons of the messengers, and it was important that no one should be so loaded as to indicate the fact to the sharp eyes of robbers: hence the necessity for so many messengers to carry it. Sopater (abbreviation of Sospater) was a kinsman of Paul, one of his converts at Berœa, and had united with him in saluting the church in Rome (Rom. xvi. 21). Aristarchus was doubtless the same Macedonian who was seized by the mob in Ephesus

(xix. 29), but had escaped and reached his home in Thessalonica. Secundus (*second*) was probably so named because he was his father's second son, as were Tertius and Quartus (*third* and *fourth*), because they were the third and fourth sons (Rom. xvi. 22, 23). As they were all three with Paul at Corinth, it is not improbable that they were brothers. Gaius of Derbe was not of course the Macedonian Gaius who had suffered in the silver-smith mob with Aristarchus. His presence here, so far west from his home, implies that he had followed Paul through interest in his labors. Tychicus (*fortunate*) and Trophimus (*foster-child*) are new names among the companions of Paul. As they are of Asia, they had doubtless turned to the Lord while Paul was preaching in Ephesus, and had followed him thence into Greece. Luke's "us," here introduced once more, implies that he too joined the company at Philippi. It was here, on the first tour, that this pronoun was dropped, and the presumption is that Luke had remained at Philippi ever since the departure of Paul and Silas therefrom, six or seven years previous. During this absence from the narrative, many parts of it have been hurried and elliptical; but we shall henceforth find it much more circumstantial.

VER. 6. If Paul's only purpose in passing through Macedonia was to reach Asia in safety, he would have had no occasion to revisit Philippi, which was at least a day's journey out his way; but the next verse finds him in that city and leaving it for Troas. (6) And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days: where we tarried seven days. The other brethren, in going before unto Troas, had probably set sail from Thessalonica, or

Neapolis, without making the detour northward to Philippi; and their design in going before may have been to get speedily out of the country in which many enemies knew of the money on their persons, while Paul, freed from anxiety on that account, might make another short visit to the church at Philippi, whose honored teacher was to join him in the journey to Jerusalem. It so happened that the days of unleavened bread, the seven days following the paschal supper, had just expired when he and Luke set sail for Troas, and thus we are able to see that nearly a whole year had passed since he left Ephesus; for he left there earlier than he had expected, and therefore earlier than Pentecost the previous year (I. Cor. xvi. 8).

The fact that the voyage from Philippi to Troas occupied five days, whereas on a former occasion they sailed from Troas to Philippi in two days (xvi. 11, 12), is suggestive of adverse winds.

When Paul was last in Troas an effectual door was opened to him by the Lord, but he passed on without entering it (II. Cor. ii. 12). Now at last some of the work then neglected was done; for the seven brethren had preceded him more than five days, and the whole company remained there seven days; and nine such men as these could accomplish much in a town like this in the course of two weeks.

#### 9. A LORD'S DAY MEETING IN TROAS, 7-12.

VER. 7. The stay of seven days in Troas terminated on the Lord's day. (7) And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight.

This passage shows that the first day of the week was the day in which the disciples broke the loaf; and also that the prime purpose of their meeting on that day was to observe this ordinance. Paul's preaching on the occasion was incidental. In the original institution of the Lord's supper, nothing was said as to the frequency with which it was to be observed. The Lord's words are, "This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (I. Cor. xi. 25). Had nothing more been said, every congregation of believers would have been left to its own judgment as to frequency of observance. But the apostles were afterward guided by the Holy Spirit in this, as in other matters left indefinite by the Lord's personal teaching, and their example is our guide. Little is said on the subject, but that little is decisive in favor of a weekly observance of the ordinance. Here it is represented as furnishing the chief purpose of the Lord's day meeting; and the same appears in the rebuke administered to the Corinthians: "When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper; for in your eating each one taketh before other his own supper" (I. Cor. xi. 20, 21). Such being the purpose of the Lord's day meeting, as surely as the disciples met every Lord's day, they broke the loaf on that day. Slight as this evidence is, when taken in connection with the universal practice of the church in the second century, and for a long period afterward, it has proved sufficient to win universal agreement among biblical scholars, that this was the apostolic custom; and as the example of the apostles acting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit shows plainly the will of the Lord, our custom should be the same, and all the excuses which we ingeniously frame for rejecting this custom are invalid.

It is this ordinance which brings us nearest of all to the sufferings of our Redeemer; and if we commemorate weekly the fact that he arose again for our justification, why should we not as frequently commemorate the fact that he died for our sins?

The extreme length of Paul's discourse on this occasion is accounted for in the remark that he was "intending to depart on the morrow;" and we learn further on, that he expected never to see these disciples again (38); hence his desire to give them all possible instruction and admonition while he was with them.

Vv. 8-10. The long, solemn discourse was broken off at midnight by an incident which caused great alarm and confusion in the audience. (8) And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where we were gathered together. (9) And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead. (10) And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him. This passage shows that the meeting was held in the night, and in the third story of the building. The third story is suggestive of cheap rent, and also of precaution against interruption of the worship by the heathen rabble on the street. If some of the members were slaves, a night meeting was the only one which they could attend, and this hour may have been selected to suit them. It is probable that on account of Paul's presence the room was crowded, and that Eutychus had taken a seat in the window to make room for some older person; and, being most likely a laboring man, unaccustomed to loss of sleep,



he found it impossible, even though deeply interested, to keep awake. It is not always a sin to go to sleep under a sermon. Eutychus was dead when they picked him up; but when Paul had embraced him his life was in him, and the embrace brought back the life which was extinguished by the fall. It was a case of resuscitation like that of the daughter of Jairus (Luke viii. 49-55).

VER. 11. The alarm caused by the fall of Eutychus, the astonishing display of divine power in his restoration, and the stillness of the midnight hour in which it all occurred, could but add to the solemnity which already pervaded the assembly. They could not think of sleep, and the meeting was still protracted. They returned to the upper chamber, where the lights were still burning, and where the elements of the Lord's supper were as yet undistributed. Paul, notwithstanding the length and earnestness of his discourse, was unexhausted. (11) And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. Thus the whole night was spent in religious discourse and conversation, interrupted at midnight by a death and a resurrection, and this followed by the commemoration of the Lord's death which brings hope of a resurrection far better. At daybreak the meeting terminated in one of those tender farewells so often spoken among believers, in which the pain of parting and the hope of meeting to part no more struggle so tearfully for the mastery. It was a night never to be forgotten by those who were there, and in eternity it will be a theme for much conversation.

It is a question of some interest, whether it was on Sunday morning or Monday morning that this parting took place. The brethren met in the early part of the

night, yet it was "the first day of the week." We have no evidence that either Jews or Gentiles had yet adopted the custom of counting the hours of the day from midnight; consequently we must suppose that the night in question was that belonging to Sunday, as it was then reckoned, or Saturday night, as we now style it. It was the night following the Jewish Sabbath, which was still observed by all Jewish disciples, and the incident shows that the disciples at Troas were in the habit of meeting on this night to break bread. Any time after sunset on that evening would be the Lord's day as they counted it, and after midnight, which was the time of breaking the loaf on that occasion, was on the Lord's day as we count it.

VER. 12. Recurring again to the case of Eutychus, Luke next remarks: (12) And they brought the lad alive, and were not a little comforted. This means that they brought him from the meeting to his home. This was done in the morning after the separation from Paul and his company, and four or five hours after the fall from the window. Having expected to take him home dead, and to be charged, perhaps, with fault in reference to his death, they were not a little comforted that they could bring him home with such a story as they could now tell to his friends and neighbors.

#### 10. THE VOYAGE FROM TROAS TO MILETUS, 13-16.

VER. 13. The brethren of Troas returned to their homes, while Paul and his companions resumed their long journey. (13) But we, going before to the ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, intending himself to go by land. Troas and Assos are on opposite sides of a peninsula which

terminates in Cape Lectum. The distance across from city to city is about twenty miles, while the coast line around is about forty. Paul could easily walk across while the ship was sailing around. But why did Paul choose, after spending a sleepless night in preaching and conversing, to still further tax his power of endurance by this walk of twenty miles? One would suppose that he would have preferred resting upon a hammock in the ship. Nothing short of an excitement which eschews rest for either mind or body can account for it. But Paul had received in every city on his journey prophetic warnings of bonds and imprisonment awaiting him (23); he was agitated by the critical state of the churches everywhere; he was saddened by the final farewells which he was giving to the churches on his way; and he longed for a season of meditation and prayer which could be found only in solitude. Amid the more stirring scenes of the apostle's life, while announcing with oracular authority the will of God, and confirming the word to trembling thousands by signs and wonders following, we are apt to lose our human sympathy for the man in our admiration for the apostle. But when we contemplate him under circumstances like the present, worn down by the sleepless labors of a whole night; burdened in spirit too heavily to enjoy the society of sympathizing friends; and yet, with all his weariness, choosing a long day's journey on foot that he might indulge to satiety the gloom which oppressed him, we are so much reminded of our own seasons of afflictions as to feel the human tie which binds our hearts to his. No ardent toiler in the vineyard of the Lord, ready to sink at times beneath his load of anxiety and disappointment, but finds relief in permitting the excess of his sorrow to

waste itself in silence and solitude. In such hours it will do us good to walk with Paul from Troas to Assos, and to remember how much has been endured by greater and better men than ourselves.

Vv. 14-16. The ship and the footman were not far apart in reaching Assos. (14) And when he met us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. (15) And sailing from thence, we came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after we came to Miletus. (16) For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. The ship was coasting among the islands scattered along the eastern shore of the *Ægean* Sea, as a glance at the map will show; and the part of the voyage here described occupied four days. They cast anchor in the harbor of Mitylene the first night. This city, beautifully situated on the northern shore of the island then called Lesbos, but now Mitylene, from the name of the city, is still a handsome town with a considerable trade. On the second night anchorage was found "over against Chios," without entering a harbor. On the third day they crossed the mouth of the bay which leads up to Ephesus, and "touched at Samos," perhaps for business as well as for a safe anchorage at night; and a short run on the fourth day brought them to the important seaport of Miletus on the main shore. As they passed by Ephesus, and were yet so near to that scene of protracted labor and suffering, Luke felt called upon for the explanation which he gives. If the ship had been under Paul's control, he could have spent at Ephesus the time afterward spent at Miletus (17, 18), without delaying his arrival

in Jerusalem ; but as the vessel was going on its way without regard to his wishes, he could visit Ephesus only by running in on some other vessel from Chios, and taking the risk of finding one in good time sailing from Ephesus to Syria. The reason for his anxiety to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost was, that then brethren from every village in Palestine would be in the city, and he could see to the distribution of the alms which his companions bore, without the necessity of visiting all the churches. We will yet see that he made the journey in time for the feast.

#### 11. AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS, 17-38.

VER. 17. As Paul's vessel was to lie at anchor in the harbor of Miletus for at least two or three days, he took advantage of the delay to gratify in part his desire to communicate once more with the brethren of Ephesus. (17) And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. The distance was about thirty miles. He might have gone to Ephesus instead of sending for the elders, but for some uncertainty as to the time of the ship's departure. If he should miss this vessel, it might defeat his purpose to attend the feast ; whereas, if the elders should arrive after his departure, they would suffer only the inconvenience of the short journey.

Vv. 18-21. The interview which Paul now holds with these elders may be regarded as a type of all those which he held with various bodies of disciples on this mournful journey. He begins his remarks to them by a brief review of his labors in their city. (18) And when they were come to him, he said to them, Ye yourselves

know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, (19) serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews: (20) how that I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, (21) testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. These elders must have been among the first fruits of Paul's preaching in Ephesus, seeing that they knew so perfectly his manner of life from the first day that he set foot in Asia. His remark about the lowliness of mind, and the tears which had characterized him, shows that the great distress which we have seen attendant on the wild proceedings of the silversmith mob, was by no means the beginning of this kind of experience in Ephesus. The reference, too, to trials which befell him by the plots of the Jews, brings out a new feature of his experience there; for in the narrative Luke has mentioned only one indication of the existence of such plots, the attempt to put forward Alexander before the mob in the theater (xix. 33, 34). It was Paul's sad experience to suffer more, throughout his career, from his own countrymen than from the heathen.

The statements, that he had not shrunk from declaring to the brethren anything that was profitable for them, and that he had taught from house to house, as well as publicly, are both worthy of solemn consideration by the preachers of the present age. The former presents Paul in striking contrast with the time-servers so abundant in our modern pulpits, who never rebuke sin except at a long distance; who speak none but smooth words about corruption in the church; and



whose whole study is personal popularity. Such men care for souls only as these souls may in some way glorify them. They are too faithful to their own aggrandisement to think of being faithful to God. The second statement places Paul in contrast with another class of modern preachers, who either neglect to go from house to house in their ministrations, and study paltry excuses for the neglect; or who go from house to house, not to teach the people, but to enjoy society and to engage in gossip. Let all such take notice that, in the true apostolic method of evangelizing a community, and of edifying a congregation, earnest work from house to house was on a par with that in the pulpit.

The order in which Paul here mentions repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, has been an occasion of confusion to some minds, and has furnished a proof text to some who have espoused the position that in the sinner's conversion to Christ repentance precedes faith. It is true that Paul preached repentance toward God before faith in Jesus Christ, and that his aim was to induce men to repent toward God as a preparation for faith in Christ. John the Baptist prepared the people for Christ by preaching repentance toward God; Jesus did the same; and Paul, in addressing the heathen in Athens, first presented to them the true God, then called on them to repent of their idolatries which had dishonored God; and then presented to them the risen Christ (xvii. 29-31). The two themes were not presented in this order because it was impossible for men to believe in Christ before repenting toward God; but because, if they are brought to repentance toward God in whom they already believe, they are in a better frame of mind for hearing the gospel of Christ,



and believing in him. In general terms, if we repent of sinning against the light we have, we are better prepared to receive any new light which God may see fit to give us; whereas, if we are impenitent in regard to the former, we will almost certainly despise the latter. To sinners of all ages and countries, who know something of God, but nothing of Christ, this method of preaching faith and repentance is doubtless the best; but it may not be so with sinners reared in Christian lands, who have by tradition the same faith in Christ which they have in God, and who realize that their past sins are really sins against Christ. This method, however, is very far from supporting the idea that repentance precedes faith in the sense usually attached to that proposition; for this would require men to repent toward God before they believe in God, and toward Christ before they believe in Christ—an obvious absurdity.

Vv. 22-27. After this very brief review of his labors in Ephesus, the apostle next speaks of his own future, and reveals to the elders the cause of the gloom which had shrouded his spirit on this journey. (22) And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: (23) save that the Holy Spirit testifies unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. (24) But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. (25) And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. (26) Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. (27) For I shrank not from declaring unto

you the whole counsel of God. By the expression, "bound in the spirit," he has reference to the bonds that awaited him in Jerusalem, and he means that he felt in spirit as if the bonds were already upon him. He was so certain that the predictions of the Holy Spirit would be fulfilled, that they seemed a present reality. This testimony of the Spirit had undoubtedly been given to him through prophets whom he had met in every city; for if it had been given to him directly, it would not have been confined to the cities. This is another evidence that the prophetic power of the apostles was not used to foresee their own future, as their healing power was not used to cure their own diseases. When he adds, "I know that ye all among whom I went about preaching the gospel, shall see my face no more," we are not to understand that the Holy Spirit, who had previously revealed some of his future to him through others, had now revealed this to him directly; but rather that he here expresses a strong conviction, based on these predictions, and also on his own fixed purpose, God willing, to spend the remnant of his days in new fields of labor (xix. 21; Rom. xv. 23, 24). When therefore we learn from his first epistle to Timothy (i. 1-3) that he did afterward revisit Ephesus, the fact should occasion no great surprise.

In the closing remark of this part of the address (26, 27), Paul recurs to his fidelity in declaring everything that was profitable to them, and he holds this up as proof that he is free from every man's blood. "I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God." It is implied that if a religious teacher does shrink, through any personal or selfish consideration, from declaring the

whole counsel of God to those whom he teaches, in some sense the blood of those who may be lost through his neglect will be upon him (*cf.* xviii. 6; Ezek. iii. 16-21). This is an unspeakably fearful responsibility, and it should never be lost sight of.

Vv. 28-35. Having spoken of his own past and his own future, the apostle next speaks of the future of the elders and their church; and he places his own example before them for imitation. (28) Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. (29) I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; (30) and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (31) Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. (32) And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. (33) I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. (34) Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. (35) In all things I gave you an example, how that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Here the apostle styles bishops those whom Luke at verse 17 calls elders, which shows that the two titles were applied to the same church officer, and that the bishops of the apostolic church were not diocesan bishops, such as now rule in episcopal bodies, but officers of sin-

gle congregations. While the word bishop is derived from the original term here used (*ἐπίσκοπος*), it does not translate it, because the idea commonly attached to the one is quite different from the meaning of the other. The exact English equivalent of the Greek word is overseer, which is used here in the A. V., and should have been retained by the revisers. In order to impress these brethren more deeply in regard to their responsibility, Paul reminds them that they had been made overseers of the flock in Ephesus by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had made them overseers by giving them the spiritual qualifications which rendered them eligible to the office, and by guiding the church in selecting them, as well as the apostle in appointing them. They are exhorted, first, to take heed to themselves; second, to take heed to "all the flock;" and third, to be shepherds to the church; for this is the meaning of the word rendered *to feed*. The first required that personal godliness without which no man's ministrations in the church have any value; the second required such watchfulness as would allow nothing in the condition of the church to escape their notice; and the third required them to do for the church all that an eastern shepherd does for his flock. They were reminded that this church was purchased by God with his own blood shed in the person of his Son, in order that they might be willing, on account of the price God paid for it, to make all needed sacrifices for its good. They were warned against two dangers which Paul's prophetic vision could foresee: the entering in of men from abroad, whom he styles "grievous wolves" who would not "spare the flock;" and the uprising from among themselves of factionists, who would draw the disciples away from the Lord to follow them.

It would have been useless to tell them of these dangers, if there were no means of guarding against them; so they are told, first, to watch. Watchfulness would enable them to see the first symptoms of coming trouble, and to attack it while it was weak. The shepherd of the church who is not watchful as to the teachers who come from abroad, and as to ambitious men within the congregation, is like the literal shepherd who sleeps until the wolf has entered the fold, or until the flock begins to scatter. Secondly, they are told to remember how he had done in such matters during his stay among them—to remember it that they might imitate it—that is, he had “not ceased to admonish every one night and day with tears.” By such admonitions, on the first appearance of trouble from within or from without, they were to keep in safety the flock committed to their care. In leaving them to this great responsibility, he points them to the only source of courage and strength sufficient for them, by commending them to God and to his word, assuring them that the word was able to build them up, and to give them inheritance among the sanctified. After this benediction, which appears as if intended to close the address, he adds still another admonition, which he enforces by both his own example and some treasured words of the Lord Jesus. It has reference to caring for God’s poor; and it required them, elders though they were, to labor with their own hands that they might be able to “help the weak.” His own example was most graphically and touchingly depicted in the words: “I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands [lifting them up] have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me;” and the sentence quoted from the Lord Jesus, “It

is more blessed to give than to receive," was one of those precious morsels of divine truth, of which many thousands fell from his lips that are not recorded in our brief gospels.

Vv. 36-38. An address so solemn, so tender, so heart-crushing both to speaker and hearers, could be followed with propriety only by prostration before the throne of grace. (36) And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. (37) And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, (38) sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship. Luke records not a word of that prayer. There are some prayers that are so broken with emotion, so interrupted by weeping, that though they leave a holy benediction on the soul, no connected words in them are remembered. The tears of women and of children are sometimes shallow; but when full grown men like these, men of gray hairs, who have been hardened to endurance by years of danger and suffering, are seen to weep like children, and to fall upon one another's necks, the depth of their grief can not be questioned. When the man of the world is thus overcome with grief, his heart often grows harder while it is breaking; but the sorrow of the man of faith is softening and purifying; it binds the afflicted more closely to one another and to God, while it is sanctified by prayer. It is a sorrow which we are willing to feel again, and which we love to remember. The pathway of the church is strewn with scenes like this. When the paths of many pilgrims meet, and for a few days they mingle together their prayers, their songs of praise, their counsels, and their tears, the hour of parting is often a



repetition of this scene on the sea shore at Miletus. Tears and heavings of the breast, which tell of grief and love and hope struggling within, the parting hand, the fond embrace, the blessing of God invoked, and the sad turning away to duties which the soul feels for the moment too weak to attempt—these are all familiar to the toiling servants of God.

If Paul had been parting from these brethren under cheerful anticipations for himself and them, the parting would have been painful; but added to the pain of a final parting was the gloom of their own uncertain future, and of the undefined afflictions which certainly awaited him. He had already, twelve months before this, recounted a catalogue of sufferings more abundant than had fallen to the lot of any other man. He had been often in prison, and often on the verge of death. From the Jews he had five times received forty stripes save one, and three times he had been beaten with rods. Once he was stoned, and left on the ground, supposed to be dead. He had been shipwrecked three times, and had spent a day and a night in the waters of the great deep. In his many journeys he had been exposed to perils by water, by robbers, by his own countrymen, by the heathen; in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, and among false brethren. He had suffered from weariness and painfulness and wakefulness. He had endured hunger and thirst, and he had suffered from cold for want of sufficient clothing. Throughout all he had borne, and was still bearing, that which was little less painful, the care of all the churches. At the same time there was a thorn in his flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, which was so irritating and humiliating that he had three times prayed the Lord to take it from him.



He had been constrained to write to the brethren in Galatia, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear branded on my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."<sup>1</sup> Most men would have said, I have suffered enough: the success of my present enterprise is doubtful at best, and it is certain to bring me once more into prison, and into untold afflictions: I will therefore remain where I am, amid brethren who love me, and let my companions complete this work of benevolence which I have undertaken. But no such thoughts were entertained; and when the Ephesian elders were parting from such a man, well might they weep, and stand mute upon the shore till the sails of his vessel grew dim in the distance, ere they turned in loneliness to the toils and dangers which they now knew they must encounter without the presence or the counsel of their great teacher. We are not permitted to return with them to Ephesus, or to hear their sorrowful conversation by the way; for we must follow the receding vessel, and witness the bonds and afflictions which await its most noted passenger.

12. THE JOURNEY FROM MILETUS TO CÆSAREA,  
XXI. 1-9.

Vv. 1-3. The vessel proceeded for a time on its coasting voyage along the shore of Asia Minor, and then struck out into the open sea. (1) And when it came to pass that we were parted from them, and had set sail, we came with a straight course unto Cos, and the next day unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara; (2) and having found a ship crossing over unto Phœnicia, we went aboard, and set sail. (3) And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, we sailed unto Syria,

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<sup>1</sup> II. Cor. xi. 21-28; xii. 7-10; Gal. vi. 17.

and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden. That they sailed with a "straight course" from Miletus to the island of Cos, implies a favorable wind on the first day. At the city of Rhodes, on the island of the same name, they cast anchor for the night in the harbor, the mouth of which had once been ornamented by a colossus which was one of the seven wonders of the world. It was a brazen statue of Helios, one hundred and five feet in height. It was prostrated by an earthquake, 224 B. C.; but its fragments were still on the spot at the time of Paul's visit. Patara, where they changed vessels, is on the southern coast of Lycia. They made the change because the new vessel was going directly to the port of Tyre, nearly in the exact direction in which they desired to sail; and this implies either that the vessel which they left was going no farther than Patara, or that it was intending still to hug the shore of Asia Minor. On passing in sight of Cyprus, Paul must have been reminded of his early experience in that island, when he and Barnabas had preached there on his first missionary tour (xiii. 4-12). The ship's run from Patara to Tyre was one of several days and nights in the open sea, without casting anchor as they had done every night since leaving Troas. Such a run the ships of that day never made, except when they could hope for the light of the moon or stars at night; and it is a singular circumstance that we are able to determine the phase of the moon at the time of this run. Paul left Philippi seven days after the full moon; and he was five days reaching Troas, where he spent seven days (xx. 6). This makes nineteen days after the full moon. Leaving Troas, they reached Miletus in four days, and from Miletus they sailed to Patara in three days (xx. 13-15; xxi. 1).

These seven days added to the nineteen make twenty-six; and if they spent three days in Miletus, these would make the aggregate twenty-nine since the last full moon, when it would be full moon again. Any traveler who has sailed by moonlight in the summer time on the Mediterranean Sea, when the water was smooth, remembers it as a delightful experience, and it must have helped to soothe the troubled spirits of Paul and his companions.

VER. 4. The time employed by the sailors in putting out freight, and perhaps in taking in a fresh cargo, gave another opportunity for communing with brethren on shore. (4) And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days: and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. The words, "having found the disciples," imply that some search had to be made for them; and this followed from the fact that Paul had not been there before since the church was established, and his companions, being all of foreign birth, were total strangers in the city. But a church was at any rate found in Tyre, verifying the words of our Lord addressed to cities of Galilee: "If the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. xi. 21). We are not to understand that the entreaties of these Tyrian brethren were dictated by the Holy Spirit; for this would have made it Paul's duty to comply with them, and he certainly would have done so; but we are to understand that the Holy Spirit revealed to some of them, as he had done in other cities, what awaited Paul in Jerusalem, while they of their own accord entreated him not to go thither. Their entreaties show that although they had not been evangelized by Paul,

they knew and appreciated his worth to the cause of Christ.

Vv. 5, 6. When the seven days were past, including, as they must, a Lord's day in which the disciples came together to break bread, another scene of painful parting occurred like that at Miletus. (5) And when it came to pass that we had accomplished the days, we departed and went on our journey ; and they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way, till we were out of the city : and kneeling down on the beach, we prayed, (6) and bade each other farewell ; and we went on board the ship, but they returned home again. Here the parting scene was even more tender than that at Miletus ; for the sobs of women and children were mingled with those of the men. All, however, were sanctified by a prayer which must have soothed every heart, and have remained in blessed remembrance with the saints at Tyre.

VER. 7. The rest of the journey by water was completed in a single day ; for the distance is not more than a day's journey by land. (7) And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais ; and we saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. Ptolemais was the name at that time of the modern city of Acre. Its original name, Accho, which it bore while in possession of the Canaanites, had been changed to Ptolemais by one of the Ptolemies of Egypt, in honor of himself ; but, as is the case with many cities of Palestine whose names were changed by its Greek and Roman conquerors, when the conquering power passed away the original name in a slightly different form was restored. That Paul found brethren here as well as in Tyre, is proof of the thoroughness with which this region had

been evangelized. Acre was situated in the territory formerly occupied by the tribe of Asher, but it had become a Greek city in the interval since the captivity.

Vv. 8, 9. The single day spent with the brethren in Ptolemais was sufficient for the admonitions which Paul was leaving with all the churches, and for another painful farewell. (8) And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him. (9) Now this man had four daughters, virgins, who did prophesy. From Ptolemais the road leads around the Bay of Acre, almost in a semicircle, along a smooth beach, to the sea end of Mt. Carmel, whence it leads in a direct line almost due south along the Mediterranean shore to Cæsarea. The distance is about thirty-five miles, and it must have occupied the greater part of two days.

The designation of Philip the evangelist, as "one of the seven," clearly identifies him as the Philip whose early labors are recounted in the eighth chapter. At the close of that account he is said to have preached in all the cities from Azotus to Cæsarea (viii. 39, 40), and now we find him residing in the latter city. His four maiden daughters who had the gift of prophecy had been well trained no doubt by their godly father, and were therefore suitable in character for the distinction conferred upon them by the Holy Spirit. His house must have been a capacious one, as it enabled him to entertain the nine men who made up Paul's company.

### 13. AGABUS PREDICTS THE IMPRISONMENT OF PAUL, 10-14.

Vv. 10-14. During the time spent with the family of Philip, another, and the last, of the prophetic warnings which Paul met with on this journey was given, and it caused a scene similar to those at Miletus and Tyre. (10) And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus. (11) And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So 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 besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. (13) Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. (14) And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done. Although Luke here introduces Agabus as if he had not been mentioned before, he is doubtless the same prophet who predicted in Antioch the famine which led to the first mission of Paul and Barnabas from Antioch to Jerusalem (xi. 27-29). The dramatic manner in which the prediction was delivered, in imitation of some of the Old Testament prophets,<sup>1</sup> made it the more impressive, while the words uttered gave Paul a more distinct conception of the affliction which awaited him. If his traveling companions had hitherto been silent when brethren were entreating him not to go up to Jerusalem, their courage now failed them, and they joined in the

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<sup>1</sup> See Jer. xxvii. 1-11; xxviii. 1-17; Zech. xi. 7-14.

entreaties of the brethren in Cæsarea. The prospect was sufficiently trying while he enjoyed the silent sympathy of his brave fellow-laborers ; but when they threw the weight of their own entreaties on the heavy burden he was already bearing, the effect was crushing to his heart, though the steadfastness of his purpose was not shaken. Whatever he might suffer would be for the name of Jesus, because it was for the church which upheld the honor of that name among men ; and to serve this high purpose was paramount to all personal considerations. Men of less faith in divine providence than were his companions, when they found all their entreaties were in vain, might have reproached him for his self-will ; but these men saw in this very fixedness of purpose the guiding hand of God, and hence their exclamation, "The will of the Lord be done."

#### 14. THE JOURNEY FROM CÆSAREA TO JERUSALEM, 15, 16.

Vv. 15, 16. It seems that the prediction by Agabus was uttered about the close of the time which Paul's company spent in Cæsarea ; and though we may believe that the first part of that stay was rich in religious communion to the saints gathered there from the east and the west, it had a sorrowful termination. (15) And after these days we took up our baggage, and went up to Jerusalem. (16) And there went with us also certain of the disciples from Cæsarea, bringing with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge. The journey had been completed in time for the Pentecost : for to the twenty-nine days which we have already counted between the previous Passover and the arrival at Patara (see under 3), we have to add,



say three days from Patara to Tyre, seven days at Tyre, and four in passing thence to Cæsarea, which make an aggregate of forty-three out of the fifty between the Passover and the Pentecost, leaving six for the stay in Cæsarea. But it is almost certain that in this count some pieces of days are counted as whole days, and that the time in Cæsarea was more than six days. This last stay is styled "many days" by Luke, not because it was many compared with other stops on this journey, but because it was many for men going to Jerusalem on an important mission, and now within two short days' journey of the Holy City. Naturally, they would have been expected to hasten to their journey's end. The fact that Mnason of Cyprus had a house in Jerusalem in which all of Paul's company could lodge, implies that he was a man of means, if not of wealth, who, besides his home in Cyprus, kept one also in Jerusalem. He is styled "an early disciple," because he had become one in the early history of the church.

# COMMENTARY ON ACTS.

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## PART FOURTH.

### *PAUL'S FIVE YEARS' IMPRISONMENT.*

(XXI. 17.—XXVIII. 31.)

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#### SEC. I.—HIS IMPRISONMENT IN JERUSALEM.

(XXI. 17 —XXIII. 30.)

##### 1. HIS RECEPTION BY THE ELDERS, AND THEIR ADVICE, 17-25.

VER. 17. The hour which had been looked forward to for months with prayerful anxiety had now come, and Paul was to know, without further delay, whether the service which he had for Jerusalem would be accepted by the saints (Rom. xv. 31). The historian was able to say: (17) And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. If Luke had said anything at all about the contribution which Paul brought, we should have expected him to say something more definite about its reception than is implied in this remark. But as he saw fit to omit all mention of the enterprise, we are at liberty to infer from the glad reception of the messengers the grateful reception also of their gift. The main purpose of Paul's visit, and of his prayers, was now accomplished. He had finished this part of his

course and of his ministry with joy, and whether the Lord would deliver him from the disobedient in Jerusalem was to him a matter of minor importance.

Ver. 18-26. After the general statement that they were gladly received by the brethren, Luke states more in detail what followed. (18) And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. (19) And when he had saluted them, he rehearsed one by one the things which God wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. (20) And they, when they heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them who have believed; and they are all zealous for the law: (21) and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. (22) What is it therefore? they will certainly hear that thou art come. (23) Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men who have a vow on them: (24) these take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges for them, that they may shave their heads: and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law. (25) But as touching the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication. (26) Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfillment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them.

In verse 18 a distinction is made between James and the elders, which indicates that he did not bear the latter title. In a later age, when the organization of the church had been changed by uninspired men, it became customary, as it still is among episcopalian bodies, to call him bishop of the church in Jerusalem, because he seems here to have had precedence over the elders. But nowhere in the New Testament is the title bishop thus used; and consequently this custom reads into the inspired record most improperly an unauthorized conception of a later age. As we have seen before (Vol. I. 189), James ranked as an apostle of the secondary class, and this fully accounts for his position at the head of the Jerusalem church, when none of the twelve was present. Paul's minute rehearsal, "one by one," of the things which God had wrought by his ministry, most probably went back no farther than the time of the conference described in the fifteenth chapter; for then he had rehearsed to James and others all that had preceded that date (xv. 4). The fact that when they heard it all "they glorified God," shows plainly enough that they were in full accord with Paul in his teaching and practice, and contradicts flatly the modern assumption of rationalists, that there was antagonism between Paul and the leading men of the Jerusalem church.

The remarks addressed to Paul by these brethren, doubtless through James as their spokesman, show very plainly the position held by the Jerusalem church as to the law and circumcision, and also the exact ground of the prejudice entertained against Paul by members who were laboring under false information concerning him. They show, first, that these disciples were "zealous for the law" (20); second, that they continued to circumcise

their children (21); third, that the purifications of the law, though they involved in some instances the offering of sacrifices, were still regarded as proper for Christians (23, 24); and fourth, that they imposed none of these observances on the Gentile brethren, but still adhered to the decision which had been issued in the name of the whole church at the time of the conference (25). The ground of prejudice against Paul on the part of the multitude is stated with equal clearness. It was that he had taught the Jews who were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses; and there were two specifications under this general charge: first, that he taught them not to circumcise their children; second, that he taught them not "to walk after the customs"—an expression for those observances which had acquired the force of law in the Jewish conscience, although they were not specified in the law itself (21). The advice given in the address, having in view the specific purpose of proving to the multitude that there was no truth in these things, and that Paul did walk orderly, keeping the law (24), shows that James and the elders understood that these reports were false; while Paul's agreement to do as they advised shows that they certainly were false. He had not taught the Jews not to circumcise their children; on the contrary, he had with his own hand circumcised Timothy, who was one-half a Jew. He had not taught them to forsake the customs; on the contrary, he had written to the Corinthians more than a year previous, that he had been a Jew to the Jew, that he might win the Jew; and as to the law in general, he had been "as under the law," that he might gain them who considered themselves still bound to keep the law (I. Cor. ix. 20, 21). In order to reconcile this position with Paul's teaching in those

epistles written previous to this time, we have only to observe the distinction which he never lost sight of, between that which we are at liberty to do for the sake of others, and that which we are bound to do in order to obey God. He had taught that the law had been "our tutor to bring us to Christ;" and that since faith is come "we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal. iii. 24-25); that the Jews had been made "dead to the law through the body of Christ" (Rom. vii. 4); and that in Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision (Gal. v. 6; vi. 15; I. Cor. vii. 19). But while teaching thus, he had found no fault with the Jews who continued the observances of the law; he had only tried to convince them that the observance was no longer binding on their consciences. The only difference between him and the most extreme Judaizers, of whom there were doubtless some in the multitude of believers to whom James referred, was that the latter held these observances to be matters of duty, while he held them to be matters of indifference.

The device of uniting himself with the four disciples who had a vow, in order to convince the multitude that they had been misinformed, sets the whole subject of Paul's relation to the law in a still stronger light. These four, as a comparison of what is said of them with the law of Nazirite clearly shows, were under the Nazirite vow, and had become unclean from a dead body before the termination of the time included in the vow (23, 24, 26, *cf.* Num. vi. 2-12). This necessitated their purification, which required seven days for its completion, the shaving of their heads at the altar, the sacrifice of a sin offering and a burnt offering for each of them, and the loss of the time passed under the vow.

Paul's part with them was, first, "to be at charges for them," meaning that he paid part or all the expenses of the victims which they had to offer; and second, to go into the temple and notify the priests when their days of purification would be fulfilled, so that a priest might be prepared to sacrifice their offerings (23, 26). The last they could not do themselves, because the law shut them out of the Jewish court during their uncleanness; but as Paul was unclean not from contact with a dead body, but from some of the many other causes mentioned in the law, he could purify himself in a single day by washing his clothes and bathing his flesh and remaining unclean until evening (Lev. xv. 1-30, *et al.*). That which renders this proceeding a more striking exhibition of Paul's present attitude toward the law is the fact that in it he participated in the offering of sacrifices, which seems to be inconsistent with his repeated declaration of the all-sufficiency of the blood of Christ as an atonement for sin. I think it must be admitted that subsequent to the writing of the epistle to the Ephesians, and more especially that to the Hebrews, he could not consistently have done this; for in those epistles it is clearly taught, that in the death of Christ God has broken down and abolished "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," which he styles "the middle wall of partition" (Eph. ii. 13-15); that the Aaronic priesthood had been abolished (Heb. vii., viii.); and that the sacrifice of Christ had completely superseded that of dumb animals (ix., x.). But in Paul's earlier epistles, though some things had been written which, carried to their logical consequences, involved all this, these points had not yet been clearly revealed to his mind, and much less to the minds of the other disciples; for it pleased God to



make Paul the chief instrument for the revelation of this part of his will. His mind, and those of all the brethren, were as yet in much the same condition on this question that those of the early disciples had been in before the conversion of Cornelius in reference to the salvation of the Gentiles. If Peter, by the revelation made to him in connection with Cornelius, was made to understand better his own words uttered on Pentecost (ii. 39), it should cause no surprise that Paul in his early writings uttered sentiments the full import of which he did not apprehend until later revelations made them plain. That it was so, is but another illustration of the fact that the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all the truth, not at one bound, but step by step. In the wisdom of God the epistle to the Hebrews, the special value of which lies in its clear revelations on the distinction between the sacrifices and priesthood under Moses and those under Christ, was written but a few years previous to the destruction of the Jewish temple, and the compulsory abrogation of all the sacrifices of the law; and that thus any Jewish Christian, whose natural reverence for ancestral and divinely appointed customs may have prevented him from seeing the truth on this subject, might have his eyes opened in spite of himself.

## 2. PAUL IS ASSAILED BY THE MOB, AND ARRESTED BY THE CHIEF CAPTAIN, 27-36.

VV. 27-30. Thus far Paul's reception in Jerusalem was gratifying, and to all human foresight his prospect for escaping personal violence was good; and so it continued for several days. (27) And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude, and

laid hands on him, (28) crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. (29) For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the 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 laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut. The "Jews from Asia" who raised this outcry were a portion of those from whose plots Paul had suffered so much in Ephesus (xx. 19). Their false accusation as to what he had taught everywhere was that, the report of which had excited the prejudices of his own Jewish brethren, as stated by James (21). They had no reason whatever to believe that Paul had brought Trophimus into the temple; but, having recognized Trophimus with him in the city, it occurred to them to bring this accusation as the quickest way to excite the wrath of the multitude. Perhaps the success of Demetrius in rousing the heathen population of their own city by the outcry concerning the temple of Diana, suggested the device (xix. 23-28). The part of the temple which they charged him with defiling was the Jewish court; for Gentiles were admitted within the outer court; and so, when it is said that they dragged him out of the temple, its meaning is that they dragged him out of the Jewish into the Gentile court. Outside the latter court, which now includes thirty-five acres of ground, there was no room in the narrow streets for such a mob to move.

Vv. 31-34. For the second time in his life a Roman officer rescued Paul from the hands of his countrymen,

the first having occurred in Corinth. (31) And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. (32) And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul. (33) Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. (34) And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. The expression, "chief captain of the band," should be chiliarch of the cohort; for such is the exact meaning of the original. The Roman legions were divided into cohorts of a thousand men each, and the commander of the cohort was called chiliarch, leader of a thousand, just as the commander of one hundred was entitled centurion, leader of a hundred.

That he took centurions, in the plural number, each of course accompanied by his command, shows that he came at the head of several hundred men. A smaller number might have been overpowered by the furious mob. The expression, "ran down upon them," is the language of an eye-witness; for the tower of Antonia, the fortress in which the Roman garrison was quartered, stood at the northwestern angle of the temple court; its foundations were laid on solid rock which rises about twenty feet above the level of the court; and a flight of stone steps descended from its door to the floor of the court which is here the natural rock.<sup>1</sup> The chiliarch saw at a glance that the man whom they were beating

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<sup>1</sup> For a full description, see *Lands of the Bible*, 177.

was in some way the occasion of the disturbance; and jumping to the conclusion that he was a criminal on whom the Jews were inflicting summary vengeance, he had him chained for safe keeping, and demanded who he was, and what he had done, so that he might know how to deal with him. But the majority of the mob did not know who he was or what he had done, and the confused answers in their outcries made it plain to the chiliarch that he must wait and seek the information in some other way; hence the order to take him into the castle.

Vv. 35, 36. The soldiers very promptly and vigorously obeyed the order of their commander. (35) And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; (36) for the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, Away with him. Paul was so stunned by the beating, or so reluctant to running from the face of his foes, that he did not move fast enough to suit the soldiers, so two of them lifted him in their arms, or threw him across their shoulders, and thus hurried him along. As the pursuers could not get hold of him, they affected to acquiesce in what was being done, by the outcry, "Away with him."

### 3. PAUL OBTAINS PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE MOB, 37-40.

Vv. 37-40. Though Paul was suffering from many a bruise, which, together with mental distress, would have prevented any other man from wishing to make a speech, when he saw those prison doors about to shut him out from his enraged countrymen, and leave them a prey to passion aroused by falsehood, he conceived the thought of at once attempting to appease them. (37) And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith

unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee ? And he said, Dost thou know Greek ? (38) Art thou not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins ? (39) But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city : and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people. (40) And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people ; and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, saying,

This brief conversation shows how utterly the chiliarch, in the excitement of the moment, had misconceived his prisoner. The Egyptian for whom he mistook him is doubtless the one mentioned by Josephus, but whom the latter represents as leading thirty thousand men instead of four thousand.<sup>1</sup> He was the only man the chiliarch could think of at the moment against whom the Jews could feel such violent hatred. When he learned that Paul was a Jew, and a citizen of such a city as Tarsus, his wonder as to the cause of the trouble was greatly increased, and he at once concluded that by allowing him to speak as requested he could learn from the speech the real charges laid against him ; for he expected of course that Paul would speak of them explicitly. When permission was given, the soldiers placed him on his feet, and they appear to have released at least one of his arms

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<sup>1</sup> He claimed to be a prophet, and promised his dupes that they should take Jerusalem from the Romans, as a proof of which he declared that when he reached the top of the Mount of Olives he would cause the walls of the city to fall by his miraculous power. Josephus is somewhat inconsistent with himself in regard to the numbers that were captured and slain. (Ant. xx. 8, 6 ; Wars, ii. 13, 5).

from the chains ; for he “ beckoned with his hand to the people,” using his habitual gesture,<sup>1</sup> to secure silence. It was the same that had been used in vain by Alexander in the mob at Ephesus (xix. 23). The silence which followed is probably called “ great ” because it was difficult to obtain any silence at all in such a multitude. It was still greater when they heard him speaking in the native tongue (xxii. 2).

#### 4. PAUL'S ADDRESS TO THE MOB, XXII. 1-21.

##### I. AN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF BEFORE HIS CONVERSION, 1-5.

Vv. 1-5. Seeing that the chiliarch had so misconceived his personality, and knowing from the outcries of the people in answer to the chiliarch's inquiry, that many of them were equally ignorant of him, Paul begins his speech with an account of himself. (1) Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defense which I now make unto you.

(2) And when they heard that he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet : and he saith,

(3) I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day : (4) and I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. (5) As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders : from whom also I received letters unto the breth-

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the instance above, we see it noted by Luke in the opening of the address in Antioch of Pisidia, and in the one before king Agrippa (xiii. 16 ; xxvi. 1).



ren, and journeyed to Damascus, to bring them also who were there unto Jerusalem in bonds for to be punished. Some in the audience, Paul's old companions in persecution, and his subsequent enemies, knew all the facts here recited, but they were unknown to the majority of the crowd; and his evident purpose in reciting them was, first, to disabuse the minds of any who may have made similar mistakes to that of the chiliarch, and secondly, to awaken some sympathy toward himself as having once stood in the same attitude with themselves toward the Christian Way.

## II. AN ACCOUNT OF HIS CONVERSION, 6-16.

Vv. 6-16. The preceding division of the speech, which is its introduction, was calculated not only to awaken sympathy toward the speaker, but while it presented him as once a persecutor like his hearers, it awakened at the same moment a desire to know what could have turned him from that position to the one he now occupied; and this desire he next proceeds to gratify. (6) And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew 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 say 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 beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. (10) And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. (11) And when I could not see for the



glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. (12) And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there, (13) came unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I looked up on him. (14) And he said, the God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. (15) For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. (16) And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name. This account furnishes several interesting details omitted by Luke in his brief narrative (ix. 3-8).<sup>1</sup> It informs us that the light from heaven flashed around him "about noon;" that his companions, though they heard the voice, did not hear it, that is, so as to catch the words that were spoken; and that the command to go into Damascus, where he should be told what to do, was given in answer to his inquiry, "What shall I do,

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<sup>1</sup> The statement of Luke that they heard the voice (ix. 7), and this of Paul that they heard it not, have long been treated by unfriendly critics as contradictory, notwithstanding the well known fact that it is common among all classes of men to say, I did not hear, when they mean that they did not hear the words spoken, though they did hear the sound of the speaker's voice. Paul himself furnishes another instance of the usage when, writing about the employment of unknown tongues in the congregation, he says: "For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man heareth" (I. Cor. xiv. 2). Here our translators have obscured the usage by rendering the word "understand," instead of "hear." If they had taken the same liberty in the passage before us, the question of a contradiction would never have been raised, at least by an English reader; and the idea of Paul would have been expressed, but not in his way of expressing it.

Lord? ” On the other hand, Paul does not state the duration of his blindness; he says nothing of the fasting and praying; and instead of telling what the Lord said to Ananias, he speaks of the good reputation which the latter enjoyed among the Jews of Damascus. He told this in order to reflect respectability in the minds of his hearers on the proceedings connected with his baptism. He also omits the words of Ananias quoted by Luke, and mentions others. The whole speech of Ananias is to be obtained by putting together these two pieces of it. The miracle wrought upon him by Ananias was mentioned, not merely to show how his eyesight was restored, but more especially to show that God’s approval attended his baptism. The words, “why tarriest thou?” were suggested by the unusual delay of baptism after believing, a delay of which Ananias did not then know the cause. In the expression, “wash away thy sins,” there is undoubtedly a reference to the forgiveness of sins which takes place in baptism, and the metaphor in the term wash away (*ἀπόλυσαι*) was suggested by the washing of the body which takes place in baptism. He was to wash his sins away, by undergoing that washing in which God forgives them. He was to do this, “calling on his name,” because it is through the name of Jesus that we now receive every blessing, and especially the forgiveness of sins.

The evident purpose of this division of the speech was to win the Jews to a favorable consideration of his cause, by showing them that he had been turned from the position of a persecutor like themselves, to that of a believer and advocate of the claims of Jesus, by miraculous evidence from heaven which could not be misconstrued, and which, according to all the maxims of the

fathers, made it his indispensable duty to do as he had done ; and at the same time he accomplished the additional purpose of furnishing his hearers evidence of the resurrection and glorification of Jesus, which ought to convince them as it had him. He was aiming to defend himself by winning his accusers over to his own position.

### III. HIS MISSION TO THE GENTILES, 17-21.

Vv. 17-21. Paul's next step was to show that the divine authority which had changed him from a persecutor into an advocate of the Way had determined for him the peculiar field of labor which distinguished him from the other apostles. (17) And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, (18) and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem : because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. (19) And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee : (20) and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him. (21) And he said unto me, Depart : for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles. Paul here reveals to us the interesting fact, omitted by Luke in the previous narrative, that when the brethren sent him away from Jerusalem to Tarsus (ix. 28-30), he did not consent to go until commanded by the Lord ; and that even when thus commanded he mildly remonstrated with the Lord for so commanding him. His plea for wishing to remain was based on the belief that as the Jews knew of his connection with the death of Stephen, and the dispersion of the church, he was

now the very man to bring them over to the truth. He was forgetting the intense malice always felt by partisans toward a man whom they can stigmatise as a deserter, or as a traitor to their cause. That he had urged this plea when the Jews were just then laying plots to kill him, is at once proof of his courage, and of his willingness to die, if need be, on the very spot where he had witnessed the death of Stephen.

#### 5. THE IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF THE SPEECH, 22-29.

Vv. 22-24. The unbelieving Jews had learned by this time to endure the preaching of Christ among the circumcised, but they still had the greatest abhorrence for the admission of the uncircumcised into religious fellowship with Jews; consequently it was Paul's position as the apostle to the Gentiles which excited their especial animosity toward him. This mob had now listened in perfect silence to his vindication of his position as a Christian, and had heard for the first time in their lives Paul's peculiar testimony to the resurrection and glorification of Jesus; and if he had concluded his remarks at that point, they might have gone away with favorable impressions; but when he claimed that his going to the Gentiles, which they looked upon as a shameful procedure, was due to an express command from heaven overriding his own preferences, and was about, as they supposed, to justify all the charges which they had heard against him, they could listen no longer. (22) And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. (23) And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air, (24) the chief captain commanded him

to be brought into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so shouted against him. They did not dare to throw stones at him, lest they should strike the soldiers; so they vented their rage like maddened brutes by throwing dust into the air. What the rest of his speech would have been but for this interruption, we can judge only by what had already been said. It certainly would have been a still farther attempt to convince his hearers of the divine authority under which he had ever acted; for he sought no vindication for himself that did not involve the vindication of the cause to which he had committed his life. Whether Lysias understood the Hebrew tongue in which Paul spoke, or had his words repeated by an interpreter, he was certainly disappointed in his hope of learning from the speech what the charges were which the Jews held against Paul, so he immediately determined on the more direct method of extorting the desired information from Paul himself. It was quite a common practice among Roman provincial rulers to scourge into a confession of their crimes men whom they held as criminals, and against whom suitable evidence was not at hand.

Vv. 25-29. When Paul was led within the castle, the executioner, under the direction of a centurion, made immediate preparation for the cruel task. (25) And when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? (26) And when the centurion heard it, he went to the chief captain, and told him, saying, What art thou about to do? for this man is a Roman. (27) And the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a

Roman? (28) And he said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am a Roman born. (29) They then who were about to examine him straightway departed from him: and the chief captain also was afraid, when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. Previous to applying the scourge the victim was bent forward upon a reclining post, and bound to it by leather thongs. It was this binding which alarmed the chiliarch, and not the previous binding with chains. The latter was legal, and Paul continued to be thus bound (30; xxvi. 29.) Paul gave no evidence but his own word that he was a citizen; but the lofty manner in which he had declared himself a citizen by birth, while Lysias had to acknowledge that he had obtained the same distinction by bribery,<sup>1</sup> together with the impressive deportment of Paul before the mob, left no room to doubt the truth of his claim; so it was respected, and the executioners did not wait to be told to depart from him. Thus a second time Paul saved himself from ignominy, and this time from incalculable suffering, by the quiet proclamation of his rights as a Roman citizen. We can but admire the majesty of the law, which, in a remote province, and within the walls of a prison, could thus

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<sup>1</sup> Citizenship was lawfully obtained in three different ways. It was conferred by the senate for meritorious conduct; it was inherited from a father who was a citizen; and it was the birthright of one who was born in a free city; that is, a city which, for some especial service to the empire, was rewarded by granting citizenship to all born within its limits. It was unlawfully obtained by the use of money in the absence of meritorious conduct. In the reign of Claudius, this distinction had become such an article of merchandise that Messalina, the wife of the emperor, is said to have openly sold it, at first for a large sum, and at last for a trifle.



dash to the ground the uplifted instruments of torture under the simple declaration, "I am a Roman citizen."

6. PAUL IS BROUGHT BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN,  
XXII. 30—XXIII. 10.

VER. 30. The chiliarch was disposed to do his duty by the prisoner thrown fortuitously into his hands, but he was puzzled to know what his duty was. He had first inquired of the mob; then he had listened to a speech from Paul; then he had gone as far as he dared toward the trial by scourging; yet he knew nothing more about the charges than he did at first. He determined to make one more effort. (30) But on the morrow, desiring to know the certainty, wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him, and commanded the chief priests and all the council to come together, and brought Paul down, and set him before them. This meeting was held in the Gentile court, if anywhere about the temple; for Lysias and his soldiers would not have been admitted within the Jewish court; and to this agree the words "he brought Paul down," seeing that the tower of Antonia, in which the soldiers were quartered, stood at a higher elevation than this court (see under xxi. 31-34).

Vv. 1, 2. No sooner had the prisoner and his accusers met face to face than the chiliarch must have suspected another disappointment; for, instead of preferring formal charges against Paul, they required him to speak first. (1) And Paul, looking steadfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day. (2) And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. No doubt the blow was as prompt as the word.



Ananias affected to regard it as an insult to the council for a man who was arraigned before them as a criminal of the deepest dye to proudly declare that he had lived in all good conscience before God. To smite him in the mouth for it, was much easier than to disprove it. To us Paul's remark is most credible, and the only question is, Did he intend it to cover the period before his conversion, when he was persecuting the church, or only the period within which the Jews condemned him? It certainly covered the latter; and a later statement, that he verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus (xxvi. 9), makes it probable that he had the former also in mind.

Vv. 3-5. The interruption, so unexpected and so exasperating, called forth from Paul a burst of indignation similar to that with which he had long ago denounced Bar-jesus in the presence of Sergius Paulus (xiii. 10). (3) Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? (4) And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? (5) And Paul said, I knew not, brethren, that he was high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people. This remark was not an outburst of improper passion. It was rather an angry expression of a righteous judgment as to how God would deal with a man so unjust and hypocritical. It was an incident like that in the experience of our Lord, when he looked around "with anger" on a similar set of men, and then immediately did the act which they held to be a sin (Mark iii. 5). It was, in Paul's own phraseology, to "be angry, and sin not" (Eph. iv. 26). When told, however, that it was the high

priest whom he had thus denounced, Paul at once admitted, not that the rebuke was unjust, but that it would have been improper to so address this dignitary, had he known who he was. And here is a proper distinction. A rebuke which is perfectly just and right in itself may be improper on account of the official relations of the person addressed. Had Paul known that Ananias was the high priest, and had he been left to himself without the guidance of the Holy Spirit promised for such occasions (Matt. x. 17-20), he would have withheld the rebuke; and the world would have been the loser; for rebukes like this help to strengthen the moral sense of men. He knew not Ananias personally, for he was not the Ananias of the Gospels, but a new usurper of the high priesthood; and it is certain that on this occasion he wore no robe or badge to indicate his office, or Paul could not have failed to know his position. The fact that he presided on this occasion did not show it, because the high priest was not always present at meetings of the sanhedrim, and especially at meetings called unexpectedly, as this one was. This Ananias was one of the worst men who ever wore the robes of a high priest. His career of crime and extortion, fully set forth in various chapters of Josephus, finally ended in assassination.

Vv. 6-10. The presence in which Paul stood was not unfamiliar to him. He doubtless remembered the faces of many in the council, and he was intimately acquainted with the party feuds which often distracted their deliberations. He knew that the chief instigators of the persecution were the Sadducees, as they had been at the beginning; and he determined to enlist, if possible, the Pharisees in his own behalf; so we read: (6) But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sad-

ducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question. (7) And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the assembly was divided. (8) For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. (9) And there arose a great clamor: and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' part stood up, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel? (10) And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle. Paul's declaration that he was a Pharisee has been treated by some writers as deceptive; and he has been censured for stirring up such a row among his enemies. The charge is unfounded;<sup>1</sup> for while it is true that he was not in every particular a Pharisee, he was one in the sense attached to his remark by his hearers. All present knew that he was a Christian, and consequently they knew that he claimed to be a Pharisee only in the sense of agreeing with that party in their

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<sup>1</sup> Farrar indulges in this censure. He says: "His belief in the risen Messiah was *not* the point on which he was mainly being called in question." "Did not then the words of the apostle suggest a false issue?" "Had he a right to inflame an existing animosity? And could he worthily say, I am a Pharisee?" "Was there not the least little touch of a *suggestio falsi* in what he said?" These insinuations are sufficiently answered above; and it is worthy of note that Farrar does not repeat them in connection with the same declarations of Paul made before king Agrippa (xxvi. 6-8), and before the unbelieving Jews in Rome (xxviii. 20).

points of antagonism with the Sadducees. His statement, that it was touching the hope of the resurrection that he was called in question, must be understood with the same qualification. All knew that this was not the immediate cause of his arrest; but all knew equally well that this was the ultimate ground of the hatred of him by the Sadducees. Both remarks were strictly true in the sense attached to them, and this sense was distinctly perceived by both parties. As to the row which followed, there is no evidence that Paul aimed at or expected such violence. He aimed at enlisting the sympathy of the Pharisees, in the hope of securing a more just consideration of his own cause; and he doubtless desired a more peaceable procedure; but for the violence which followed he was not responsible. And even if he had anticipated all that followed, it would seem too great a refinement of moral distinctions to blame him: as well blame a man for putting two bulldogs at each other's ears to keep them from devouring him.

The more surprising circumstance in the proceedings is that some of the Pharisees (not all) were so quickly turned in Paul's favor. But the whole council were in an awkward predicament. They were called together by the chiliarch, to show cause why they and their followers had clamored so for the death of Paul, and they knew themselves utterly unable to render a reason that would appear even plausible to the mind of this heathen officer. It was for this cause that, instead of preferring charges against Paul at the beginning of the proceedings, they had required him to speak first. All must have felt anxious for some turn in the affair which would relieve them of their embarrassment; and when Paul boldly proclaimed that he was a Pharisee, the shrewder men of that

party saw at once that this was their chance to slip out and leave the Sadducees in the mire. The latter were exasperated by the trick, and thus the row came on. The trick was the more exasperating, because the speaker for the Pharisees pointed his arrow with the intimation that Paul may have heard the voice of an angel or a spirit, the very existence of whom the Sadducees denied. It is not necessary to suppose that the Pharisees thought it probable that an angel or a spirit had spoken to Paul; for if they were known as not believing any such thing, this only poisoned with irony the shaft which they hurled at the Sadducees.

In Luke's remark, that while the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit, the Pharisees confess both, we should naturally expect him to say all three, instead of both; but he doubtless included in the thought of angels and spirits the single idea of beings without fleshly bodies.

Lysias was once more disappointed in his efforts to learn the truth about Paul's case; but he certainly learned that his enemies had no charge against him which they were willing to formulate.

## 7. PAUL IS ENCOURAGED BY A VISION, 11.

VER. 11. If we had an epistle from Paul's pen written at this time, it would probably speak of great distress and despondency; for such a state of mind is clearly implied in the incident next mentioned. (11) And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. Such words of cheer from the Lord himself are not spoken except when they are greatly needed; and this

makes it certain that Paul was sorely troubled in spirit that night. Well he might be. The bonds and affliction which had been predicted all along his journey from Corinth to Jerusalem had now befallen him, and it was not apparent whether the earnest prayers which he and others in his behalf had offered to God, that he might be delivered from those who were disobedient in Jerusalem, were to be granted. Outside the prison he could hope for nothing but death, and inside there was no field of usefulness. In whatever direction he could look, prison walls or a bloody death confronted him, and hedged his way. At this opportune moment he was cheered by the first ray of light in regard to his future; and though it was impossible for him to conjecture as yet how it was to be brought about, he had the assurance that in the Lord's own way and time he should yet escape the present danger, and preach the gospel in Rome.

#### 8. A CONSPIRACY FORMED AND EXPOSED, 12-22.

VV. 12-16. Notwithstanding the gleam of hope granted to Paul in the night, his prospects grew darker than ever the next morning. (12) And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. (13) And they were more than forty who made this conspiracy. (14) And they came to the chief priests and the elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. (15) Now therefore do ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more exactly: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to slay him. (16) But Paul's sister's son heard of their



lying in wait, and he came and entered into the castle, and told Paul. (17) And Paul called unto him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath something to tell him. (18) So he took him and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and asked me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say to thee. (19) And the chief captain took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, What is that thou hast to tell me? (20) And he said, The Jews have agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow unto the council, as though thou wouldst inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him. (21) Do not thou therefore yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, who have bound themselves under a curse, neither to eat nor drink till they have slain him: and now are they ready, looking for the promise from thee. (22) So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him, Tell no man that thou hast signified these things to me. It is difficult to imagine the malignity which animated these conspirators, both the prime movers in it, and the priests and elders who gave it their sanction. The latter classes were of course Sadducees who had been enraged by the proceedings of the previous day, whilst the former were desperate roughs of the city. Their scheme, if left unexposed, would almost certainly have been successful; for Lysias, in his perplexity, would have gladly complied with their request; and as the prisoner was led along the narrow street, or along the pavement of the great court, it would have been easy for forty desperate men, having chosen their position in advance, to have rushed in among the unsuspecting soldiers, and slain Paul before a blow could have



been struck in his defense. But a conspiracy so desperate, known to so many persons, and aimed against a man concerning whom the whole community was excited to a white heat, could not well be kept secret. It leaked into the ears of some of Paul's friends, and this nephew, who for some unknown cause was in the city, was charged with the hazardous task of revealing it to Paul and to the chiliarch. The young man trembled no doubt when he was ushered into the presence of the Roman officer; but Lysias, with kindly consideration, reassured him by taking his hand and leading him aside, that he might deliver his message in secret. Then, fearing for the young man's life if his act should become known, and desiring to keep hid from the conspirators the cause of the move on which he at once determined, he dismissed him with a charge of the strictest secrecy.

#### 9. PAUL IS REMOVED TO CÆSAREA, 23-30.

Vv. 23-30. On receiving this information, Lysias had at least three lines of policy between which to choose. Had he been disposed to gratify the Jews, he might have permitted them to carry out their plot without probability of being known to his superiors as accessory to the murder. Had he preferred to defy their power and display his own, he might have sent Paul down under a guard so strong and so instructed that they would have slain the conspirators. Or if he desired to protect Paul, and to avoid offense to the Jews and bloodshed, he might send him away that night before their request had been laid before him. It reflects credit on his military skill, and on his character as a man, that he chose the course which both justice and prudence dictated. (23) And he called unto him two of the centurions, and said, Make

ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Cæsarea, and horsemen three score and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night: (24) and he bade them provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon and bring him safe unto Felix the governor. (25) And he wrote a letter after this form:

(26) Claudius Lysias, unto the most excellent governor Felix, greeting. (27) This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be slain by them, when I came upon them with the soldiers, and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. (28) And desiring to know the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him down unto their council: (29) whom I found to be accused about questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. (30) And when it was shown to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to thee forthwith, charging his accusers also to speak against him before thee. But for one slight misrepresentation in this letter, there would be nothing in the whole procedure of Lysias discreditable to him. He had acted like a just and prudent man; but in reporting to his superior he so stated the facts as to give himself credit for rescuing Paul because he was a Roman citizen; whereas he had only learned this fact when he was about to scourge him. The statement that he had commanded Paul's accusers to appear before Felix, though not absolutely true at the moment it was written, he intended to make true before the letter could be read; consequently it was not intended to deceive. The letter also shows that, although he did not understand the nature of the charge against Paul, he had learned enough to know that he was not accused of anything criminal. Under this conviction, he would soon

have released him but for the plot of the Jews, and so, as they must have learned afterward, the conspiracy overreached itself, and really caused their intended victim to slip out of their hands. The sound judgment and prudence of Lysias was still farther shown by the fact of his sending so strong a body of troops with Paul as to prevent bloodshed even had his movement been discovered by the Jews, because the guard was too formidable to be attacked by an unarmed mob.

#### 10. PAUL IS DELIVERED TO FELIX, 31-35.

Vv. 31-35. The centurion in command executed his commission with judgment and fidelity. (31) So the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. (32) But on the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: (33) and they, when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the letter to the governor, presented Paul also before him. (34) And when he had read it, he asked of what province he was; and when he understood that he was of Cilicia, (35) I will hear thy cause, said he, when thine accusers also are come: and he commanded him to be kept in Herod's palace. Antipatris was reached after descending from the mountains of Ephraim into the plain of Sharon, where its ruins have been identified at the source of the river Aujeh.<sup>1</sup> It was

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<sup>1</sup> The place is called *Ras el Ain* (*Promontory of the Spring*), from the large body of water which rises out of the ground under its northern and western sides and forms the river Aujeh. The top of the hill is crowned with the ruins of a large castle built by the crusaders, and the place is known to represent Antipatris, because the latter is represented by Josephus to be in the plain, close to the hills, with a river encompassing it (*Antiq* xvi. 5. 2), and this is the only ruin answering to the description. It is

about half way between Jerusalem and Caesarea, and about thirty miles from either place. As the rapid march through the night had brought the little army beyond all possible danger of attack from Jerusalem, the seventy horsemen were a sufficient guard the rest of the way. To Paul, unaccustomed to riding on horseback, this long and rapid ride through a whole night was doubtless very fatiguing. It is not quite certain for what reason Felix inquired as to Paul's province. It may have been from natural curiosity; or it may have been with the purpose of sending him to the governor of his province, if it should be one near by; but when he learned that it was Cilicia, accessible only by sea, he did not hesitate to keep him in his own hands. It seems that Herod's palace, more properly *praetorium*, in which Paul was now kept under guard, had a guard-room in it for the confinement of such prisoners.

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## SEC. II. PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT IN CAESAREA.

(XXIV. 1—XXVI. 32.)

### 1. HE IS ACCUSED BEFORE FELIX, 1-9.

VER. 1. When the Jews of Jerusalem were commanded by Lysias to present their accusations against Paul before Felix, though they had been bitterly disappointed by the miscarriage of their plot, they still hoped

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11½ miles from Lydda, and 30½ from Caesarea. "From it," says Conder (*Tent-Work in Palestine*), "the stream flows rapidly away westward, burrowing between deep banks, and rolling to the sea, a yellow, turbid, sandy volume of water, unfordable in winter, and never dry, even in summer."

to secure his death, and they followed up the prosecution without delay. (1) And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with certain elders, and with an orator, one Tertullus; and they informed the governor against Paul. It is most natural, in counting these five days, to suppose that they extended from the next day after Paul left Jerusalem, which was the day on which they received notice from Lysias, till their arrival in Caesarea. Tertullus was a Roman, as his name indicates, and they brought him, as a paid attorney, because they now had to appear in a regular Roman court, and they must have a man familiar with the proceedings in such a court to represent them.

Vv. 2-9. The formal proceedings were opened, very much as in our modern courts, by a speech from the prosecuting attorney, presenting the accusation; and this was followed by the testimony of the witnesses for the plaintiff. (2) And when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying,

Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and that by thy providence evils are corrected for this nation, (3) we accept it in all ways, and in all places, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. (4) But that I be not further tedious unto thee, I intreat thee to hear us of thy clemency a few words. (5) For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrection among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: (6) who moreover assayed to profane the temple; on whom also we laid hold: (8) from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. (9) And the Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that these things were so. While Felix was guilty of

much corruption in his administration of affairs, the complimentary words with which Tertullus opened his speech were not undeserved; for he had restored tranquility to the country when it was disturbed, first, by bands of robbers; second, by organized assassins; and lastly, by that Egyptian for whom Lysias at first mistook Paul (xxi. 38).

The accusation against Paul was the general one of being a "pestilent fellow," and the specifications under this charge were three; first, that he had excited the Jews in many places to insurrections; second, that he was a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes; and third, that he had attempted to profane the temple. Any one of these specifications, sustained, would sustain the charge; and Tertullus closed by affirming that Felix could find proof of them all by examining Paul himself—a hint of the examination by scourging, which Paul had escaped, Tertullus knew not how, at the hands of Lysias. The witnesses supported the charges by affirming that these things were so.

## 2. PAUL'S DEFENSE, 10-21.

Vv. 10-21. Paul was now required, without previous notification of the charges, and without a moment for premeditation, to make his defense against an accusation which, if sustained in the judgment of the court, would have cost him his life. Without a single witness to support his representations, he could rely only upon the self-evident truthfulness of what he might say; but he had the support of the words of Jesus: "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate beforehand how to answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to withstand or

gainsay" (Luke xxi. 15). On this assurance he could and did rely. (10) And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered,

Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation,<sup>1</sup> I do cheerfully make my defense: (11) seeing that thou canst take knowledge, that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem: (12) and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man, or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city. (13) Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me. (14) But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets: (15) having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust. (16) Herein do I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense toward God and men alway. (17) Now after many years<sup>2</sup> I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings: (18) amidst which they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but there were certain Jews from Asia (19) who ought to have been here before thee, and to make accusation, if they had aught against me. (20) Or else let these men themselves say what wrong-doing they found, when I stood before the council,

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<sup>1</sup> He was now in the seventh year of his procuratorship of Judea. This was "many years," in comparison with those of his predecessors in the same office.

<sup>2</sup> If we omit, as we have done, the visit supposed by many to be referred to in xviii. 22, he had not been in the city since the visit of chapter xv., which was eight years previous. See *Chronology, Intr.* xxvii, xxix.



(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 before you this day.

This speech contains a direct reply to every specification made by Tertullus. The statement that it was only twelve days since he went up to Jerusalem, answers the charge of stirring up sedition, at least in that city; for as he had been away from there five days, and was in prison there one, this left only six, which were insufficient for such movements. Moreover, he had not engaged in disputation with any one, in the temple, in the synagogues, or in any part of the city. As to being a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes, without alluding to the title ringleader he admits that he belongs to the sect so-called, yet he believes all the law and the prophets, hopes for a resurrection of the dead, and leads a conscientious life. Finally, the statement that, when found in the temple by certain Jews from Asia, he was purified as the law required, and that he was engaged about almsgiving and the offerings of the temple, refuted the charge of profaning the temple (xxi. 28), now changed into *attempting* to profane it (6). In conclusion, he notes the significant fact, that those who first seized him, and who were the only personal witnesses of what he did in the temple, were not present to testify; and then he calls upon Ananias and the elders, who witnessed only what was done in the Sanhedrin, to testify as to any wrong doing there, unless it was that remark in reference to being a Pharisee, which had set Ananias and his friends in a fierce quarrel with the rest of the elders. He makes this last reference, not because he was conscious of wrong in the matter, but in order to taunt his

Sadducee accusers, and to show Felix that they were moved against him by party jealousy.

### 3. THE CASE CONTINUED, 22, 23.

VV. 22, 23. As Paul's defense consisted in nothing but his own statements, it was doubtless a surprise to both him and his accusers, that Felix virtually decided in his favor. (22) But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter. (23) And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him. This decision is ascribed to his having more accurate knowledge of the Way, by which we are to understand, not that he had just acquired such knowledge from Paul's speech, for it contained very little information on this point, but that Felix had already more exact knowledge than to be deceived by the representations of the Sadducees. Having been in Judea now for six years more, he had been compelled, whether willing or not, to become acquainted with the religious parties into which his subjects were divided, and he well knew the jealousies which existed among them. The reason which he gave for postponing a decision in the case was a mere subterfuge, as must have been apparent to the Sadducees. Paul's confinement was now the least irksome that was consistent with safe keeping.

### 4. PAUL PREACHES TO FELIX AND DRUSILLA, 24-27.

VER. 24. The freedom which Paul enjoyed of receiving his friends not only left open to him the frater-

nal visits of Philip and other brethren who lived in Cæsarea, but also gave him opportunity to preach the gospel to any unbelievers who might be induced to hear him. It may have been his activity in this work that led to the incident next related. (24) But after certain days Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. The word "came" indicates either that he had been absent from the city and returned to it, or that he came from his usual place of residence to an apartment in Herod's prætorium where Paul was kept. Drusilla, as we learn from Josephus, was a daughter of Herod Agrippa, who murdered the apostle James, and miserably perished soon afterward (xii. 1, 2; 20-23). She was but six years old when her father perished, and as that was in the year 44, and her present appearance in our narrative was in 58, she was now only twenty. She had been given in marriage at an early age to Aziz, king of Emesa; but Felix, having seen her and become enamored of her beauty, had, through the machinations of a sorcerer named Simon, induced her to abandon her husband and come to him, so she was now living in open adultery with Felix.<sup>1</sup> Concerning Felix it is asserted by Tacitus, one of the most judicious and fair-minded of Roman historians, that "with every kind of cruelty and lust, he exercised the authority of a king with the temper of a slave."<sup>2</sup> He and his brother Pallas had actually been slaves in the household of Agrippina, the mother of the emperor Claudius, and by the latter he had been sent from the position of a slave to that of ruler over a province.

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, xx. 7. 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Antonius Felix, per omnem sævitiam et libidinem, jus regium servili ingenio exercuit" (History, v. 9).

VER. 25. Under the summons to speak concerning the faith in Christ, Paul was at liberty to choose for himself the special topic of discourse, and he did so with direct reference to the spiritual wants of his hearers. (25) And as he reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way, for this time ; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me. Nothing could be more terrifying than to speak of righteousness to a man of such iniquity ; of temperance in all things to a man of such unbridled lust ; or to drive home what was said on these topics by depicting the judgment to come. I here adopt the burning words of Farrar : “ As he glanced back over the stained and guilty past, he was afraid. He had been a slave in the vilest of all positions, at the vilest of all epochs, in the vilest of all cities. He had crept with his brother Pallas into the position of a courtier at the most morally degraded of all courts. He had been an officer of those auxiliaries who were the worst of all troops. What secrets of lust and blood lay hidden in his earlier life we do not know ; but ample and indisputable testimony, Jewish and Pagan, sacred and secular, reveals to us what he had been—how greedy, how savage, how treacherous, how unjust, how steeped in the blood of private murder and public massacre—during the eight years which he had now spent in the government, first of Samaria, then of Palestine. There were footsteps behind him ; he began to feel as though ‘the earth were made of glass’ ” (Life of Paul, 550). The terror which seized him was the beginning necessary to a change of life ; but lust and ambition smothered the kindling fires of conscience, and he made the common excuse of alarmed but impenitent sinners to get rid of

his too faithful monitor. The "convenient season" to which he deferred the matter, never came, and it never could come: for how could it ever be convenient for a man to put away a beautiful woman with whom he was living in sin, and to radically revolutionize the whole course of his previous life? This change must be made at a sacrifice of much convenience and much pride by every wicked man who makes it. How Drusilla was affected we are not told; but it is scarcely possible that she was more composed than the hardened Felix.

Vv. 26, 27. Felix maintained the character in which Tacitus paints him to the very last. (26) He hoped, withal, that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. (27) But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds. From having incidentally learned, through Paul's speech at his trial, that he had been up to Jerusalem to bear alms from distant churches, and knowing, besides, the general liberality of the disciples toward one another in distress, he had not a doubt that Paul could raise a large sum to secure his release from imprisonment, and that it would be forthcoming on the merest hint that it would be accepted. Undoubtedly, had Paul thought it right to obtain release in this way, the money would have been in hand soon; for what would not his brethren have given to relieve him from the ignominy of imprisonment, and to set him free in apostolic usefulness. But bribe-giving is next in turpitude to bribe-taking, and Paul could be no party to a crime.

The removal of Felix was brought about by accusations of misgovernment preferred against him by the

Jews. He was called to Rome by Nero to answer for his crimes, and, barely escaping execution, he was banished into Gaul, where he died. Drusilla clung to him in his failing fortunes; but a son whom she bore to him, and who was named Agrippa, after her brother, perished in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, which engulfed the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum.<sup>1</sup>

These two years of imprisonment in Cæsarea, if we may judge from the silence of history, were the most inactive of Paul's career. There are no epistles which bear this date; and though his brethren and others had free access to him, we have no recorded effects of their interviews with him. The only moments in which he emerges into view are those in which he appears before his judges.

#### 5. PAUL'S TRIAL BEFORE FESTUS, XXV. 1-12.

Vv. 1-5. The long imprisonment of Paul seems not in the least to have moderated the hatred of his enemies; so, on the change of governors, they renewed their efforts for his destruction. (1) Festus therefore, having come into the province, after three days, went up to Jerusalem from Cæsarea. (2) And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews informed him against Paul; (3) and they besought him, asking favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem; laying wait to kill him on the way. (4) Howbeit Festus answered, that Paul was kept in charge at Cæsarea, and that he himself was about to depart thither shortly. (5) Let them therefore, saith he, who are of power among you, go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, let them accuse him. He also told them, as

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* xx. 7. 2.



we learn from a later speech (16), that it was contrary to Roman law to condemn a man before he had an opportunity for defense, face to face with his accusers. All this shows that Festus was disposed to act justly. He of course knew nothing then of the plot to waylay Paul.

Vv. 6-8. He made no delay in granting them the promised hearing. (6) And when he had tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and on the morrow he sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded Paul to be brought. (7) And when he was come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood round about him, bringing against him many and grievous charges, which they could not prove; (8) while Paul said in his defense, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Cæsar, have I sinned at all. The specifications which Paul makes in his defense are the same as in his defense against the charges preferred by Tertullus before Felix (xxiv. 10-21), showing that the charges were also the same. Being a "ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" was his sin against the law; attempting to profane the temple, his sin against the holy place; and the incitement of insurrections among the Jews, his sin against Cæsar. In the last specification, reference was had to the mobs which the Jews were in the habit of stirring up against him, whose crimes were thus charged upon him.

VER. 9. As the accusers were not able to prove their charges (7), and the prisoner pleaded "not guilty" to every one of them, he should have been unconditionally released; but Festus, at this point, allowed his sense of justice to be biased by his desire for popularity. (9) But Festus, desiring to gain favor with the Jews, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there



be judged of these things before me? As Cæsarea was the seat of government for the province, he had no right to order the trial of a citizen elsewhere; hence the inquiry whether Paul was willing to be tried in Jerusalem. It is probable that he knew nothing of the plot mentioned in verse 3, but he must have known that the petition of the Jews that Paul be carried to Jerusalem for trial, was prompted by some sinister motive, and he should have rejected it without hesitation.

Vv. 10-12. The purpose of the Jews was well understood by Paul. He had not forgotten the vow of the forty conspirators, and, although they must have broken their vow in breaking their fast before this time (xxiii. 12, 13), this made them only the more determined to kill him, if they could. Fortunately, his very imprisonment, which exposed him to this new danger, furnished him the means of escaping it, and in the resolution which he instantly formed he saw a glimpse, at last, of Rome. (10) But Paul said, I am standing before Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged; to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest. (11) If, then, I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if none of those things is true, whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar. (12) Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar; unto Cæsar shalt thou go. The statement, "I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged," was his protest against being sent to Jerusalem; and his declaration that Festus knew that he had done the Jews no wrong, was based upon the developments of the trial. The appeal to Cæsar, which was the right of every Roman

citizen, required the judge before whom the appeal was made to instantly suspend proceedings in the case, and to send the prisoner, together with his accusers, to Rome, that the case might be adjudged by the imperial court. In Paul's case, this appeal was not a call upon a military power by a free man for protection, but a demand made upon the military power which held him in unjust confinement, not to add to this injustice that of exposing him to assassination. The answer of Festus betrays some bitterness of feeling, the natural effect of the reproach implied in the appeal, and at the same time it hints at the inconvenience to which Paul would himself be subjected by it. It subjected him to being sent to Rome as a prisoner under a military guard, and to all the delay which might attend the coming of the witnesses to testify against him, as well as that often resulting from the dilatoriness of the imperial court itself. This inconvenience deterred citizens from making the appeal except in extreme cases.

#### 6. PAUL'S CASE STATED TO KING AGRIPPA, 13-22.

VER. 13. The custom among princes of extending congratulations to those of like rank who are newly appointed in neighboring provinces, led to the next recorded incident of Paul's confinement. (13) Now when certain days were passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Cæsarea, and saluted Festus. This Agrippa was the only son of the Herod who had murdered the apostle James (xii. 1, 2). He was only seventeen years old when his father died, and, being thought too young for the government of his father's dominions, he was made by the emperor king of Chalcis, a small district east of the Jordan. He was now thirty-one years of

age. Bernice was his sister, and like the younger sister, Drusilla, she was remarkable for her beauty. She had been the wife of her own uncle, the former king of Chalcis, but she was now a widow, and living with her brother.<sup>1</sup>

Vv. 14-21. Festus knew that the charges against Paul had reference to the Jewish law, but he was still very much in the dark as to their exact nature; and as he was now under the necessity of sending a statement of them to the emperor, he determined to seek for light by appealing to Agrippa's more intimate knowledge of Jewish affairs. (14) And as they tarried there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix; (15) about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, asking for sentence against him. (16) To whom I answered, that it is not the custom of the Romans to give up any man before that the accused have the accusers face to face, and have had opportunity to make his defense concerning the matter laid against him. (17) When, therefore, they were come together here, I made no delay, but on the next day sat down on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought. (18) Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed; (19) but had certain questions against him of their own demon-worship,<sup>2</sup> and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. (20) And I, being perplexed how to inquire concerning these things, asked whether he would go to Jerusalem,

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* xx. 7. 3.

<sup>2</sup> For a justification of this rendering, see remarks under xvii. 18. 23.

and there be judged of these matters. (21) But when Paul had appealed to be kept for the decision of the emperor, I commanded him to be kept till I should send him to Cæsar. From this speech we learn the exact conception which Festus had thus far formed of Paul's case. He had discovered that Paul contended for the worship, with divine honors, of Jesus, a man who was dead; and as this, to the mind of a Greek or a Roman, was demon-worship, he so styles it here. He supposed that the Jews, like other nations, were accustomed to such worship, and consequently that the dispute between them and Paul was over the question whether they should worship Jesus in common with other demons. His ignorance of the religious ideas of the Jews, and his still more surprising ignorance about Jesus, whom he styles "one Jesus," as though he had never heard of him before, shows that, like most politicians in that day as in our own, he had made no study of religious questions. Agrippa must have smiled at his ignorance.

VER. 22. This could not have been the first time that Agrippa had heard of either Paul or Jesus. Being the son of the Herod who tried to suppress the Christian faith by killing the apostle James, and imprisoning Peter with the purpose of killing him; a nephew of the Herod who had killed John the Baptist, and mocked Jesus on the day of his crucifixion; and a great grandson of the one who attempted to kill Jesus in his cradle at Bethlehem, the names of Jesus and his apostles had been household words in his family for generations back. The name of Paul was doubtless less familiar than those of the original apostles, but of him he could not have been ignorant. He would not have deigned, as would none of his ancestors, to visit a congregation for the

purpose of hearing an apostle ; but in the privacy of the pretorium in which Paul was a prisoner he could gratify his curiosity by hearing him, and at the same time render some assistance to Festus. (22) And Agrippa said unto Festus, I also could wish to hear the man myself. To-morrow, saith he, thou shalt hear him. The proposal pleased Festus, because of the information which he hoped to obtain, and also, perhaps, because it provided another day's entertainment for his royal guests.

#### 8. PAUL'S CASE PUBLICLY STATED, 23-27.

VER. 23. Without intending to honor Paul, but rather to suitably entertain his royal guests, Festus provided for Paul the most magnificent audience, from a worldly point of view, that he had ever been permitted to address. (23) So on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and they were entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and the principal men of the city, at the command of Festus Paul was brought in. If the officer who was sent for Paul had told him that king Agrippa wanted him brought out that he might behead him, as his father had beheaded James, he would probably have been but little surprised. But who can imagine his surprise when told that this scion of the Herod family desired to hear him preach? Could it be true [that the gulf between Christ and this bloodiest of all the families which had stood against him [since the beginning, was so nearly bridged] over that one of them, and he a king, really desired to hear the gospel? This question must have flashed upon Paul's mind, as he made hasty preparation to appear before the splendid audience awaiting him. The bare possibility of winning a Herod over to the

cause of Christ must have thrilled his soul, and stirred him up to an effort worthy of the auspicious occasion. He began to feel almost repaid for two years of confinement, by the privilege now afforded him. For the first time, and perhaps the last, an apostle stood face to face with a Herod, unless James had enjoyed that privilege just before he was beheaded.

Vv. 24-27. The proceedings were conducted with all the dignity and formality suited to so august an audience. (24) And Festus saith, King Agrippa, and all men who are here present with us, ye behold this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews made suit to me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. (25) But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death; and as he himself appealed to the emperor, I determined to send him. (26) Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my Lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and especially before thee, king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I may have somewhat to write. (27) For it seemeth to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not withal to signify the charges against him. This was a very candid confession, before a brilliant audience, of his heathenish ignorance concerning a faith which had been propagated in every part of the Roman empire, and had established itself even in the imperial city of Rome. There were probably many in the audience besides Agrippa who were surprised at such ignorance; for it is scarcely possible that the "chief men of the city" who were present, and even some of the chiliarchs under his own command, did not understand the position of Paul. But all could see that Festus was in a bad predicament, in having held as a prisoner a man who was entitled to



his liberty, until, now that he had appealed to Cæsar, there was no chance to get rid of him.

## 8. PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA, XXVI. §1-29.

### 1. HIS INTRODUCTION, 1-3.

Vv. 1-3. When Festus took his seat, Agrippa assumed control of the proceedings. (1) And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defense :

(2) I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defense before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews ; (3) especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews : wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. This was a sincere expression of his happiness on the occasion. He was happy for a reason which it would have been unwise for him to express—the hope of winning the young king to Jesus; and for the especial reason, that now he had an opportunity to speak before one who, unlike Lysias, Felix, and Festus, being familiar with Jewish questions and customs, would be able to understand the case. Agrippa had been brought up in the Jewish faith, and on this account had been entrusted by the emperor with the oversight of religious affairs in Jerusalem, while Judea was under Roman procurators.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. HIS POSITION TOWARD JEWISH PARTIES, 4-8.

Vv. 4-8. After the exordium he proceeds to declare that he had been reared a Pharisee, and that he still adhered to the hope peculiar to that party. (4) My

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* κκ. i. 3.



manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation, and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews ; (5) having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, how that after the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. (6) And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers ; (7) unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king ! (8) Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead ? His purpose in these statements was not to defend himself against any charge ; for they meet no charge which had been preferred ; but to awaken within the heart of the king a chord of sympathy with himself, and thus to open the way for more serious impressions which he hoped to make. To this end also he emphasized the fact that he had spent his youth among his own nation, and in Jerusalem ; for, had he spent it among foreigners, he might have been indifferent to Jewish hopes and interests. His declaration that he was brought into judgment because of the hope of the resurrection, is to be understood here, as in xxiii. 6, and xxiv. 21. He means that his persecution by the Sadducees, the real authors of his present imprisonment, was instigated chiefly by his preaching the resurrection, and preaching it through the risen Jesus. In the demand, " Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead ? " he turned, as the plural number of the pronoun shows, from Agrippa, whom he had addressed exclusively before, to the rest of the assembly, who were, including Festus, unbelievers in the resurrection. The purpose of the demand was to challenge them to produce in their own minds a reason

for their incredulity. It was calculated also to strengthen the hold on Agrippa which he may have gained by his previous remarks.

### 3. HIS FORMER POSITION TOWARD JESUS, 9-11.

Vv. 9-11. In the next division of the speech, Paul makes another and more obvious attempt to enlist the sympathy of the king. (9) I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. (10) And this I also did in Jerusalem; and I <sup>5</sup>both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to <sup>5</sup>death, I gave my vote <sup>1</sup> against them. (11) And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I <sup>1</sup>strove to make them blaspheme; <sup>2</sup> and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities. This brief review of his career as a persecutor, which, brief as it is, adds several new items of information to those given by Luke (viii. 1-3; ix. 1, 2), must have caused Agrippa to say within himself: Why, the man was once on the same side with my family, and he showed the same zeal to suppress the cause of the Nazarene as did my father, my uncle, and my grandfather. It was intended to have this effect, and also to start within the astonished young

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<sup>1</sup>This remark shows that Paul had a vote in deciding who among the victims of persecution should be slain. This is usually construed as proving that he was a member of the Sanhedrin; but it may be that his vote was cast as a member of a commission appointed by the Sanhedrin to conduct the persecution, and that he had reference to this when he said that he had received "authority and commission" from the chief priests (xxvi. 12.)

<sup>2</sup>Not blaspheme the name of God, which he would not desire them to do; but the name of Jesus.

man the question : How did this persecutor come to undergo so great a change ?

#### 4. HIS INTERVIEW WITH JESUS, 12-18.

Vv. 12-18. As if to answer the question which he had raised in the mind of Agrippa, Paul next gives the cause of his change from a bloody persecutor to an ardent advocate of the cause of Jesus. (12) Whereupon, as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, (13) at midday O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. (14) And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. (15) And I said, Who art thou, Lord ? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. (16) But arise, and stand upon thy feet ; for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee ; (17) delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, (18) to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. On the supposition that Paul told the truth, Agrippa must have seen in these statements enough evidence of the resurrection and glorification of Jesus to convince him as well as Paul ; and it was probably new evidence to him ; for, although he must have heard long before something about the testimony of the original

witnesses of the resurrection, he may never before have heard of Paul's. The evidence conveyed with it proof also that Paul had been like an unruly ox, kicking when goaded, and thereby adding to his own pain while he persecuted the church; and this had doubtless been the experience of Agrippa's ancestors; for no man can persecute unto death unresisting men and women without many pangs of regret, even when he thinks, as Paul did, that he was doing God a service (*cf.* 9).<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Agrippa learned from this portion of the discourse that Paul had a commission from heaven, even from the glorified Jesus, to pursue the very course in life which he was now pursuing.

5. WHY HE WAS NOW IN BONDS, 19-27.

Vv. 19, 20. Having received such a commission, the speaker next tells the king how he had executed it. (19) Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; (20) but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea,<sup>2</sup> and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. Did not the king respond within himself, You are right, Paul; if you saw what you say

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<sup>1</sup> The fact that he thought he was doing God service must prevent us from interpreting the remark about kicking against the goad as referring to the goadings of conscience.

<sup>2</sup> By construing Paul's language here as if he were aiming to mention the countries which he evangelized in the order in which he visited them, and comparing it with the previous record in Acts, he has been made to contradict Luke. But he uses no expression to indicate that he is following such an order. He follows the order of place instead of the order of time, and therefore there is no contradiction. This statement is to be understood in the light of the preceding narrative.

you did, you were right to obey the heavenly vision, and our people have done wrong in opposing you.

Vv. 22, 23. To show still further that his enemies were in the wrong, he proceeds to tell how they had acted. (21) For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. (22) Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; (23) how that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles. Unless Paul was insincere in these statements of what he had done and taught, Agrippa had no alternative but to acknowledge that he had been unjustly dealt with by the Jews; and he could certainly see no ground for doubting Paul's sincerity. Furthermore, while claiming that he had taught nothing contrary to the law and the prophets, Paul very ingeniously wove into his argument the claim that the essential feature of his preaching, the resurrection of the Christ from the dead, was itself a matter of inspired prediction. Indeed, he shows that according to prophecy the Christ by his own resurrection was to throw clear and unmistakable light on that very hope of resurrection which had been the glory of Israel, and especially of the Pharisees. All of this was calculated to very deeply impress the mind of the king.

#### 6. AN INTERRUPTION, AND THE CONCLUSION, 24-29.

VER. 24. At this point in the speech Paul was interrupted by Festus. In the ears of that benighted heathen the speech was a very strange one. It presented to him a man who from his youth had lived in a faith

whose chief tenet was belief in the resurrection of the dead ; who had once persecuted to the death his present friends, but had been led to change his course by a vision from heaven ; and who, from the moment of that change, had been enduring stripes, imprisonment, and constant exposure to death, in his efforts to inspire others with his own hope of a resurrection. Such a career, on the part of a man of great learning and talent, he could not reconcile with those maxims of ease or of ambition which he regarded as the highest rule of life. Moreover, he saw this strange man, when called to answer the accusations of his enemies, appear to forget himself in his zeal to convert his judges. There was a magnanimity in both the past and the present of his career, which rose above the comprehension of the sensuous politician, and which he knew not how to reconcile with soundness of mind. He seems to have forgotten the proprieties of the occasion, so deeply was he absorbed in listening to and thinking of Paul. (24) And as he thus made his defense, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad ; thy much learning doth turn thee to madness. How darkened the mind that could regard in this light the life which has been the admiration of enlightened men, both believers and unbelievers, in every subsequent age !

VER. 25. Paul saw from the tone and manner of Festus, as well as from the admission of his own great learning, that the charge of madness was not intended as an insult, but was rather the sudden outburst of an excited and puzzled brain ; so his answer was respectful, and even courteous. (25) But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus ; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. This reply is the only remark in the

whole speech expressly intended for Festus. Paul knew before, and the charge of madness was only an additional proof of it, that Festus was beyond the reach of the gospel ; so he seems to have had no thought of him while he was reaching after king Agrippa.

Vv. 26, 27. In Agrippa Paul had a very different hearer. His Jewish education enabled him to appreciate Paul's arguments, and to see repeated in that noble life of self-sacrifice, which was an enigma to Festus, the heroism of the old prophets. As Paul turned his eyes away from Festus and fixed them again on the king, he saw the hold which he had obtained on the latter, and he pressed the advantage to the utmost. (26) For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely ; for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him ; for this hath not been done in a corner. (27) King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets ? I know that thou believest. He could speak thus confidently of Agrippa's knowledge and of his belief, because he knew his past history. He knew that the name of Jesus and his apostles had been household words in the family of Agrippa for generations, and that the questions between them and the unbelieving Jews had been discussed in his presence from his childhood, though always from the view of the enemies of the faith. The remark that " this hath not been done in a corner " was intended for Festus, to let him know that his ignorance of the matter was no proof of its obscurity.

VER. 28. With matchless skill the apostle had brought his evidences to bear upon his principal hearer, and with the boldness which only those orators can feel who are determined upon success, he pressed this personal appeal so unexpectedly that the king, like Festus,



was surprised into an open expression of his thoughts. (28) And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuation thou wouldst fain make me a Christian.<sup>1</sup> The remark shows that Agrippa saw very clearly the aim of the apostle. It is to his credit, being a Herod, that he did not take offense at an obvious attempt of the kind. It was evidently embarrassing to him; but while he turned it off in this cool manner, he evidently regarded Paul with a respect far beyond that ever entertained for an apostle by any of his ancestors. This was a great gain for the gospel; for it showed that by the patient endurance of persecution, and the continuous pressing of the gospel's claims upon men, the later generations of its bloodiest foes had been made willing to give it a respectful hearing.

VER. 29. Paul's reply was never excelled for propriety of diction and magnanimity of sentiment. (29) And Paul said, I would to God, that whether with little, or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds. It was not till he came to express a good wish for his hearers and his jailers, a wish for that blessedness which he himself enjoyed in Christ, that he seems to have thought again of himself, and to have remembered that he was in chains.

## 9. THE IMMEDIATE RESULT OF THE SPEECH, 30-32.

VV. 30-32. The heart that beats beneath a royal robe is too deeply absorbed in worldly cares to often or

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<sup>1</sup> Except for the needless introduction of the obsolete word "fain," this rendering is sustained by the scholarship of this age, the expression *ἐν ὀλίγῳ*, on which the whole meaning turns, never having the meaning "almost," which is given it in the rendering of A. V.

seriously entertain the claims of the religion of Jesus. A corrupted Christianity, which shifts its demands to suit the rank of its hearers, has been acceptable to the great men of the nations, because it helps to soothe an aching conscience, and it is often useful in controlling the ignorant masses; but men of rank and power are seldom willing to become altogether such as the apostle Paul. They turn away from a close pressure of the truth, as did Paul's royal auditor. (30) And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: (31) and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. (32) And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Cæsar. The decision of those who had not heard Paul before, that he was not worthy of death, or even of bonds, was based on nothing but the speech to which they had listened; and in that there was no attempt to state the charges, or to make a formal reply to them. The decision then was evidently the result of the tone of honesty and sincerity which breathed all through the speech, and which could not be feigned so as to deceive these experienced men of the world. As Agrippa coincided with the rest, Festus was led to regret that he had not released Paul before he made his appeal to Cæsar; for now he is in the same predicament precisely as when he first stated the case to the audience. He was under the painful necessity of sending to the emperor a prisoner, the charges against whom he was not able to express in writing, and of whom he would be compelled to say, that he had done nothing worthy of being sent at all. The fact that he did send such a statement (*eulogeum* was its official title) must have much to

do with the mildness of Paul's imprisonment when he reached Rome (xxviii. 16, 30, 31), and with his subsequent release.

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### SEC. III. PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME.

(XXVII 1—XXVIII. 16.)

#### 1. FROM CÆSAREA TO FAIR HAVENS, 1-8.

VV. 1, 2. Very soon after the speech before Agrippa, Paul found himself about to begin the long expected voyage to Rome. The answer to his prayers was about to be realized (Rom. xv. 30-32), and the promise made by night in the prison of Claudius Lysias, that he should yet testify of Jesus in Rome, was about to be fulfilled. This was brought about, not by any miraculous interposition, but by a providential combination of circumstances. The machinations of the Jews, the avarice of Felix, the indecision of Festus, the prudence of Paul, and the Roman statute for the protection of citizens, had very strangely, yet very naturally, combined to fulfill a promise of God made in answer to prayer. (1) And when it was determined that he should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan band. (2) And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea, Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. Here once more we see the significant "we" of Luke, showing that he was in Paul's company at this time, and started with him to Rome. As he had come with Paul to Jerusalem (xxi. 17, 18), the probability is

that he had been close to him during his imprisonment. This stay of more than two years in Palestine gave Luke the opportunity, if he had not enjoyed one before, to gather up all the information contained in his gospel; and it is highly probable that he also composed his gospel at this interval of comparative inactivity.<sup>1</sup> Aristarchus had also come up with Paul to Jerusalem (xx. 4), and as Paul, in an epistle written after his arrival in Rome, styles him his fellow-prisoner (Col. iv. 10), it is probable that, for some <sup>or</sup> cause not mentioned in the text, he also had been arrested in Judea, and was sent to Rome on an appeal to Cæsar.<sup>2</sup>

The Augustan band (cohort), in which Julius was a centurion, was so called in honor of the emperor. As the ship was of Adramyttium, a city on the western coast of Mysia, it was homeward bound; and it was not expected to convey the soldiers and their prisoners to Rome. The centurion started out with the expectation, afterward realized, of falling in with some vessel sailing to Italy, into which he could transfer his prisoners and soldiers.

VER. 3. Luke's account of the voyage on which Paul and his company are now embarked is the only

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<sup>1</sup> If the book of Acts was completed, as I have argued in the Introduction (xxiii. ff.), during the Roman imprisonment, Luke's gospel, which certainly was written earlier (Acts i. 1), was probably written during the first part of the same imprisonment, or during that in Cæsarea; for there was probably no earlier interval in which he had the leisure and the opportunity to gather all the information which he claims in his introduction (i. 1-4).

<sup>2</sup> This is held in doubt by Alford and Gloag (see their commentaries), who suppose that the term "fellow prisoner" is used figuratively when applied to Aristarchus; but there is no fact noted by either of them to justify the figurative interpretation of the term.

narrative of the kind in the Bible, and it is full of interest from beginning to end. (3) And the next day we touched at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul kindly, and gave him leave to go unto his friends and refresh himself. The friends found in Sidon were doubtless brethren in Christ; and from this we infer that Sidon, as well as Tyre, had received the gospel (*cf.* xxi. 3-6). With the brethren in the latter place Paul had spent a week on his sad voyage to Jerusalem, and now, on his voyage to Rome, he is cheered by the hospitality of those in the former. That he needed refreshing the next day after he had set sail is best accounted for by supposing that he was subject to seasickness, and the side wind them prevailing (4), which caused the ship to rock, accounts for the seasickness. A few hours on shore afforded great relief, although it was but temporary.

Vv. 4-6. The vessel continued to sail northward for a time, and avoided striking out into the open sea. (4) And putting to sea from thence, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. (5) And when we had sailed across the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. (6) And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy; and he put us therein. As the proper course of the ship was westward, the lee of Cyprus must have been its eastern end, whereas the southern coast would have been chosen had the wind been favorable. Another reason for passing into the waters north of Cyprus and south of Cilicia may have been that sailors then knew, as they do now, that a sea current there runs to the westward, by the aid of which they could make better headway in tacking against a contrary wind. The ship from Alexandria, which they met according

to their expectation, must also have encountered the prevailing westerly winds, and was therefore far to the east of the direct line from Alexandria to Italy. She had a cargo of wheat (38) brought from the granaries of Egypt, and she was a vessel of the largest size, accommodating, after her new passengers were taken aboard, two hundred and seventy-six souls, including the crew (37).

Vv. 7, 8. When they left Myra in the new ship the wind was still contrary. (7) And when we had sailed slowly many days, and were come with difficulty over against Cnidus, the wind not further suffering us, we sailed under the lee of Crete, over against Salmone; (8) and with difficulty coasting along it we came unto a certain place called Fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. The distance from Myra to the Island of Cnidus is only about one hundred and thirty miles, and as they were "many days" making that distance, the sailing must have been slow indeed. From that island to Cape Salmone, the eastern extremity of Crete, the direction is nearly due south; and this run was therefore made at a right angle to the wind. The purpose of this tack was to avoid the open sea west of Cnidus, and also to take advantage of the lee shore of Crete, by which they could make about one hundred miles toward their destination before reaching the open sea again. In the meantime they were hoping every day for a change of the wind. The difficulty of sailing along the coast of Crete grew out of the unfavorable course of the wind, which constantly threatened to drive them out to sea, and compelled them to make short tacks, as the headlands, causing counter currents in the wind, afforded them opportunity. Good seamanship was required for this, as it had been all the way.

Fair Havens was about halfway the length of the island.

## 2. DISCUSSION ABOUT CONTINUING THE VOYAGE, 9-12.

Vv. 9-12. The voyage had thus far been so tedious that winter was now approaching, and it was deemed unsafe to attempt to complete it before spring. It was a question, however, whether they should spend the winter where they were, or try to reach a more desirable winter haven. (9) And when much time was spent, and the voyage was now dangerous, because the Fast was now already gone by, Paul admonished them, (10) and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives. (11) But the centurion gave more heed to the master and to the owner of the ship, than to those things which were spoken by Paul. (12) And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they could reach Phœnix, and winter there; which is a haven of Crete, looking north-east and south-east. The fast here mentioned is the Jewish fast on the day of atonement, which was the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month (Lev. xxiii. 26, 27), and it occurs usually within our month of October. Paul's advice was the beginning of an activity on his part which forms the chief matter of interest in the remainder of the voyage. He spoke from experience, and not from inspiration (see under 21-26), but his words, as we shall see, came very near being fulfilled. It was quite natural that the centurion credited the judgment of the sailing master and the owner of the ship, rather than that of Paul, of whose nautical experience he knew nothing. The centurion



had control of the ship, notwithstanding the presence on board of the owner, because he had taken it into the service of the emperor. As the harbor of Phoenix looked (seaward) to the north-east and the south-east, being open in those directions, and closed in others, it was well adapted to protecting vessels from such winds as had been prevailing. It was westward of Fair Havens on the southern coast of Crete, and only thirty-four miles distant.

### 3. A VAIN ATTEMPT TO REACH PHOENIX, 13-20.

VER. 13. The harbor called Fair Havens lay on the east side of Cape Matala, which the sailors would have to double in order to reach Phoenix, and this they could not do in the face of a west or northwest wind; so they waited for the wind to change. (13) And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close in shore. The words, "thinking they had gained their purpose," express the thought that they were "as good as there" when they started with this soft wind from the south, the very wind for which they had waited. It was a deceitful lull, the prelude to a fearful change.

Vv. 14-20. The ship sailed smoothly for awhile over an unruffled sea, with its boat hanging astern ready for the debarkation at Phoenix. (14) But after no long time there beat down from it a tempestuous wind, which is called Euraquilo; (15) and when the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, we gave way to it, and were driven. (16) And running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat; (17) and when they had

hoisted it up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so were driven. (18) And as we labored exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw the freight overboard; (19) and the third day they cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship. (20) And when neither sun nor stars shone upon us for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was now taken away. The name *Enraquilo*, given to this wind, is equivalent to North-easter, and it indicates the direction from which it blew. It rushed down suddenly from the mountain tops of Crete, and struck the vessel when she was within but a few hours of her destination. Under the lee of *Cauda* the water was not so rough, and this enabled the sailors, before getting out into the rough water again, to take the three precautions here mentioned. They got the boat on board to prevent it from being dashed to pieces against the side of the vessel. The undergirding consisted in passing cables around the hull of the vessel, and drawing them tight by the capstan, so as to add their strength to that of the vessel's hull, and prevent her timbers from parting. The gear, or rigging, was lowered, all except sail sufficient for steering the vessel, in order to impede her progress toward the dreaded Syrtis, the great banks of quicksand near the coast of Africa, toward which the wind was driving them. The vessel was lightened on the following day by tossing overboard a part of the freight, that in consequence of drawing less water, the waves might strike her sides with less force. The tackling was thrown overboard the next day for the same purpose; and it consisted in the spars, planks, cordage, and so forth, which were carried

for the purpose of making repairs. As the mariners of the age were dependent on the sun and the stars exclusively for a knowledge of the direction in which they were sailing, when they had seen neither for many days, and the storm was unabated, they had no definite idea as to where they were, and hence their despair of being saved.

Vv. 21-26. The owner of the ship, the master, the centurion, and all on board had formed by this time a better estimate of Paul's judgment, and they were prepared to listen with respect when he addressed to them the following speech : (21) And when they had been long without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. (22) And now I exhort you to be of good cheer ; for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. (23) for there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, (24) saying, Fear not, Paul ; thou must stand before Cæsar ; and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. (25) Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer ; for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. (26) Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island. Paul's former prediction had come so near being fulfilled, that his hearers were not disposed to be captious about the apparent discrepancey between that and what he now says ; and when they heard him now predict their safety on the ground of a direct revelation from heaven, which he had not claimed before, they could see clearly that the former prediction was only his judgment. Moreover, the words of the angel, " I have granted thee all them that sail with thee," conveyed the

idea that but for this grant they all would have perished, and that this grant was made in answer to his prayers in their behalf. Let it be noted, too, that foremost of all in this answer to Paul's prayers is the assurance that he "must stand before Cæsar;" for with Paul the chief ground of wishing to escape the present danger was that he might at last see Rome, answer before Cæsar as he had before Agrippa, and then, being set free, preach to the Jews and the Gentiles in the "eternal city."

#### 4. THE SHIP AT ANCHOR, AND PAUL ON THE WATCH, 27-32.

Vv. 27-32. Notwithstanding the assurance of safety given by Paul, the peril for a time became more imminent. (27) But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven to and fro in the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors surmised that they were drawing near to some country; (28) and they sounded, and found twenty fathoms; and after a little space, they sounded again, and found fifteen fathoms. (29) And fearing lest haply we should be cast ashore on rocky ground, they let go four anchors from the stern, and wished for day. (30) And as the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under color as though they would lay out anchors from the foreship, (31) Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye can not be saved. (32) Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. The ship was nearing the island now called Malta, which is farther south than that portion of the sea now called the Adriatic, so this name covered a greater space in geography then than now. The ground of the surmise among the sailors, that they were nearing

land, must have been the roar of breakers on the rocky shore, at first so indistinct that they could not be certain what it was. The sounding tested the surmise, the rapidly decreasing depth proving that land was near. To run ashore in such a storm, and on such a coast, would be certain destruction to the ship and all on board. To cast out all the anchors at hand would be in all probability to wreck the vessel where she was by attempting to hold her stiff against the rushing waves, even if the cables did not part and leave her to drift upon the rocks. The sailors felt so sure that the one fate or the other would befall the ship before morning, that they resolved to risk their own lives in an attempt to get ashore, notwithstanding the darkness and the rocks. They easily deceived the landsmen by their pretense of putting another anchor out at the bow, where it could not possibly be of any service; but Paul was too much of a seafaring man to be so deceived, and his watchfulness saved the lives of all the passengers. Although he had assurance from God, which he implicitly believed, that not a life on board would be lost, he remembered that the promise was, "God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee," and so he was just as watchful to save those committed to his care as if no promise of their escape had been given. Indeed he goes so far as to tell the soldiers that none would be saved if the sailors were allowed to leave the ship. This was because none but skillful sailors could run the vessel safe ashore in such a wind and on such a coast. From this we gather the lesson, that when God makes us any promise the realization of which can in any part be promoted by our own exertion, such exertion is an understood condition of the promise. The rule has many applications in matters both temporal and

spiritual, which we can not pause to specify. In decreeing that a thing shall be done, or predicting that it will be done, God anticipates the voluntary actions of the parties concerned, and interferes directly only when the purpose would otherwise fail ; and in our dealings with God we are therefore to be as active and laborious as though we had no promise of his help, and yet as confident of help as though all were to be done by God alone.

5. PAUL COMFORTS THE CREW, AND THE SHIP  
IS LIGHTENED, 33-38.

Vv. 33-36. When the treacherous attempt of the sailors had been frustrated, there seemed to be nothing to do but to trust to the anchors and wait for day. The deck was swept from stem to stern by every large wave, so doubtless the hatchways were closed, and all descended below. In moments of supreme terror like this, when the stoutest heart is apt to quail, a man who maintains complete self-possession is instinctively leaned upon by the rest. Paul was this man. By outwitting the sailors he had impressed both them and the soldiers with a sense of his coolness and watchfulness, and this at once made him the leading spirit in the whole ship's company ; and now, while they were swinging at anchor, and had nothing to do except to keep themselves from rolling about on the floor, he imparted to them all a portion of his own cheerfulness and strength. (33) And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. (34) Wherefore I beseech you to take some food, for this is for your safety ; for there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you. (35) And when he had said this, and had

taken bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and he brake it, and began to eat. (36) Then were they all of good cheer, and themselves also took food. Paul knew that there is nothing so cheering to tired and hungry men as a good meal; and he knew that in order to safely reach the shore, there was exertion yet to be required of them for which they were not capable in their present enfeebled condition. His statement that they had taken no food for fourteen days, if taken literally, would not be incredible to those who are familiar with the famous fast of forty days by Dr. Tanner, of Philadelphia; but in rightly judging it we are to remember that this is not Luke's statement to his readers, but Paul's to his hearers; and that if they had taken any food at all, they knew how to interpret his remark accordingly. When a kind hostess in these days asserts that her guests have eaten nothing at all, and insists that they shall take a little more, no one misunderstands her, or charges her with misrepresentation. It is a colloquial exaggeration which is common and admissible. Those addressed by Paul had certainly eaten but little; those of them who were much given to seasickness had scarcely raised their heads from their couches during the time; and those who had suffered the least had not been able to sit down in quiet to eat. Certainly no cooking could have been done on the vessel. The free and easy way in which Paul spoke of the matter was in itself cheering, and the statement that the eating which he advised was for their safety, still further exhibits his conviction that the promised escape of every one was dependent in part on their own exertions (*cf.* note under 31).

Vv. 37, 38. The assembling of the whole ship's company at the time of this meal seems to have suggested



the mention of the number of persons on board; and perhaps it was at this moment that a count was first made, in order that, by another count when they landed, it should be known whether any perished, and if so, how many. (37) And we were in all in the ship two hundred three score and sixteen souls. (38) And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. This further lightening of the ship was for the purpose of enabling her to run nearer in shore than she otherwise could, ere she would strike bottom. It was no easy task to raise the sacks of grain from the hold of the vessel and get them overboard when she was pitching and rolling as she must have been. They needed for it all the renewed strength imparted by the food they had taken.

6. THE SHIP IS STRANDED, BUT THE MEN  
ESCAPE, 39-44.

Vv. 39-41. All was now done that could be until daylight should reveal the exact nature of the breakers ahead, and of the shore beyond. (39) And when it was day, they knew not the land; but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it. (40) And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. (41) But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained unmovable, but the stern began to break up by the violence of the waves. It seems, from the consultation of the sailors, that they thought it barely possible to so guide the ship as to strike the only smooth spot on the

shore; and the difficulty was occasioned by the intervening rocks between which the ship must be safely steered. This revealed to the passengers the wisdom of Paul in keeping the sailors on board when they tried to leave the ship the night before. The anchors were left in the sea, both because they would be of no further use to the ship, and because, if ever so much needed, they could not have been recovered. The rudders were only paddle-rudders, one at each corner of the stern, and while the ship was riding at anchor their handles were pressed down on deck, and fastened there, so that their paddle ends would be lifted out of the water, and saved from being broken by the waves. These were now loosed that they might be used in steering, and at the same moment the foresail was hoisted to give the vessel the forward movement through the water without which the rudders would have little effect. By skillful use of both sail and rudders, the ship was steered clear of the rocks, and landed at or near the point aimed at. The impetus with which wind and wave sent her forward caused her bow to plow its way deep into the sand, so that she was held fast. Two heavy waves (in sailor's phraseology, "two seas"), coming from different directions around the rocks, alternately struck the immovable stern like two immense hammers in the hands of giants, and the timbers, which had already been greatly strained by swinging at the cables all night, immediately began to give way. If the persons on board were to escape, there was now no time to be lost in leaving the vessel.

Vv. 42-44. At this critical juncture the soldiers proved themselves as unfeeling as the sailors had in the night. They could now see plainly that they owed their lives to Paul, yet they had no sense of gratitude

for it. (42) And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out and escape. (43) But the centurion desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they who could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land: (44) and the rest, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. And so it came to pass that they all escaped safe to the land. The centurion, who showed himself a kind and discreet man throughout the voyage, seems to have been the only soldier on board who had the right sense of gratitude to Paul for his invaluable services, and yet for the other prisoners he seems to have had little or no concern, seeing that it was for Paul's sake that he saved them. The necessity for swimming, even after the vessel struck, grew partly out of the fact that she was still in water too deep for wading; for a ship of her size draws not less than eight or ten feet when she is light; and partly because large waves were rolling in from the deep and sweeping high up on the shore. It was no easy task to reach the shore, and the escape of all was truly remarkable, the more so in that it had been predicted by Paul.

#### 7. PAUL ESCAPES ANOTHER PERIL, XXVIII. 1-6.

VV. 1, 2. Fortunately for the shipwrecked voyagers, they struck a hospitable shore, and one that was well populated. Doubtless as soon as daylight appeared the inhabitants along the coast saw the distressed vessel, and watched with eagerness her perilous run ashore. They were at the spot in crowds when the vessel stranded. (1) And when we were escaped, then we knew that the island was called Melita. (2) And the barbarians showed us no common kindness; for they kindled a fire, and re-

ceived us all because of the present rain, and because of the cold. They knew the name of the island (now Malta) by what the islanders told them. Luke calls the islanders barbarians because thus the Greeks and Romans styled all people except themselves. The term bore less of reproach than it does with us. These barbarians were very far from being savages. It was with no little labor that they kindled a fire in the rain, and a fire so large that two hundred and seventy-six men could get near it. These men were already drenched from swimming ashore, and the rain that was falling prevented them from getting dry; but still the warmth of a large brush fire made them much less uncomfortable. The rain was one of those chilling October or November drizzles, which are sometimes more disagreeable than a colder rain in the middle of winter.

Vv. 3-6. Paul was not a preacher after the style of a modern clergyman, who is particular not to soil his hands with menial labor, and who expects everybody to be ready to serve him, while he preserves his dignity and looks on. He did not stand by the fire which others had kindled, and allow others without his help to keep it burning; but he took a hand in the disagreeable job with the barbarians and the sailors. (3) But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, a viper came out by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand. (4) And when the barbarians saw the beast hanging from his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live. (5) Howbeit he shook off the beast into the fire, and took no harm. (6) But they expected that he would have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly; but when

they were long in expectation, and beheld nothing amiss come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god. This is Lystra reversed. There Paul was first taken for a god, and afterward stoned. Here he was first taken for a murderer, and then for a god. The bad opinion of him was not based on the naked fact that he had been bitten by the viper; for they knew that good men were liable to that; but by the occurrence of this fatality in so close connection with his escape from an apparently hopeless shipwreck. If they had discovered that he was a prisoner, this contributed to their conclusion. They ascribed his punishment to the goddess of justice, (*δίκη*) who appeared to be determined that he should not escape her hands. But when they discovered that the bite, the fatality of which they knew so well, had no effect on him, their conclusion that he was a god was as natural to them as the previous conclusion that he was a murderer. The miracle was wrought by the direct power of God, and it was intended to make the very impression on the islanders that it did—a temporary impression which must have been followed before many days by a true conception of Paul's person and office.<sup>9</sup>

#### 8. PAUL'S USEFULNESS IN MELITA, 7-10.

Vv. 7-10. The voyagers were fortunate in the place at which they landed, not only in its being inhabited, but in the character of its principal inhabitants. (7) Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands be-

<sup>1</sup> For the nautical information connected with this voyage, not found in the text, I am largely indebted to Mr. Howson's exhaustive treatise on the subject in *Life and Epistles of Paul*, vol. ii. chap. xxiii.

longing to the chief of the island named Publius, who received us, and entertained us three days courteously. (8) And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery; unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him. (9) And when this was done, the rest also who had diseases in the island came and were cured: (10) who also honored us with many honors: and when we sailed, they put on board such things as we needed. The title here given to Publius, "the chief man of the island," is ambiguous; but the Greek words so translated (*ὁ πρωτότος τῆς νήσου*) have been found on inscriptions in the island, as the title of the Roman ruler, and this justifies the conclusion that Publius held this office. If by "us," in verse 7, Luke means the whole ship's company, which is the most natural reference, the hospitality of Publius in entertaining with food and lodging two hundred and seventy-six men was worthy of all commendation. Perhaps he placed some of them in the houses of his tenants on the estate, but they were provided for at his expense for three days, after which some other arrangement seems to have been made. He was well rewarded however by Paul in the healing of his father, whose disease, even in our own days of medical skill, is considered a very dangerous one. It is probable, too, that the ship's company found accommodations in the homes of the others in the island whose sick were healed in the same manner. In this way Paul, who at the beginning of the voyage was one of the most unobserved of all the passengers, at last became the mainstay of the whole company, and exercised an ascendancy over every mind. It was gratitude to him that caused the islanders at last to supply the ship's company with all the comforts needed



for the remainder of their voyage. By this time the soldiers were doubtless glad that they had not killed him before they left the ship (xxvii. 42).

We can not suppose that Paul healed diseases among the islanders so generally without mentioning the name of Jesus. On the contrary, though Luke makes no mention of it, we must think that from the palace of the governor to the remotest hamlet of the island the name and power of Jesus were fully made known during the three months of his stay.

### 9. THE JOURNEY COMPLETED, 11-16.

Vv. 11-14. It was the winter months which were spent in the island; and so soon as navigation was considered safe in the early spring, the voyage was resumed. (11) And after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the island, whose sign was The Twin Brothers. (12) And touching at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. (13) And from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli; (14) where we found brethren, and were intreated to tarry with them seven days; and so we came to Rome. This ship of Alexandria, like the one that had been wrecked, was doubtless loaded with wheat for the Italian market; and it had been checked in its course the previous fall by the same tempest which had wrecked the other ship. It was kept in port three months or more when it was within three or four days' sail of its destination. The Twin Brothers, whose wooden images, standing at the bow or the stern, constituted her sign, or, as we would say in modern phraseology, her name, were Castor and Pollux, the two fabled



sons of Jupiter who were the special guardians of sailors. Thus the emblems of heathenism were kept constantly before the eyes of the early Christians. The stay at Syracuse, the famous city of ancient Sicily, may have been occasioned either by contrary winds, or by the discharge of freight. It is distant from Malta something less than one hundred miles, and the run was made in less than twenty-four hours. Rhegium, the next port at which they touched, was at the southern extremity of Italy, and not far from the mouth of the straits of Massena. It is now called Reggio. The circuitous sail in reaching it was doubtless the result of unfavorable winds. The south wind which sprang up after they left Rhegium was directly in their favor, and the run of one hundred and eighty miles thence to Puteoli, in a single day, was a swift one. Puteoli, the ruins of which are still visited by travelers, was situated on the northern shore of the bay to which Naples afterward gave its name. The latter city, which was then a mere hamlet, superseded Puteoli in the course of time as the seaport of that portion of Italy, while the latter gradually sank into decay. That Paul found brethren in Puteoli, is proof of the extent to which the gospel had already been preached in Italy; and that he obtained permission from the centurion to remain with them seven days, is proof additional of the respect with which Julius had come to regard him. The seven days included a Lord's day, in which Paul and his companions had the privilege of breaking the loaf with these newly found brethren.

Vv. 15, 16. The journey from Puteoli was over a paved road, which was a branch of the famous Appian Way that led from Rome to Brundisium, the modern Brindisi. The space is now traversed by a railroad.

This main road was reached at Capua, thirty-three miles from Puteoli, whence the route lay along this road to Rome, the whole distance by land being about one hundred and fifty miles. The reason that the ship had landed so far from Rome, was that Puteoli had the nearest harbor that would admit vessels of the deepest draft. The delay at Puteoli, and the long journey by land, had given time for the brethren in Rome to hear that Paul was coming. (15) And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us as far as the Market of Appius, and the Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage. (16) And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier who guarded him. The market (more properly forum) of Appius, was a town on the Appian Way forty-three miles from Rome; and the place called Three Taverns was a village ten miles farther toward the city. The group of brethren who met Paul at the latter place started later, no doubt, than the others. That Paul thanked God and took courage when he met them, implies that he had until then experienced some fear as to his reception by these brethren. As he was coming to this proud city a prisoner in chains, they might have felt that the reputation of the cause in Rome forbade their recognition of him as one of their great men; and if the brethren in the city should thus stand aloof from him, it would be vain to hope to accomplish any great good there while a prisoner, or even after securing his freedom. When, however, the brethren showed themselves so true in Christian sympathy as to ignore time-serving considerations, and to come as though they were meeting a man who would reflect honor upon them, all gloomy doubts were dissipated, and

courageous hope took their place. Among those brethren we may suppose that he recognized some, at least, of that noble band whose names he had mentioned with high encomiums in the last chapter of his epistle to their church, and who had passed with him through trials of the faith in years gone by. He had a thrilling story to tell these faithful brethren about his voyage, and it was certainly a matter of delight to them to find that, although he was a prisoner, he had won the esteem and confidence of the centurion who had him in charge, and as we may safely suppose, of all the soldiers who had once thought of killing him to prevent the possibility of his escape. They witnessed, too, on the arrival in Rome, the extension to him of the further and unusual courtesy of permitting him, instead of being placed in the common military prison, to dwell by himself, with no restraint other than that of having a single soldier to guard him. This favor was the result of the representation made by Festus, that he had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds, and also of the representation made by the centurion Julius of his conduct on the journey. Like Joseph when a slave in the house of Potiphar, and a prisoner in the king's prison, he had so conducted himself as to win the implicit confidence of those who had him in charge, from the beginning to the end of his confinement. So it must ever be with him who maintains under all circumstances a strictly Christian deportment.

## SEC. IV. PAUL'S PRISON LABORS IN ROME, (XXVIII. 17-31.)

### 1. HE OBTAINS AN INTERVIEW WITH THE LEADING JEWS, 17-22.

Vv. 17-20. Paul had now completed a journey which he had contemplated for many years, and he had met with some brethren whom he had requested more than three years before to strive together with him in prayer to God, that he might come to them with joy, and with them find rest (Rom xv. 24; 30-32). But how different his entrance into the imperial city from that for which he had hoped. Instead of coming a free man, to appear in the synagogue and the forum for the name of Jesus, he had been marched in between files of soldiers, presented to the authorities as a prisoner sent up for trial, and was being kept under a military guard night and day. How dismal his prospect for preaching the gospel to those who were in Rome! If Paul the tent-maker, a stranger and penniless, had commenced his labors in the commercial emporium of Greece, "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (I. Cor. ii. 3), how must Paul the chained prisoner have felt when he began a similar work in the capital city of the whole world? The prospect was sufficiently disheartening; but he had one ground of encouragement which he did not enjoy in Corinth; he was supported by a band of tried lieutenants, both men and women, as brave and true as ever executed the orders of a great leader; and every one of these was a hand which he could stretch out to lead interested hearers to his place of confinement. He made no delay in beginning his work, and his first movement was to

call the principal unbelieving Jews of the city to a fraternal interview. (17) And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews; and when they were come together, he said to them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans; (18) who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. (19) But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of. (20) For this cause therefore did I intreat you to see and to speak with me; for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. Paul's wisdom in seeking this interview, and in making these particular statements, is quite obvious. It would naturally have been supposed, from the fact that he was accused by his own countrymen in Judea, that he had committed some crime; and from his appeal to Cæsar, that he intended to prefer grave charges against his accusers. The statement that the Romans would have released him but for the opposition of the Jews, was much in his favor on the first point; and on the latter, his own disavowal was sufficient. His closing remark, that it was for the hope of Israel that he was bound with a chain, which is to be understood in the same sense as when made on two previous occasions (xxiii. 6; xxvi. 67), was calculated to enlist their sympathies, because it was no uncommon thing for Jews to be persecuted, and because it gave them assurance that he still cherished the fondest hope of the pious Jew.

Vv. 21, 22. The response of the Jews was candid and becoming. (21) And they said unto him, We nei-

ther received letters from Judea concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. (22) But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against. It is rather surprising that they had heard nothing from Judea concerning Paul; but it often happens that events pass almost unnoticed by a living generation, which become afterward the important events of history. By hearing nothing they had heard "no harm" of him, though they had heard much prejudicial to the "sect" which he represented. If they had acted as many do now, they would have refused to hear him at all because of the evil report of his sect; but the fact that the latter was everywhere spoken against was the very reason they wished to hear Paul in reference to it. Perhaps they had themselves refused to hear the preachers that preceded Paul in Rome; but the courteous manner in which he had invited them to his lodging, and the conciliatory manner of his address to them, had won them to a better feeling. Had they always felt as they now did, they would doubtless have heard of him before, and most favorably, through the epistle which he had written to the church in their city more than three years previous.

## 2. A SECOND INTERVIEW WITH THE JEWS, 23-28.

Vv. 23, 24. Before the Jews took leave of Paul they made an appointment to come again and give him a formal hearing. (23) And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number: to whom he expounded the matter, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets,

from morning till evening. (24) And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. The discourse was a long one, occupying sufficient time to place the whole subject before them, and to support every separate proposition with adequate evidence; but the result was the one always experienced in a congregation of Jews.

Vv. 25-28. From what follows we have reason to suppose that the disbelieving party gave some unbecoming expression to their sentiments. (25) And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, (26) saying,

Go thou unto this people and say,

By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand;

And seeing ye shall see, and shall in nowise perceive:

(27) For this people's heart is waxed gross,

And their ears are dull of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed;

Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,

And hear with their ears,

And understand with their heart,

And should turn again,

And I should heal them.

—(28) Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear. So skillful a preacher as Paul would not have closed his discourse with a warning like this, had he not seen or heard something in his audience to call forth these burning words from the sixth chapter of Isaiah. The passage had been quoted before by Jesus, and ap-



plied to the unbelieving Jews of Galilee (Matt. xiii. 14, 15); and it was after this used by the apostle John in explaining the unbelief of those who heard Jesus in Jerusalem (Jno. xii. 40). It furnishes the true explanation of the failure of the gospel to win some who hear it fully proclaimed; and the explanation is contradictory to the once popular doctrine, that the Holy Spirit must regenerate the soul by an immediate exercise of its power before the gospel can be received. According to this doctrine, the reason why some of Paul's hearers went away unbelievers was that a divine influence was withheld from them which was granted to the others. But according to the view expressed in this passage, the Lord had done as much for the one class as he had for the other; and the reason some were believers and the others not, was because the latter were "dull of hearing, and their eyes were closed." Their eyes and ears were not closed by some power above themselves; for they are expressly charged with closing them. As they closed them voluntarily, they had the power to keep them open; and it is implied that, had they done so, the result would have been reversed—that they would have seen the truth, that they would have heard it favorably, that they would have understood it, and that they would have turned to the Lord and been healed. This was precisely the experience of the party who believed. They had themselves been gross of heart and dull of hearing, and had closed their eyes against the previous preachers in Rome; but now they opened their eyes and ears to what Paul presented, and as a consequence they understood with their hearts, they turned, and were healed. In this order of things there is no respect of persons with God, neither can any man ascribe his final ruin to a with-

holding of saving influences on the part of the Holy Spirit.

### 3. DURATION OF THE IMPRISONMENT, AND CONTINUED LABORS, 30, 31.

Vv. 30, 31. The narrative is now brought abruptly to a close. (30) And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, (31) preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him. This hired dwelling is the one alluded to in verse 16, where it is said that "Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him." This soldier, as we see in the remark, "I am bound with this chain," (20) was chained to him day and night. The guard was changed according to uniform custom every three hours, unless an exception was made of the sleeping hours in this particular case. In this way it became the privilege of not less than five or six different soldiers to be present and hear his preaching and teaching every day. As this continued for two whole years, it is by no means surprising to hear Paul say in his epistle to the Philippians, "My bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole prætorian guard, and to all the rest" (i. 13). The prætorian guard was a body of soldiers kept at Rome, in a camp outside the city, for the purpose of guarding the emperor, and keeping prisoners awaiting trial in the imperial court. As each soldier returned to the camp from guarding Paul, he had a strange story to pour into the ears of his companions, and so it spread from lip to lip. It even reached some of the household of Cæsar, perhaps by means of the guards about the palace (*ib.* iv. 22).

The remark, that "he received all that went in unto him," implies many visitors. These were in part drawn together by the increasing fame of the imprisoned preacher; but chiefly we may assume by the activity of Paul's brethren in the city, who would naturally busy themselves in this way. By the zeal of the same brethren the rent of his hired dwelling was paid; but such was their own poverty, that when a contribution was forwarded to him by the distant church in Philippi, it relieved a felt want (Phil. iv. 10, 11, 18).

Preaching and teaching are here distinguished, 'as they are throughout the book of Acts, the former being addressed to the unbelievers, and the latter to the believers. That he did both shows that both believers and unbelievers were drawn to his lodging. His activity was unforbidden, because, being limited to those who voluntarily sought him in his private dwelling, it could cause no such outbreak, as it had in other cities. The results of these labors Luke does not see fit to enumerate, neither does he gratify the natural curiosity of the reader by telling us the result of Paul's appeal to Cæsar. This last circumstance can be accounted for, as we have argued in the Introduction (xxiii.-xxvi.) only by the supposition that the last sentence of the book was written just at the end of the two years, and previous to the trial. But with the exception of this omission, the leading purpose of the narrative suggests this as a fitting close. Having started out to show the manner in which the apostles executed their commission in turning sinners to the Lord, the writer has now led us from Jerusalem through Judea, Samaria, the provinces of Asia Minor, the islands of the Mediterranean, Macedonia, and Achaia, to the imperial city of Rome; and leaving the principal

laborer here, still "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ," his main purpose is accomplished, and the narrative closes.

A commentary on Acts, strictly confined to the text, would here be brought to a close; but as it has been a part of our plan to give more fullness to the narrative by drawing from other inspired sources, we have yet a few paragraphs to pen. The desire inspired in the thoughtful reader by the closing chapters, to trace a little farther the career of Paul, may in some degree be gratified. This desire has reference especially to the two questions, what were the results to the cause of Christ of his long imprisonment? and what was the issue of his appeal to Cæsar?

In reference to the first question, we have already remarked that his entrance into Rome was so different from that which he had hoped for, that his prospect for doing good there must have been very gloomy. But as he was permitted without interruption to teach and preach for two whole years in his hired dwelling, we can not doubt that he accomplished much, notwithstanding his confinement as a prisoner. We learn something of the results from epistles written during the time. Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were the earliest of these epistles. They were all written at one time, and forwarded, the first two by Tychicus, and the last by Onesimus, the two messengers traveling together.<sup>1</sup> In the

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<sup>1</sup> As he sent Onesimus back to Philemon, and had to send the epistle by some messenger, we conclude that he sent it by him (8-12); and as he sent Tychicus to the brethren to whom the two other epistles were directed, we likewise conclude that he sent those epistles by him (Eph. vi. 21, 22; Col. iv. 7, 8); and it is stated expressly that Onesimus was sent with Tychicus (Col. iv. 8, 9).

two former he shows a sense of the embarrassments of his situation, by exhorting the brethren to pray for him, that a "door of utterance" might be opened to him, and that he might have boldness to speak the gospel as it ought to be spoken. The last reveals the fact that at the same time he had already accomplished something. Out of the very dregs of the dissolute society of the metropolis, a runaway Greek slave had been induced to visit the apostle, and hear the gospel. It proved the power of God to free him from a bondage far worse than that from which he had fled. After he became a disciple Paul found him "profitable to him for the ministry," being of service, no doubt, in bringing within the sound of the gospel many of his former companions. His master was Philemon, a convert of Paul's residing in Colosse. Paul desired to retain him in his service; but out of respect to the legal rights of Philemon he sent him home with an epistle in which he delicately intimates the propriety of setting free a slave capable of such usefulness; and thinking it probable that Onesimus had defrauded his master in some way, promises to pay the sum, whatever it might be (Philemon, 8-21). His preaching had begun to take effect on the most hopeless class of the city's population, at the time when he was urging distant brethren to pray that God would open to him a door of utterance (Eph. vi. 18-20; Col. iv. 2, 3). But eventually a door of utterance was opened far wider than he had dared to expect. In the epistle to the Philippians, written at a later period, when he was expecting his trial and release, he says: "Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which have happened to me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ through-

out the whole prætorian guard, and to all the rest ; and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear" (i. 12-14). He also says, near the close of the same epistle, "All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Cæsar's household" (iv. 22). These results, as we have stated before, sprang most naturally from the word carried into the barracks of the prætorian guard by the many soldiers who alternately guarded Paul, and heard what he taught and preached to his visitors ; for the soldiers of the guard, and the employés about the palace of Cæsar, would naturally be among the very last to visit the apostle's lodging for the purpose of hearing him.

During these arduous and embarrassing labors, Paul enjoyed the coöperation not only of the true and brave men and women whom he found in the church at Rome, but also of other fellow-laborers who had toiled with him in other fields, and who came to him from a distance. Timothy, last mentioned before in the journey from Corinth to Jerusalem, united with him in the salutations of Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians. Aristarchus and Epaphras were his fellow prisoners (Col. iv. 10 ; Philemon 23) ; Mark, who once forsook him, and went not with him and Barnabas to the work, was now with him, and about to go on a distant journey at his request (Col. iv. 10) ; Demas, who afterward forsook him and went to Thessalonica, "having loved this present world," was as yet by his side (Col. iv. 14 ; II. Tim. iv. 10) ; and Luke, the beloved physician, who shared the perils of his voyage from Cæsarea, was his constant companion (Col. iv. 14).



In reference to Paul's appeal to Cæsar nothing is said expressly in the New Testament; yet there is conclusive inferential ground for the belief that it was successful in securing his release. This evidence is found in the events and journeys described in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, for which no place can be found in the period covered by Acts. Among these are his leaving Timothy in Ephesus to counteract the influence of certain teachers, while he went into Macedonia (I. Tim. i. 3); his leaving Titus in Crete to set in order the things that were wanting there (Titus i. 5.); his visit to Miletus when he left Trophimus there sick (II. Tim. iv. 20); and his journey toward Nicopolis to spend the winter (Tit. iii. 12.)

It would be interesting, were it not going beyond the limits of a commentary on Acts, to follow in the details of these labors till the curtain of authentic history drops and shuts out from our view his departure to be with Christ. When he obtained a hearing under the appeal which brought him to Rome, his enemies could have nothing to say against him worse than they had said before Felix and Festus; and his defense before them, together with that before King Agrippa, suggests the line in matter and method of that which he most probably laid before the emperor and his council. We shall not tax our imagination in an attempt to depict the scene. We bid him adieu till the resurrection morning, well pleased that the course of the narrative on which we have commented has kept us for so long a time in his company.



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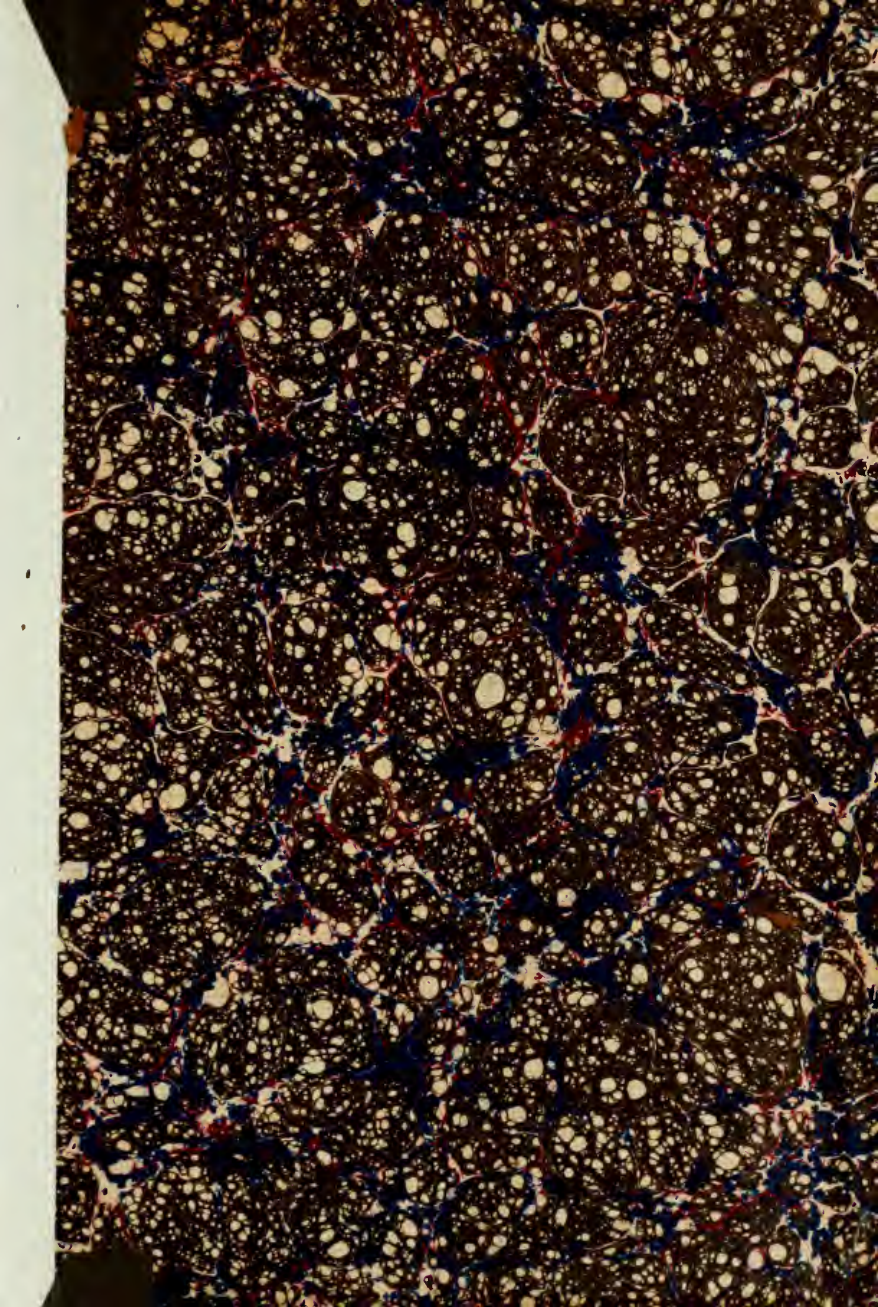
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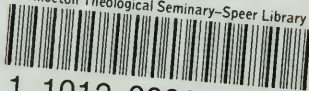
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